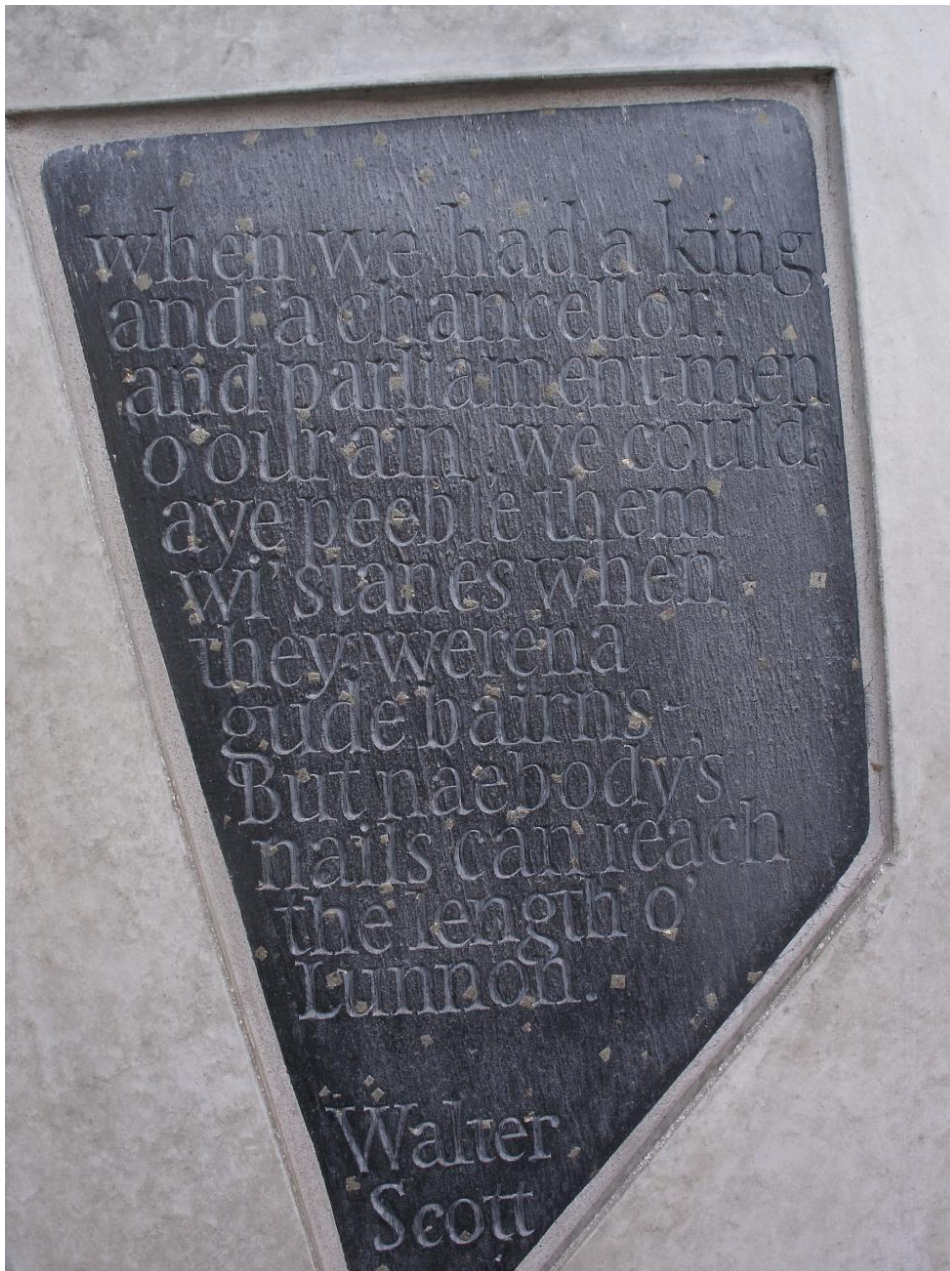




Scots Language Centre

Crack Aboot Politics



Document 13

Political Terms in Scots

Background to Scots as a Political Language

It is self evident that from the Middle Ages until the 18th century the Scots language was a medium for spoken political debate and for written political discussion. The earliest documents in Scots prose dealing with political matters date from the 1380's, and include the terms of a truce and contracts between leading nobles. By the 1390's Scots was also being used to petition parliament and soon after burgh councils were using the language to record the minutes of council meetings. In the 1420's King James I decreed that the acts and laws of parliament should also be translated from Latin into the mother tongue so that the people could not pretend ignorance of the law. Gradually Scots evolved as a political language, drawing from Latin and French, and coining its own terminology, so that it was normal for political debate to take place in the language at the highest levels. This position was weakened after the monarchy removed to England after 1603, but while Scotland remained independent Scots continued as a medium for formal political expression. It was political union with England, in 1707, and the abolition of the Scottish parliament – thus removing politics to London – which most seriously undermined Scots as a language of politics, at least in institutional settings. During the remainder of the 18th century the political elite consciously shifted to speaking and debating in English in order to conform to the new political arrangements in which English culture, language, and identity predominated.

A Kind of Rebirth

Political debate in Scots in a formal or institutional setting had almost vanished by 1800, but the rise of the popular printing press had given the language a new voice by the mid 1800's when regional journalists, and letter writers, contributed hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of articles written in the various regional forms of Scots. Another important new factor was the gradual extension of the voting franchise from 1832 onwards. This meant more and more of the middle and working classes – precisely the people who spoke Scots – were admitted to the political process and they took it for granted that they should debate politics in their mother tongue. This led to something of a rebirth and the language once again developed its range and register as Scots speakers expressed themselves in the tongue they knew best. This continued to be the case until the early 20th century when, through a combination of anti-Scots education programmes, the takeover of Scottish newspapers by outside companies and the rise of the English language broadcast media (1920's), the social and political climate was once more turned against the language. Only as recently as the 1990's, with the reversal of discriminatory policies in education, the re-establishment of the Scottish parliament, and recognition of the language within the EU, has the climate begun to improve for Scots as a language of political expression. Since 1999 oath taking and speech making in Scots have been permitted in the Scottish parliament and a few guides and leaflets have even been produced in Scots from time to time, though, bizarrely, Scots remains excluded from all signage in the parliament and from any language act despite its speakers forming 30% of the Scottish population.

Political Terms

Because of its long history as a medium for political debate Scots has quite a large word stock covering administration, political concepts, and debating terminology. The following list is not intended to be exhaustive but will provide a guide to some of the key terms, related expressions, combined with some general words which may be used in a number of situations, including politics. Included are terms which English, Scots, and other European languages, share from Greek and Latin

Scots Term	Equivalent used in English
Abbreviate (n)	Abstract, abridgement
Absteen (v)	Abstain
Act (n)	Act
Advocate (n)	Barrister
Agin (adj)	Against, in opposition to
Airt (v)	Direct, guide or incite
Airt an pairt (adj)	Implicated in, party to a project or scheme
Airticles (n)	Legislation in preparation or under debate
Anent (prep)	Concerning, regarding
Approve (v)	Vote in favour
Appynt (v); Appyntment (n)	Appoint; Appointment
Assemblie (n),	Assembly
Associe (n)	Association
Astrict (v)	Restrict
Backjaw (n & v)	Retort, abuse
Begeck (v)	Deceive
Bootgait (n)	Evasion, roundabout course
Braidcasting (n); Braidcaster (n)	Broadcasting; Broadcaster
Breetish (adj)	British
Burou, The (n)	Department of employment, labour exchange
Campaign (n)	Campaign
Cawing (n)	Career, vocation
Ceetizen (n)	Citizen
Ceevil richts (n); Ceevil servant (n)	Civil rights; Civil servant
Chakkar (hoose) (n)	Exchequer (department)
Chaumer (n)	Chamber
Comatee (n)	Committee
Comatee o airticles (n)	Steering group
Confeerance (n)	Conference
Conter (v)	Oppose
Controvertit (adj)	Controversial
Cooncil (n)	Council
Coort (n)	Court
Cost cannie (adj)	Cost effective
Debate (n & v)	Debate
Demit (v); Demission (n)	Resign; Resignation
Depairtment (n)	Department
Depute (n)	Deputy, Vice
Diet Buik (n)	Daily record of deliberations
Dint: Steal a dint on	Seize an opportunity against
Dooble (n)	Copy
Dounsitting (n)	Opening session of deliberative body
Elide (v)	Annul
European Union (n)	European Union
Evite (v)	Avoid
Expone (v)	Expound or explain

Fence (v)	Formally open proceedings
Fesh-on (v)	Develop or advance
Field gaithering (n)	Open air meeting
Fisk (n)	Public treasury
Flyte (n & v)	Scold or chide, argumentative debate
Fremmit (adj) <i>see also Ootland & Ootlin</i>	Foreign
Gaithering (n) <i>see also Meeting</i>	Meeting
Gang-roond (n)	Tour
Government (n)	Government
Haiverel (n); Haivers (n)	Person who speaks nonsense; Nonsense
Halyrood (n); Halyroodhoose (n)	Holyrood; Holyrood Palace
Hameart & Hamelt (adj)	Native
Hamepage (n)	Homepage
Hame-rule (n)	Devolution
Hamewith (adj)	Self-interested
Haunling (n)	Business, matters in hand, events going on
Heids (n)	Principal items or points
Homologate (v) <i>see also Touch</i>	Ratify
Iconomus (n)	Financial manager
Ill-gab (n)	Insolent or impudent language
Ill-gabbit (adj)	Insolent or impudent in language
Income an chairges (n)	Revenue and expenditure
Ingiear (n)	Sponsor or lodger of a document or motion
Inrow (v); Inrowment (n)	Register; Registration
Ish (n)	Expiry of term of office
Jouk (v)	Avoid or evade
Kirk an mercat	Publically, at all times
Lang-nebbit (adj)	Polysyllabic, long-winded and obscure
Lawpaper (n)	Legal document
Lend: Tak a lend o	Take advantage of
Lunnon (n)	London
Mairch (n)	Public demonstration
Mercats (n)	Markets
Meenits (n)	Minutes
Meenister (n)	Minister
Meeting (n) <i>see also Gaithering</i>	Meeting
Member (n)	Memmer
Miscaw (v)	Abuse verbally
Misgae (n & v)	Miscarry
Oncost (n)	Additional expenditure
Opeenion poll (n)	Opinion poll
Orison (n)	Very formal set speech
Ootland (adv); Ootlin (adj & n) <i>see Fremmit</i>	Abroad; foreign, foreigner
Oxter: Oxter alang wi	Ally with, work together with
Pairlament (bigging) (n)	Parliament (building)
Pairt-takar (n)	Supporter
Pairties-contrair (n)	Opposition parties
Pairty (n)	Party

Pairty ploy (n)	Political manifesto
Peacify (v)	Pacify
Peuther (v)	Canvass for votes through flattery
Politeecian (n)	Politician
Preses (n)	President, presiding officer
Prestable (adj)	Practicable, enforceable
Propone (v)	Suggest matter for discussion or action
Public-speir (n)	Public inquiry
Referendum (n)	Referendum
Register-hoose (n)	Archive, archival depository
Repose (v); Reposeition (n)	Reinstate; Reinstatement
Scots (adj)	Scottish
Scots Pairlament (n)	Scottish Parliament
Screivings (n); Bit Screive (n)	Writings; Piece of writing
Scroll (n)	Rough draft or draft copy
Secretar (n)	Secretary
Sederunt (n)	List of those attending meeting
Sederunt Buik (n)	Minute book
Sheed (n)	Division or Section
Siller (n)	Money, currency
Skailing (n)	End of meeting or session
Speir (v)	Enquire
Speir-oot (v)	Conduct research
Speirings (n)	Research
Stent (n)	Amount at which a due or tax has been set
Stentar (n)	Assessor who sets rate
Stentit (adj)	Assessed
Steerar (n)	Activist
Stoushie (n)	Commotion, row or uproar
Stravaig the wab	Surf the internet
Swatch: Tak a swatch o	Appraise or scrutinise
Swick (n)	Deception or fraud, a deceiver or fraudster
Tentie (adj); Tentless (adj)	Attentive, prudent; Careless, imprudent
Thole (v)	Endure, tolerate
Threap (n & v)	Argue, contend, argument, contention
Throu-pittin (n)	Harsh cross-examination
Touch (v) <i>see also Homologate</i>	Ratify
Tryst (n)	Appointment
Unco politic (adj)	Politically correct
Unfreen (n)	Adversary, opponent
Uphaud (v)	Support, maintain
Vaik (v); Vaikit (adj)	Fall vacant; Vacant
Vizzy (v)	Examine or scrutinise
Voice: In ae voice	Unanimously
Vote (v), Votin, Votit	Vote, Voting, Voted
Wab (n); Wabsteid(n); Wabmaister (n)	World wide web; website; webmaster
Ware (v)	Lay out or spend