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Campaign for an **E**nglish **P**arliament

Think of England Number 105: July 2020



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Number 105 July 2020

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Campaign for an English Parliament Aims, Principles and Policies.

We campaign for an English Parliament, meaning a parliament for the people of England, for whom England is their chosen or inherited home and who are legally entitled to vote.

We campaign for an English Parliament with powers at least as great as those of Scotland's, i.e. a Parliament and Executive (Government) that can make Acts (primary legislation) on the same domestic issues (e.g. health, welfare & education) that are devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

The CEP works with academics, business groups, trades unions, think tanks and the media to create the conditions whereby UK MPs see that there is no alternative to the re-establishment of the English Parliament.

Editorial: This month I copy a member's letter written to their MP and the MP's reply. We know that MPs are required by their British party to follow the party line however the more letters they get like this one the



more they will come to understand England's plight. We need to keep the pressure up especially as Covid-19 will impede any public campaigning for the foreseeable future. You too could use this letter and also point out that EVEL is pointless when laws for England are overturned by the votes of Scottish MPs such as in the case of extending Sunday trading hours.

EVEL does not ensure that policy for England can only be made by MPs for English constituencies. Moreover Select Committees on English matters contain vociferous members of nationalist MPs of the other UK nations.

When fee discrimination was brought into UK universities an English student and others supported by the CEP tried to challenge it. It went as far as the European court but was thrown out on the grounds that member states could discriminate within their own boundaries.

We hear the devolved administrations moaning that their views on negotiating Brexit are not continually acceded to by the UK government. However foreign policy is a matter reserved to Westminster. These semi-autonomous regional governments should have no input.

Scottish Kenny Farquarson bemoans the fact that some citizens of the UK, because of their nationality, are effectively barred from becoming PM of the UK. A federal UK would solve this problem.

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Campaigning for England:

Letter from a member to their MP

Dear (MP),

Being proud to be half English and half Spanish, I do not consider myself an English Nationalist, however I do find myself increasingly confused and frankly frustrated with the iniquitous treatment of England and the people of England within the UK. This feels all the more acute as politicians, the media and the world at large endlessly debate and promote equality and justice.

I am no expert but some of the more obvious areas where I feel England and the people of England suffer a significant deficit as compared to the other nations of the UK are:

Democracy: As has been afforded to and lauded for the other UK nations, there is no *SINGLE* English parliament, which sits for the unashamed benefit and betterment of the *WHOLE* - North, South, East and West of England/people of England, (*not* the unsatisfactory and non-equivalent *EVEL* or the *extremely divisive*, suggested, devolution *within* England).

If it was deemed so important to reinstate the Northern Ireland Assembly, and as Scotland and Wales have also had their own parliaments for decades now, why does England and the people of England continue to be denied one?

UK Government funding: As a whole, the people of England receive far less per capita than the people of the other UK nations. This leads to understandable envy and resentment of such things as free long-term care for the elderly, free university tuition, free prescriptions, free dental and eye checkups and free hospital parking.

EU funding: All be it a moot point following the EU referendum result, as a whole, England has always been and presently remains a net contributor to the EU, whilst the other UK nations have always been and remain net recipients.

Austerity measures: These were first implemented and were most severe in England and continue to be so, whilst they were either deferred or implemented to a lesser extent in the other UK nations.

Identity: Whilst the identities of the other UK nations are celebrated, preserved and promoted, English identity, of any kind, is at best ridiculed or at worst condemned, deliberately suppressed or described as/ confused with British Identity.

History: Whilst the histories of the other UK nations are taught, preserved and where appropriate celebrated, English history is at best ignored or at worst condemned or deliberately described as/confused with British history.

Culture: Whilst the cultures of the other UK nations are celebrated, preserved and promoted, English culture of any kind is at best ridiculed or at worst suppressed or deliberately described as/confused with British culture.

Infrastructure: When visiting Scotland and Wales I am struck by the good condition of roads, general infrastructure and an almost litter free environment. The absolute reverse of which is the case in England, leading to a feeling of neglect and a lack of national and community pride.

Environment: Whilst the National Parks of the other UK nations faced a 20% funding cut under the austerity measures, England's National Parks suffered a 40% cut.

National wings of political parties: Whilst the mainstream political parties have Scottish and Welsh wings and manifestos, they have no English equivalent.

BBC channels and news reporting: Whilst Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have dedicated BBC channels, there is no BBC England channel. Also, BBC News actively describes individuals (in news and sport) from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish but describes people from England as British or by their county.

Taking all of the above factors into consideration, something is bound to snap, and I would humbly suggest that, leaving the EU alone, will not resolve the, long-held, discriminatory feelings induced by these glaring anomalies/facts.

Having pressed my new local MP for a more detailed response to the issues raised in my letter above I received the attached reply, which I thought may be of interest to you.

She was at least honest in her opinion and response, but if we were previously in any doubt regarding mainstream political parties, mainstream media, the Civil Service et al being of the view that, what's good for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is *not* good for England, we certainly shouldn't be now.

I truly now fear that with the weight, power and influence of the aforementioned organisations (and in some cases their anglophobic ideologies), divisive devolution *within* England, instead of a single English Par-

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liament, will be imposed on us, leading to a very fractured country, or ultimately, the break up of England.

MP's reply

Thank you for your follow-up email regarding English Votes for English Laws (EVEL), and devolution. It is this Conservative Government's policy to implement full devolution across England. I do not agree that this has, or will, lead to dissent between the regions.

Conservative MPs have long believed that only MPs representing English constituencies should be able to vote on matters which affect only England, similarly to how Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are able to vote on such matters at the devolved level.

The EVEL process has come about because of the wider devolution of powers in the four nations of the United Kingdom. It is designed to ensure that legislation which affects only England is approved by a majority of MPs representing English constituencies. This prevents MPs representing constituencies that have devolved responsibility for the matter at hand altering or blocking certain pieces of legislation. MPs representing English constituencies, therefore, play a much greater role in the formation of legislation which affects only England.

I believe EVEL ensures greater accountability for MPs representing English constituencies and reflects the wider devolution of powers, which has taken place across the United Kingdom in recent decades. I appreciate your strength of feeling and I realise that we are unlikely to agree on this issue, however I appreciate your raising your concerns with me.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

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### English identity can matter more than money

January 8 2020, 5:00pm, The Times: James Kirkup, director of the Social Market Foundation

Levelling up with investment in the north won't resolve the cultural disconnect in the provinces

In Whitehall the talk is all of "levelling up", the mission to close the productivity gap between the southeast of England and the rest. It's welcome news that a government is focusing on productivity, a big issue that doesn't get talked about enough — largely because it's complicated, boring and very hard to fix. Until that productivity gap narrows much of the country will lag behind the southeast. It makes perfect sense for this government, elected with the votes of many people in places that lag, to try to address that problem.

For all that laudable focus on productivity gaps, no clever initiatives devised in the Treasury will be enough to solve what is as much a political and cultural problem as an economic one. The conventional wisdom is that 2016's Brexit vote and the 2019 election result were largely delivered by disaffected Labour voters in "left-behind" places whose wealth has fallen farther and farther behind that of the capital. That simple diagnosis begets a simple remedy: chuck concrete, steel and money at the poor provincials then they'll cheer up and maybe even vote Tory again.

I will celebrate without reservation increased infrastructure spending but talk about "levelling up" makes me worry that important things are being missed, again. It was a truism of politics after 2016 that "no one voted to be poorer" when in fact some people happily did just that. For some Leave voters, the increased pride in their country and the enhanced democratic control that they believed (and believe) Brexit will deliver more than justify an economic pinch. The same is true of immigration. A liberal migration policy boosts GDP but for some there is more to life than GDP.

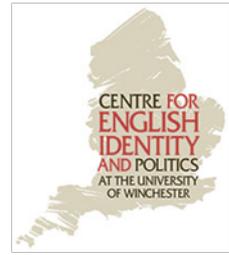
Here's something that matters to a lot of people in the "left-behind" places that Westminster wants to help yet is barely mentioned in politics: England. About a third of the 55 million people in England define themselves as either "English not British" or "more English than British", yet the nation that matters to them is scarcely discussed by their leaders who mainly talk of "Britain" and "the UK". If you want to address the political disaffection felt in parts of England you must reflect on how a sizeable number of people live in — and value — a country that their leaders do not even talk about.

Partly that reticence is about sensitivity to Scottish nationalism and the Union. Partly it's because Englishness is seen as retrograde and even racist, whereas Britishness can be inclusive, multicultural and even cool. Yet as John Denham, the former Labour minister now charting Englishness at Winchester University, rightly notes, reality is more complicated: "There are plenty of liberal English people and socially conservative British."



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People who value their Englishness are more likely than others to have voted Leave, more likely to identify strongly with their region or town and more likely to live in the poor and poorly connected places that gave the Tories their majority last month. As well as offering those people new bypasses, bridges and high-tech industries, the prime minister could usefully start a debate about England, the English and the way politics works for them. That might mean more devolution — working closely with English city mayors should be a priority for Boris Johnson — but this should be about more than policy responses. It's about people's ideas of themselves, nebulous concepts that need a cultural and intellectual response, not a bureaucratic one.



That discussion could address important questions: how does Englishness differ from Britishness? How can Englishness be extended to all who live in England? How can the pride some people feel in the flag of St George be better reflected and respected, and shared by all of those 55 million? This debate should start soon, before Scottish nationalists force it on to the agenda in a more destructive way.

Englishness is a slippery concept. It is blurred by overlaid Britishness: when John Major spoke of old maids cycling to Holy Communion in the morning mist as the essence of Britain, he was misquoting Orwell, who wrote those words about England. This is a national identity in need of an update as well as a voice.

Labour, too, needs to get back in touch with England, though its leadership contest thus far suggests that this is not imminent. When Rebecca Long Bailey spoke of something as bland as “progressive patriotism” she was denounced in *The Guardian* for “racial pandering” and has not uttered the phrase since.

For several million people, many living in seats that decide elections, “England” is important. Some in politics find that inconvenient but those people are not going away and recent history suggests that politicians ignoring their concerns leads to turmoil and rupture.

Despite the shocks of recent years, politics has done a pretty bad job of acknowledging the obvious truth that there is more to life than money. Identity, place and nation matter too. Answering the questions posed by England and the English is just as important and difficult as solving our productivity problems.

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**Current English Affairs:** Health and Welfare, Education, Economy, Planning

**Officials worry that a one-size-fits-all approach will not help to fight local outbreaks.**

Monday June 01 2020, 12.01am, The Times: Andrew Norfolk

It was a chilling prophecy. More than six weeks ago an independent think tank warned that Middlesbrough was the local authority area most at risk from coronavirus.

Back then many British communities had far more cases but today the Teesside town has the highest Covid-19 death rate outside London. Some grim predictions, unhappily, come true.

Why this has happened, and the heightened vulnerability of Middlesbrough as lockdown measures are tentatively eased, are matters of acute concern to those tasked with protecting residents. It is a concern shared by many across the northeast, which by now has the worst per capita infection rate of any UK region. (*He means England. Ed.*)

Six weeks ago eight of the ten local authorities with the highest confirmed case rates were in London. Today's top ten features only one London borough.

The top four hotspots are all in the northeast: Sunderland, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Middlesbrough. Widespread confusion remains over the degree to which, if at all, the introduction of test and trace measures will give local health authorities greater flexibility in determining what is appropriate for their area. South Teesside's director of public health, Mark Adams, wants Middlesbrough to be allowed to develop “a culture that's a little bit more like South Korea” than areas of Britain with far lower infection rates. For Andy Preston, the town's straight-talking independent mayor, it is “blindingly obvious that a country the size of England, with a broad range of R rates, should not have a one-size-fits-all policy on softening or toughening lockdown”.

The prediction that Middlesbrough risked becoming a hot spot for the pandemic came in a prescient report by the Centre for Progressive Policy. Its author was Ben Franklin, the think tank's head of research. “Our theory was that in addition to case numbers, it was important to factor in underlying vulnerabilities. So we looked at healthy life expectancy, mortality from treatable conditions, the quality of care and age structure.” In three of those four categories Middlesbrough scored particularly badly, as might perhaps have been expected for a local authority ranked the poorest in England.

Mr Franklin said it came as little surprise last month when the Office for National Statistics announced a clear link between higher levels of deprivation and higher Covid-19 mortality.

Across the UK the pandemic death rate per 100,000 people is 56. In the ten English councils with the

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highest proportion of the most deprived neighbourhoods, ranked among the 10 per cent most deprived nationally, the average mortality rate is 81. In Middlesbrough, the Covid-19 death rate is 127, higher than all local authorities bar two London boroughs, Harrow and Brent. As London's infection rate slows to a crawl, cases continue to rise in pockets of the northeast, the northwest and the West Midlands.

High rates of confirmed cases are sometimes influenced by varying levels of testing, but deaths do not lie and Middlesbrough has suffered 178 Covid-19 mortalities. Almost a third of them were in care homes, but not all victims were elderly and frail.

For Mr Adams, who began his job as Middlesbrough's director of public health on March 23, the day the UK entered lockdown, the past two months have been "a bit of a baptism of fire".

He is confident that the town has now passed the peak of its own infections but warns that underlying vulnerabilities remain. "The features of post-industrial northern towns include health inequalities. "The ability to socially distance also varies. If you live in a block of flats, haven't got any outside space, you're using a lift that everybody else is using, or you're in a job where you can't work from home. Your risk of catching Covid is much higher than for someone sitting at home with their own garden."

Mr Adams's prime concern now is "what happens as lockdown gets lifted". "We need to have a slightly different approach in Middlesbrough and across the northeast, one that's potentially a little bit more stringent because although it's coming down we've still got a high infection rate. "There's more risk in Middlesbrough than there is in Cornwall, for example. So we need to be really careful."

The mayor, Mr Preston, hopes that test and trace, rather than imposing a "prescriptive diktat from central government", will give his town powers to "implement local knowledge and local measures to deal with our local Covid challenges". "I'm really concerned about the potential for a second wave. We need the ability to turn up and turn down our degree of lockdown on a hyperlocal basis if we discover it in a particular building, care home or street."

Middlesbrough's action plan will initially focus on "identifying and testing as many people as possible".

"We're going to make sure that we have a way of getting everybody who needs a test and wants a test to a testing station, and if that means getting them there ourselves, that we take them there and bring them home, then so be it. What's critical is data. If we know who's tested positive and who their contacts were, we can start to assess whether there are patterns and take the appropriate action."

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English universities to take on extra science students

Tuesday June 02 2020, 12.01am, The Times: Rosemary Bennett, Education Editor

The government has limited popular universities to recruiting only 5 per cent more students than usual. Top English universities will be able to recruit extra students in chemistry, engineering, maths and physics this year under government rules to manage admissions in the pandemic.

It has limited popular universities to recruiting only 5 per cent more students than usual to stop them hoovering up applicants from other less popular institutions. They are predicted to have thousands of vacancies on their courses because many overseas students say they will defer their places until campuses are open as normal.

However, the government has reserved 10,000 extra places universities can bid for. Half will go to six science subjects, along with architecture, social work and teacher training. The other half will go to nursing and healthcare degrees.

The Department for Education also said it was limiting the number of English undergraduates going to universities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They will be able to recruit only 6.5 per cent more than usual.

Close to 18,000 students from England travel to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland each year to start undergraduate degrees. Welsh universities are particularly popular with English students, with Cardiff University admitting nearly 60 per cent of its undergraduates from across the border.

Edinburgh and St Andrews are also popular with English students. They will have hoped to admit more English students to make up for the loss of overseas applicants.

Richard Lochhead, the Scottish higher education minister, said the decision was "deeply disappointing". He added: "The UK government should be working with the devolved administrations to support higher education at a time of crisis, not imposing . . . targets and sanctions which are aimed at stabilising the English market." Kirsty Williams, the Welsh education minister, said she "disagreed strongly" with the approach.

Since England, unlike the rUK, has no national government and the UK government controls education in England it is obvious that, in the absence of anyone who has a remit to speak for England, Gavin Williamson will impose

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whatever the UK government wants on England, for good or ill. Ed.

End to 'fee discrimination' is price for Scottish universities' bailout

Sunday June 07 2020, 12.01am, The Sunday Times: John Boothman

The University and College Union has predicted that the pandemic will cost Scottish higher education £250m

A UK bailout of Scotland's universities could be contingent on ending what members of Boris Johnson's government view as unfair fee discrimination against English students and a clampdown on principal pay.

The UK government has confirmed that it intends to help universities in Scotland and the rest of the country, but government sources signalled that strings would be attached.

The Scottish government's approach to fees, which exempts Scottish and EU students but requires those from south of the border to pay to study in Scotland, has long been a bone of contention among UK ministers. UK government sources believe it is untenable for taxpayers to continue to pay nearly £100m a year to give EU students free education in Scotland after Brexit.

For as long as the UK remained in the EU it was illegal to give free university education to students from Scotland while charging students from other member states. However, it was legal to charge students from England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Once the Brexit transition period ends — which is scheduled for the end of the year — the Scottish government could decide to keep learning free for domestic students but charge EU students.

A senior UK government source said: "It is not as if it is the sons and daughters of the poor and down-trodden from across the EU that have benefited from this largesse. It has helped children of the middle classes and prosperous from across the continent, while Welsh, Northern Irish and English students have had to pay."



Scottish scene: Economic recovery requires all four nations to work together

Sunday June 07 2020, 12.01am, The Sunday Times: Erikka Askeland

As we enter the 12th week of lockdown the implications for businesses are becoming clearer and the outlook is grim. The lockdown measures are only just starting to ease slowly across the UK — and even more slowly in Scotland. And while many embrace the Scottish government's more cautious approach to getting back to work compared with England, there is a cost in economic terms and concern that the precautions risk being more deadly than the virus in terms of the impact caused by joblessness and poverty. Respected economic think tank CEBR has estimated the lockdown costs the Scottish economy £217m a day. That's more than a third of gross value added having drained away from households and livelihoods. This is in line with the Scottish government's own State of the Economy report, which warns that the economy could take up to three years to recover. The human cost of this is currently uncountable, but have no doubt it is mounting.

However, the solutions to the peril must be manifold and will probably require the injection of substantial capital across the breadth of the economy. This will require work and agreement with the UK Treasury, which will demand even stronger leadership than has been yet seen for all four nations to agree.

(Who pays? The majority tax payer. Ed.)

High street revival requires more power for town halls

Saturday June 20 2020, 12.01am, The Times: Ashley Armstrong, Retail Editor

High streets have been hit hard by the pandemic, but they were already struggling under pressure from business rates and online competition

A revival of high streets relies on Whitehall handing more powers to local authorities, according to a report into the future of retail by the former boss of Wickes and Iceland.

Bill Grimsey says that half of retailers were at risk of going bust even before the coronavirus outbreak, but adds that the pandemic should be seized on as an opportunity for a reinvention of retail centres, which require "an understanding that the challenges facing our towns and high streets are simply too big for Westminster. They cannot be solved by pulling big levers in Whitehall."

His report says that councils need new powers to ensure that unused or neglected properties are forced back on to the market and can be bought by community trusts to serve their neighbourhoods. He also wants the Land Registry to open up its database to give transparency about who owns town centres, as

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plans to redevelop them are often snarled up in the time it takes to track down relevant property owners.

Times letters 28/6/20: JENRICK STAMPING ALL OVER OUR TOWNS

Robert Jenrick (News, last week) is not a popular person in this part of the world. The planning minister overruled South Oxfordshire district council in its opposition to a massive development of more than 3,000 homes near the sleepy village of Culham.

The nearby towns of Didcot and Abingdon will be choked. The area does need social housing, but there will be little in this scheme. How many other developments has Jenrick interfered with?

Jenny Mahony, Abingdon

English politics:

Devolution is 'a mess' that jeopardises plans to level up the regions

Monday June 01 2020, 12.01am, The Times: Callum Jones, Trade Correspondent

Devolution across Britain (*He means England. Ed.*) has become a "complete mess" and must be reviewed to ensure every regional economy can recover, the chairman of the business, energy and industrial strategy committee says.

Darren Jones is "just not convinced" that the local infrastructure is in place for Boris Johnson to deliver on his promise to level up the country.

Some areas have myriad authorities — from city and regional mayors to economic and business initiatives — which he believes lack the "full empowerment and finance" to act coherently and stimulate local growth. Ministers should examine the effectiveness of such governance complexities to ensure regions "get the best bang for our buck in our recovery", Mr Jones, Labour MP for Bristol North West, said.

Mr Jones cited Bristol, which has a city council, a city mayor, a regional combined authority mayor, a local enterprise partnership and the Western Gateway economic project. "They are all well-intentioned," he said, "but I'm not sure that any of them really have the full empowerment and finance to be able to make proper, local decisions that leverage coherently the type of growth we need in the future."

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said: "We disagree with these claims."

Mr Johnson pledged to "level up" Britain as it leaves the European Union, boosting activity in "left-behind" areas. Last week he was warned this amounts to the economy's "greatest challenge" after it was found that 49 per cent of all foreign investment in Britain is taking place within London.

A ministry spokesman said that devolution had "unlocked billions of pounds of investment for local communities," with local leaders delivering on local priorities.



The UK's castle will crumble if the devolved nations have no say

Sunday June 07 2020, 12.01am, The Sunday Times: Kevin Pringle

Two years ago, the public administration and constitutional affairs committee of the House of Commons published a report concluding that: "Whitehall still operates extensively on the basis of a structure and culture which take little account of the realities of devolution in the UK." There has been no improvement since, and the committee's recommendation for a review of the country's entire "constitutional architecture" in light of Brexit has been ignored. The attitude of successive UK governments to the three devolved administrations reflects a similarly enduring expression of superiority. Constitutionally, Westminster may be the sovereign parliament; but treating the elected representatives of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as little more than rascally upstarts and ignoring what they have to say is poor politics. Last week was typical of the devolution experience over the past 20 years. Northern Ireland's assembly approved a motion urging an extension to the Brexit transition period, which expires at the end of the year unless Britain requests more time by June 30. In doing so, Belfast added its democratic voice to calls from Edinburgh and Cardiff for the UK government to press the pause button. The risk of an inadequate or no deal in such a short timescale is real — particularly when ministers and civil servants are, or should be, focused on the pandemic — which poses equally real dangers to an economy already hurtling into a coronavirus crisis. So far, there is no sign that Boris Johnson is paying heed.

We have become four nations under Covid. The coronavirus crisis has shown the prime minister of the UK to be in many respects the leader of England alone

Wednesday June 10 2020, 12.01am, The Times: Kenny Farquharson

Could a Scottish prime minister impose an English lockdown? This question is like a crowbar. Stick it in a

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hairline crack in the British constitution, apply some force, and a deep crevice appears. The difficulty is plain. Boris Johnson is prime minister of the UK. Yet during the coronavirus crisis he is, in many respects, prime minister of England alone. On the NHS, on schooling, on lockdown rules, his writ runs out at the Tweed.

Imagine for a moment Gordon Brown was still prime minister. Yes, I know, unlikely in a whole lot of ways, but bear with me. Could an MP for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath, with any credibility, lay down lockdown rules for Kirklees and Cowes, but not for his own constituents at home in Fife?

Such a scenario throws up a number of problems. Accountability for one: Mr Brown would not be directly answerable to his constituents for his actions. Authority too: would English citizens accept Mr Brown's right to tell them what to do? Having a Scot running the UK might be fine, but a Scot running England?

We have been here before. Hard to believe now but between 2003 and 2005 the UK cabinet minister responsible for England's health service was John Reid, MP for Hamilton North and Bellshill, now Lord Reid of Cardowan. This appointment by Tony Blair raised a few eyebrows at the time but would now surely be impossible in an age so dominated, on both sides of the border, by identity politics.

The problem would be more than just one of perception. In the years since Lord Reid's time in frontline politics the House of Commons has introduced the convention of "English votes for English laws", known by the unfortunate acronym of Evel. It is quite conceivable that if he or Mr Brown were in office today they would be unable to vote in the Commons on measures they themselves had introduced.

Are we now at the point where a Scottish MP representing a Scottish constituency could never serve in the UK cabinet as prime minister? And if that is indeed where we are, what does that say about the wonky, Heath-Robinson, unfit-for-purpose British constitution?

Other countries deal with this much better. In the Bundestag, for example, Angela Merkel represents a constituency in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, one of the lesser-known states within Germany's federal structure. Yet she manages to be chancellor without too much trouble because each of these German states has its own government with its own ministers. Same goes for Canada, for Australia, for the United States and any other country with decentralised power.

Early in the Covid-19 crisis I pointed out that the so-called "four-nation approach" was a landmark moment for British governance. Why? Because it recognised that one of those four nations was England. Evel was just a foretaste of things to come. The government of England is now a thing. All we have to do now is figure out how it works.

Regular readers may be rolling their eyes and thinking: "He's going to call for federalism, isn't he?" A rational conclusion. I do think a more federal structure would help make sense of all this, but in truth we can live with some inconsistencies in the British constitution. Neatness is overrated. The UK does not need to work in theory, it needs only to work in practice.

So, is it working in practice? Not really. UK cabinet ministers currently make no distinction between acting in an English capacity and acting in a UK capacity. Sometimes, whisper it, the English interest and the UK interest are not one and the same.

Coming months will test these dynamics further. Dismantling the furlough system will be done to an English timetable. Does Rishi Sunak have the imagination to continue the furlough in Scotland alone if the lockdown here continues for longer than in England? Or would workers be denied both work and pay? We are living through a transformative moment for British governance, as for so much else. The "four-nation" approach, once learned, cannot be unlearned. Will we never again see a Scottish MP representing a Scottish constituency standing victorious on the steps on 10 Downing Street on election night? I suspect this is the case. For now at least. And as someone who voted in 2014 to save the UK, that conclusion saddens me.

It proves that something is awry in the way Britain works. A United Kingdom where some citizens, because of their nationality, are effectively barred from the highest office is not united at all. The message it sends to the ordinary Scot is clear and simple: the British state is not for the likes of you.

I take some encouragement from the fact that attitudes are changing. Yet I wonder if change will be fast enough or convincing enough. I wonder if a majority of Scots can still be persuaded the UK is home.

England's heroes/heroines: Sir Joshua Reynolds **Sir Joshua Reynolds** PRA FRS FRSA (16 July 1723 – 23 February 1792) was an English painter, specialising in portraits. He was possibly one of the major European painters of the 18th century. He promoted the "Grand Style" in painting which depended on



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Self-portrait

idealization of the imperfect. He was a founder and first president of the Royal Academy of Arts, and was knighted by George III in 1769.

Reynolds was born in Plympton, Devon, the third son of the Rev. Samuel Reynolds, master of the Plympton Free Grammar School in the town. His father had been a fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, but did not send any of his sons to the university. One of his sisters was Mary Palmer (1716–1794), seven years his senior, author of *Devonshire Dialogue*, whose fondness for drawing is said to have had much influence on him when a boy. In 1740 she provided £60, half of the premium paid to Thomas Hudson the portrait-painter, for Joshua's pupilage, and nine years later advanced money for his expenses in Italy.

Having shown an early interest in art, Reynolds was apprenticed in 1740 to the fashionable London portrait painter Thomas Hudson, who had a collection of Old Master drawings of which Reynolds made copies. Although apprenticed to Hudson for four years, Reynolds remained with him only until summer 1743. Having left Hudson, Reynolds worked for some time as a portrait-painter in Plymouth Dock (now Devonport). He returned to London before the end of 1744, but following his father's death in late 1745 he shared a house in Plymouth Dock with his sisters.

In 1749, Reynolds met Commodore Augustus Keppel, who invited him to join HMS *Centurion*, of which he had command, on a voyage to the Mediterranean. While with the ship he visited Lisbon, Cadiz, Algiers, and Minorca. From Minorca he travelled to Livorno in Italy, and then to Rome, where he spent two years, studying the Old Masters and acquiring a taste for the "Grand Style". While in Rome he suffered a severe cold, which left him partially deaf, and, as a result, he began to carry a small ear trumpet with which he is often pictured.

Reynolds travelled homeward overland via Florence, Bologna, Venice, and Paris. Following his arrival in England in October 1752, Reynolds spent three months in Devon, before establishing himself in London, where he remained for the rest of his life. He took rooms in St Martin's Lane, before moving to Great Newport Street, his sister Frances acted as his housekeeper. He achieved success rapidly, and was extremely prolific. Lord Edgumbe recommended the Duke of Devonshire and Duke of Grafton to sit for him, and other peers followed, including the Duke of Cumberland, third son of George II, in whose portrait, according to Nicholas Penny "bulk is brilliantly converted into power".

Alongside ambitious full-length portraits, Reynolds painted large numbers of smaller works. In the late 1750s, at the height of the social season, he received five or six sitters a day, each for an hour. By 1761 Reynolds could command a fee of 80 guineas for a full-length portrait; in 1764 he was paid 100 guineas for a portrait of Lord Burghersh.

The clothing of Reynolds' sitters was usually painted by either one of his pupils, his studio assistant Giuseppe Marchi, or the specialist drapery painter Peter Toms. Lay figures were used to model the clothes.

Although not known principally for his landscapes, Reynolds did paint in this genre. He had an excellent vantage from his house, Wick House, on Richmond Hill, and painted the view in about 1780.

Reynolds also was recognized for his portraits of children. He emphasized the innocence and natural grace of children when depicting them. His 1788 portrait, *Age of Innocence*, is his best known character study of a child.

Reynolds was one of the earliest members of the Royal Society of Arts, helped found the Society of Artists of Great Britain, and in 1768 became the first president of the Royal Academy of Arts, a position he was to hold until his death. In 1769, he was knighted by George III, only the second artist to be so honored.

England's history: The **Peace of Breda**, often referred to as the **Treaty of Breda** was signed in the Dutch town of Breda, on 31 July 1667. It consisted of three separate treaties between England and each of its opponents in the Second Anglo-Dutch War: the Dutch Republic, France, and Denmark–Norway. It also included a separate Anglo-Dutch commercial agreement.

Negotiations had been in progress since late 1666, but progressed slowly as both sides tried to improve their positions. This changed after the French invasion of the Spanish Netherlands in late May, which the Dutch viewed as a more serious threat. War weariness in England was increased by the June Medway Raid and the two factors led to a rapid agreement of terms.

Prior to 1667, the Anglo-Dutch relationship was dominated by commercial conflict; the Treaty did not



Contemporary engraving of the signing of the peace at Breda Castle

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end this entirely but tensions markedly decreased and cleared the way for the 1668 Triple Alliance between the Republic, England and Sweden. With the brief anomaly of the 1672 to 1674 Third Anglo-Dutch War, it marked the beginning of an alliance between the two that lasted for the next century.

English culture: The Wenlock Olympian Games, dating from 1850, are a forerunner of the modern Olympic Games. They are organised by the Wenlock Olympian Society (WOS), and are held each year at venues across Shropshire, centred on the little market town of Much Wenlock. One of the two mascots for the 2012 Summer Olympics was named Wenlock in honour of the Wenlock Olympian Games.

On 25 February 1850 the Wenlock Agricultural Reading Society (WARS) resolved to establish a class called The Olympian Class – "for the promotion of the moral, physical and intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Wenlock and especially of the working classes, by the encouragement of outdoor recreation, and by the award of prizes annually at public meetings for skill in athletic exercise and proficiency in intellectual and industrial attainments". The secretary of the class and driving force behind the Olympian Games was Dr William Penny Brookes who was inspired to create these events through his work as a doctor and surgeon in the sprawling borough of Wenlock which consisted of Madeley, Broseley and Much Wenlock. The first meeting was held at Much Wenlock racecourse on 22–23 October 1850.

The first Games were a mixture of athletics and traditional country sports such as quoits, football and cricket. Events also included running, hurdles, football and cycling on penny farthings. Some of the early Games included "fun events" as the blindfolded wheelbarrow race and, one year an 'Old Women's Race' with the prize of a pound of tea.

In 1859 Wenlock Olympian Class sent £10 to Athens as a prize for the best runner in the Long Foot Race at the Zappas Olympics which was held in November that year – open only to Greek-speaking athletes. The Wenlock Prize, the largest prize on offer was won by Petros Velissarios of Smyrna in the Ottoman Empire, one of the first international Olympians.

Following a dispute with WARS, in November 1860, the Wenlock Olympian Class separated from WARS and changed its name to Wenlock Olympian Society. The 1860 Games the following year was a great success and Rifle Shooting was added to the programme.

In 1861 after several years of work by Brookes and his colleagues the Shropshire Olympian Games were introduced. The first National Olympian Games were held in London in 1866 and were organised by the National Olympian Association (NOA) which had been co-founded by Brookes in 1865.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin visited the Wenlock Olympian Society in 1890, which held a special festival in his honour. He was inspired by Dr Brookes and went on to establish the International Olympic Committee. Brookes was named as an honorary delegate at the 1894 Sorbonne Congress at which the IOC was established, although he was unable to attend due to ill health. The Wenlock Olympian Games continued intermittently after his death in 1895, with significant revivals in 1950 and 1977. The current series has been running since 1977, and has received official recognition from the IOC and the British Olympic Association (BOA), exemplified by visits from the Princess Royal for the BOA in 1990 and Juan Antonio Samaranch for the IOC in 1994.



A silver medal from the 1864 Wenlock Olympian Games.

Promotion: English produce: Peas

The **pea** is most commonly the small spherical seed or the seed-pod of the pod fruit *Pisum sativum*. Each pod contains several peas, which can be green or yellow.

P. sativum is an annual plant, with a life cycle of one year. It is a cool-season crop grown in many parts of the world; planting can take place from winter to early summer depending on location. The average pea weighs between 0.1 and 0.36 gram. The immature peas (and in snow peas the tender pod as well) are used as a vegetable, fresh, frozen or canned; varieties of the species typically called field peas are grown to produce dry peas like the split pea shelled from a matured pod. These are the basis of pease porridge and pea soup, staples of medieval cuisine; in Europe, consuming fresh immature green peas was an innovation of Early Modern cuisine.

The wild pea is restricted to the Mediterranean basin and the Near East. The earliest archaeological finds of peas date from the late Neolithic era of current Greece, Syria, Turkey and Jordan. A pea is a most commonly green, occasionally golden yellow, or infrequently purple pod-shaped vegetable, widely grown



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in England. The seeds may be planted as soon as the soil temperature reaches 10 °C (50 °F), with the plants growing best at temperatures of 13 to 18 °C (55 to 64 °F).

In early times, peas were grown mostly for their dry seeds. From plants growing wild in the Mediterranean basin, constant selection since the Neolithic dawn of agriculture improved their yield. In the early 3rd century BC Theophrastus mentions peas among the legumes that are sown late in the winter because of their tenderness. In the first century AD, Columella mentions them in *De re rustica*, when Roman legionaries still gathered wild peas from the sandy soils of Numidia and Judea to supplement their rations. In the Middle Ages, field peas are constantly mentioned, as they were the staple that kept famine at bay. Green "garden" peas, eaten immature and fresh, were an innovative luxury of Early Modern Europe. In England, the distinction between **field peas** and **garden peas** dates from the early 17th century: John Gerard and John Parkinson both mention garden peas. Sugar peas, which the French called *mange-tout* for they were consumed pods and all, were introduced to France from the market gardens of Holland.

Recipe: Easy vegetable stir-fry

Preparation time: less than 30 mins, Cooking time: 10 to 30 mins, Serves 4

Ingredients

4 spring onions, cut into 4cm/1½in lengths
piece fresh root ginger, about 1cm/½in, peeled and grated
1 carrot, cut into matchsticks
100g/3½oz baby sweetcorn, halved
150g/5½oz sugar-snap peas or mangetout, trimmed

2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tbsp hoisin sauce
2 tbsp low-salt soy sauce
1 red pepper, cut into thick matchsticks
1 courgette, cut into thick matchsticks



Method

Heat a wok on a high heat and add the sunflower oil. Add the spring onions, garlic, ginger and stir-fry for 1 minute, then reduce the heat. Take care to not brown the vegetables.

Add the carrot, red pepper and baby sweetcorn and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the courgette and sugar snap peas and stir-fry for a further 3 minutes. Toss the ingredients from the centre to the side of the wok using a wooden spatula. Do not overcrowd the wok and keep the ingredients moving.

Add 1 tablespoon water, hoisin and soy sauce and cook over a high heat for a further 2 minutes or until all the vegetables are cooked but not too soft. Serve with noodles or rice.

Comment, no comment

England could face water shortages within 25 years,

Times 19/3/19: Jemma Crew

The head of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan, warned that the "jaws of death" were approaching, the moment when demand from a growing population would no longer be met as climate change caused water supplies to decline. Speaking before the Water-wise conference in London, he said: "About 25 years from now, where those two lines cross, is known by some as the jaws of death -- the point at which we will not have enough water to supply our needs unless we take action to change things." He added: "We can foresee this moment and there is still time to avoid it. But we need to change our attitudes to wasting water so it becomes as socially unacceptable as throwing your plastic bags into the sea."

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