i. What is the Scottish Question?

ii. Can it ever be answered conclusively?

iii. Key issues in today’s debate
SQ = four overlapping sets of issues/questions
‘It’s the right to negotiate that counts’

‘I’m relaxed about DVLAs – we decide on what is appropriate.’

‘The idea is that we’ll create all the important institutions but we will share some services.’

‘I’d have no problems with DVLA or such like bodies being run from outside Scotland – whether that’s in England, Wales or the EU, even the world for that matter. It depends on the issue and where it was best done. We live in an interdependent world – technical interdependence is not going to disappear. I can connect anywhere in the world in an instant as long as it isn’t blocked.’

‘It’s a pragmatic decision. But DVLA? Who cares? [Laughs] It wouldn’t bother me.’

‘Quite relaxed [on defence]. I’d be interested in a debate on that. A European Defence Force would be interesting. I’m not sure what Britain’s interests would be what I’d retain. The FM would mention the monarchy of course – I’m not sure about that. There are so many British institutions – the Post Office? Basically, it would be a pragmatic approach. If we engaged on a contractual basis, I would have no problem with that. I wouldn’t want to be boxed into a relationship that we couldn’t get out of – I’d oppose anything that proved difficult to get out of.’

‘I’d be happy with the Swansea DVLA. Joint working, sharing services is fine. Look at swine flu at the moment – of course we need to have joint working – it’s not about whether we have joint working – no dispute on that – so long as Scotland is involved and there is accountability.’

‘I agree with Kenny MacAskill that if we can pay for the DVLA to provide a good service then we should do so. That’s fine. Why set up a bureaucracy when we don’t need one? There’s a level of interdependency. The idea is that we’ll create all the important institutions but we will share some services. Businesses do this all the time – outsourcing – why can’t countries?’

‘Not sure about DVLA – it wouldn’t be one I’d see as sharing but we’d need an equivalent to NATO in the British Isles – a kind of British Atlantic Treaty Organisation – with the rest of the UK.’
‘Call it what you will. I call it independence. I support a confederal Europe and perhaps there will be a confederal arrangement within the British isles. There will be special partnership for sure.’
'Gladstone spent his declining years trying to guess the answer to the Irish Question; unfortunately, whenever he was getting warm, the Irish secretly changed the Question.'

W.C. Sellar and R.J. Yeatman (1930), 1066 and All That, Methuen and Co Ltd.