

News story: Scottish Secretary visits Islay to remember WW1 losses

Mr Mundell was there to remember the island's contribution to World War One and the loss of two British troop ships carrying American soldiers to fight alongside the Allies.

The sinking of SS TUSCANIA (5 February 1918) and HMS OTRANTO (6 October 1918) off the island's coast, saw around 700 US servicemen and British crew members lose their lives. Over 200 Islay and Jura men died during World War One.

Mr Mundell joined descendants, locals and dignitaries including HRH The Princess Royal, Scottish Government Minister Fiona Hyslop, and United States Ambassador to the UK, Robert Wood Johnson at the service.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

It is right and fitting that, one hundred years on, we reflect on the terrible loss of these two vessels, with such enormous loss of life, off the coast of Islay.

Many thousands of American and British servicemen lost their lives protecting Europe against fascism, and they have our enormous gratitude. That loss was felt keenly on Islay, where every family in every village lost brothers, fathers and sons in the conflict. We must never forget their service and their sacrifice.

The war service of the people of Islay was never more apparent than on those two days in 1918, when the islanders made huge efforts to help survivors – saving lives and looking after those men like their own.

We all have a duty to tell the stories of those who lived and fought in WW1, to keep the memories of them and their sacrifice alive. It has been particularly moving to hear the personal stories of both American and Scottish descendants of service personnel, and those involved in the rescue effort. I am very honoured to be able to pay tribute to Islay, its people and its history at this service at Port Ellen.

[News story: Lord Duncan visits historic RRS Discovery](#)

Lord Duncan was welcomed aboard by Dundee Heritage Trust Executive Director, Paul Jennings, and enjoyed an informal tour of the newly-redeveloped [Discovery Point](#).

The award-winning visitor attraction celebrates its 25th Anniversary this summer, and with the neighbouring V&A opening in September, Discovery Point is ready to play its part in welcoming visitors from across the globe.

A recent £500,000 investment, supported by the Coastal Communities Fund, Dundee City Council and the Friends of Dundee Heritage Trust, has dramatically enhanced the five-star attraction in anticipation of the surge of visitors to Dundee's waterfront.

The Coastal Communities Fund is a UK-wide programme created and funded by the UK Government which aims to encourage the economic development of UK coastal communities by awarding funding to create sustainable economic growth and jobs.

Lord Duncan was given the opportunity to visit the redeveloped galleries, which include fresh graphics, new audio-visual shows, hands-on digital interactives and a dedicated multi-purpose learning and activity space, as well as displays of previously unseen objects from the museum's nationally significant polar collection.

Lord Duncan said:

Dundee is undergoing a renaissance, and every time I visit, I am reminded of the vibrancy and innovation of the city. The waterfront regeneration has given a new lease of life to the area and is a destination for visitors and locals alike. Partially funded with over £250,000 of UK Government money through the Coastal Communities Fund, it aims to bring more people to the area and I have been very impressed with progress and development of new galleries at Discovery Point, that are a key part of this transformation.

Dundee Heritage Trust Executive Director, Paul Jennings, said:

We're delighted to welcome Lord Duncan to Discovery Point. As a key partner in the VisitDundee campaign, we want to ensure that the hundreds of thousands of tourists who are set to visit the new V&A are encouraged to explore everything else that Dundee has to offer.

With the redevelopment of our exhibition spaces and a packed 25th Anniversary programme for 2018, Discovery Point is ready to make the most of this exciting year for Dundee's tourism.

The Wall Street Journal recently named Dundee as one of the top 5 locations in the world alongside the likes of Madagascar and Shanghai, The Observer named it a must-see destination for 2018, while leading US business magazine Bloomberg ranking the UNESCO City of Design next to Los Angeles, Singapore and Florence in their roundup of the 22 best places to visit this year.

[Speech: Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster speech to CBI Scotland](#)

Thank you Paul for that kind introduction – and thank you everyone for that very generous welcome.

Before I start, and on behalf of everyone here, can I pay tribute to Paul, your tenure with the CBI, and for everything you have done on behalf of the thousands of businesses across the UK.

Leading this organisation through two general elections and a referendum on our membership of the European Union would be a tall ask for anyone, but you have kept the CBI at the forefront of our national debate – and it is fair to say you have kept the UK Government permanently on our toes.

And so for that I thank you, and wish you all the success in the future.

It is a pleasure to be with you today, and to have the great privilege of addressing CBI Scotland. And it is also a pleasure to be back here in Edinburgh.

Whenever I visit this great city, I am constantly reminded of the weight of history that is all around us.

Edinburgh isn't simply a thriving, modern capital within our United Kingdom.

It is the cradle of so much that our country, and indeed Europe, can celebrate in terms of philosophy, literature, architecture, poetry and political thought.

It is the birthplace of the Scottish Enlightenment, a period in our history when pragmatism, reason and freedom of thought rose to the fore.

And so it is the proud home of many of our finest intellectual figures, such as Adam Smith, whose statue stands proudly just a few streets away from here, and whose legacy continues to remind us of that virtue of choice that is so

integral to our economic way of life and wellbeing.

That is what I want to touch on very briefly with you this lunchtime: the importance of making choices – not just in the economic sense, but in the political sphere too.

The choice to leave the EU

Because politics is ultimately about having preferences and making choices.

Left or right; conservative or socialist; liberal or protectionist; Unionist or Nationalist; I guess Hearts or Hibs; even Celtic or Rangers – it is the virtue of having different choices which makes democracy something we must always cherish and respect.

I am sure there are many of you here who voted to Remain in the European Union nearly two years ago. As many of you will know, I also fought hard for such an outcome.

But on June 23rd 2016, the British people made a clear choice to leave the European Union and forge a new and different path for ourselves in the world.

Now it is incumbent all of us, both individuals and governments, not just to accept that choice as democrats – and not merely to understand why the British people made that choice – but to minimise the risks and seize the opportunities that this choice presents.

Now there will be those here in this room who, for perfectly understandable reasons, have concerns about the challenges we face – and want nothing more than certainty and clarity as negotiations proceed.

But you should be in no doubt of the resolve of the UK Government to respond to those concerns and deliver a Brexit that prioritises certainty and clarity for businesses and consumers in all four parts of our union.

Update on negotiations

And as negotiations proceed, that is precisely what we are doing.

We have already agreed a fair deal on citizens' rights, ensuring that EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals can get on with their lives broadly as they are now.

We've agreed a good financial settlement for British taxpayers, made in the spirit of our future partnership with the EU.

We've agreed a Joint Declaration with the EU that makes clear our mutual determination to preserve the Common Travel Area, avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and uphold the totality of relationships embodied in the Belfast Agreement, both East-West and North-South.

And we've reached agreement with the EU on an implementation period, providing that certainty and clarity for people and businesses so they will only see one change when we enter into a new relationship with the EU in the future.

So while these are real achievements we have made in the interests of businesses and individuals across our country, we must now look to build our future economic partnership with the European Union.

In her speech at Mansion House in March this year, the Prime Minister set out her aim for a deep and comprehensive partnership in which:

- trade between the UK and the EU would be as frictionless as possible
- UK regulatory standards remain at least as high as the EU's
- and in which there is no hard border on the island of Ireland

She also made clear that one important objective in building that partnership would be to seek a new customs arrangement with the European Union.

At Lancaster House in 2017, the Prime Minister said that we will be leaving the EU's customs union, its Common Commercial Policy, and the Common External Tariff.

But she also said that we do want to have a customs agreement with the EU. As she said, we have an open mind on how: it is not the means that matter, but the ends.

And that is why last year, we set out two potential options for what this new customs arrangement might be.

Option one was a customs partnership between the UK and the EU, in which the UK would mirror the EU's requirements for imports from the rest of the world, applying the same tariffs and the same rules of origin as the EU for those goods arriving in the UK and intended for the EU.

The other option was a highly streamlined customs arrangement, in which we would jointly agree to implement a range of measures to minimise frictions to trade.

This would include waivers for goods moving between the UK and the EU, "trusted trader" schemes, specific exemptions for small businesses, and online systems – such as for customs declarations to be made far from the border, as is already the case with VAT declarations when VAT regimes between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are different.

But whatever option we are discussing, our objectives remain the same:

- for trade at the UK-EU border to be as frictionless as possible
- with no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland
- and for us to conduct our own trade policy and sign free trade agreements that will benefit businesses and consumers here in Scotland, as well as those in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland too

And I am pleased to say that, despite what you may have read, this work is now nearing completion.

So as negotiations continue, these are choices that will have the best interests of Scottish businesses and consumers at their heart, and the need to provide clarity and certainty as soon as possible for you all.

Importance of the UK common market

Because this is a long road that has many different twists and turns, as we together journey out of the European Union.

But as negotiations continue on that future deep and special partnership we all want to see, we must not forget the need for certainty and clarity here at home as well.

It is why the UK has a responsibility, through our modern industrial strategy, to improve living standards, spread prosperity and promote growth around all parts of our country, and ensure we are match fit for the next wave of technological change that is fast approaching.

For example, our Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund is providing £795 million for potential innovators, and we are working to ensure as many Scottish bidders as possible are successful.

And we are investing in new City Deals – which have been committed to or agreed for all seven of Scotland’s cities – as well as a Borderlands Growth Deal to help secure prosperity in southern Scotland. We have also opened formal negotiations for the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

But it is also why the UK has a deep-seated responsibility to maintain the integrity of our union.

When I spoke in North Wales earlier this year about the value of our union, I emphasised the importance the UK Government places on preserving the common market of the United Kingdom – what many of you may refer to as the “internal market” or the “UK single market” that comprises Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I also emphasised why it is so crucial that our businesses and consumers face no new internal barriers to conducting their business on the day of our exit in March next year.

For it is only by maintaining the coherence of that common market – and keeping barriers to trade within it to an absolute minimum – that businesses and consumers in all parts of our union can continue to benefit.

Preserving that common market is exactly what the EU Withdrawal Bill, currently making its way through Parliament, will do.

It will make sure that, as we carry out the delicate process of transferring European Union law back onto the UK statute book, we do so as smoothly as possible...

The current regulatory and legal framework will remain in place, but on a UK rather than an EU legal footing.

If and when we wish to move away in future from the current rules, we can do so in a considered and deliberate fashion, taking account of consultation with business.

So it will make sure that when we leave the European Union in March next year, we do so in a way that avoids a damaging cliff-edge for businesses, firms; factories, industries and consumers alike – so that businesses have certainty from day one of our exit.

And on devolution, the Bill will make sure that, as this process is carried out, we retain the ability to keep common and temporary UK frameworks where necessary, while we work on the long term solution – such as one set of package labelling and hygiene rules, instead of four different ones.

The Bill respects the devolution settlement – but stops short of giving any part of the UK a veto over that temporary mechanism.

This has always been a red line for us.

For if one part of the UK has a veto over the ability to establish a common framework across the rest of the UK, it could be used to undermine this common market we all, everyone in this room, prospers from.

And the message we have from business is that the UK common market is vital to their growth and prosperity.

For Scottish businesses trade four times as much with the rest of the UK as they do with the EU.

And as businessmen and women you want to be sure that your factories in Paisley and farms in Perthshire will be able to continue selling their goods freely to customers in Preston and Swansea and Londonderry.

And not only will the temporary preservation of common frameworks guarantee certainty for businesses trading within the United Kingdom – it will mean that, with a clear set of commonly-recognised standards, we can agree those new trade deals with the global growth markets of tomorrow as well.

Indeed, when I visited China just last month, I saw first-hand how hard our

network of embassies around the world work to promote both UK and Scottish exports, such as the finest Scotch Whisky, of which 61 per cent of exports go to countries outside the EU.

I even had the pleasure of seeing the First Minister during my visit to China, who was also using the network of UK embassies to promote Scottish goods overseas.

And just this morning I was visiting Diageo here in Edinburgh hearing about the breadth of ambition the industry has to reach new and emerging markets and build on the strength of the internationally renowned quality of Scottish food and drink.

And during my last visit to Scotland in January, I also visited a Marine Harvest factory in Rosyth, specialising in salmon sales and learned that not only do they sell to every part of the UK, but export the fish heads to China and the skins to Thailand, where they are made into crisps.

That is why having a successful domestic market and competitive global markets are complementary to one another, and why the UK Government is committed to delivering directly for Scottish businesses and consumers.

Put simply, respecting and preserving the United Kingdom common market is to uphold one of the fundamental expressions of the constitutional integrity that underpins our existence as a union.

But put even more simply, any attempt to undermine that common market would represent a self-inflicted blow to the thousands of firms who owe their prosperity to its success.

Clause 11 negotiations

Now I am well aware from the conversations I have had with Scottish and Welsh businesses that what they care about is what all this means for business – and whether it provides the certainty they need.

That is why all of us – Westminster, Cardiff and Holyrood – have worked hard to identify only those absolutely essential areas where we agree that UK-wide frameworks are needed.

And of course it is worth underlining that we already have UK-wide frameworks in all these areas right now.

Our approach as we leave the EU however, is to see the vast majority of powers returning from Brussels bypass Westminster entirely.

Indeed, we have moved a considerable distance in the spirit of compromise and collaboration so as to ensure we reach a deal with the Scottish and Welsh Governments that not merely respects the devolution settlements and improves upon them, but also upholds the Sewel Convention and provides the certainty that businesses require.

That is why I was pleased that the Welsh Government, in this spirit of pragmatism, recently agreed to our approach, and to recommend the Welsh Assembly give legislative consent to the Withdrawal Bill.

As the Welsh CBI, the Federation of Small Business in Wales, and the Farmers Union of Wales have all made clear, this deal is very good not only for the Welsh economy and its people, but for the whole of the UK too.

And as the First Minister for Wales himself said this week: “the nature of an agreement is that you come to ground that you believe to be common ground”.

I am glad that thanks to the joint work of the three governments there is now far more common ground between all.

The door is still open

But it is also why it is disappointing that the Scottish Government still does not feel able to sign up to our proposals and deliver that certainty for businesses.

Of course, it is now for the Scottish Parliament to decide what view it wants to take on the compromise we have reached, and that we have now agreed with the Welsh Government.

So that is why I say to the Scottish Government – and to the Scottish Parliament – the door is still open.

At a stroke, they can join the Welsh Government – who have also put so much into getting us to this stage – and recommend to the Parliament here in Holyrood that we should end any lingering question of legal uncertainty for businesses in all parts of the UK.

Indeed, just a couple of weeks ago, the Food and Drink Federation Scotland, Scottish Bakers, and the Scottish Retail Consortium all emphasised the importance of the UK common market.

How it benefits Scotland’s businesses enormously by lowering costs and increasing efficiency and how it also benefits Scotland’s consumers by providing more choice and keeping prices down.

And as the Scottish Government themselves have agreed, it makes sense for there to be frameworks applying across the UK in some areas.

But no matter what the Scottish Government decides, I want to reiterate that the UK Government is committed to acting in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement that – even now at this late stage – is open to the Scottish Government to sign up to.

Scottish businesses can see this in black and white: our Intergovernmental Agreement is public for all to see.

You can have that certainty and clarity that we will work to agree the approach needed to protect our vital common market, and that we will respect

– in full – the devolution settlements as we do so.

Conclusion

So as we all face choices, the Scottish Government also faces a choice.

But I am confident that, if we work together, we can and will forge a path that fully respects the democratic choice the United Kingdom made two years ago while maximising clarity and certainty wherever we can for our families and businesses not just here in Scotland, but across our whole country.

For our union is strongest when each of its constituent parts is strong and working together.

As I have said before, the unity that exists between our four nations gives us a scale of ambition that none of us could possess alone.

But this ambition can only be realised if we do work together, and make those choices that are truly in the national interest.

For together, we are a union that is greater than the sum of its parts.

A country that can remain a strong, global leader.

A United Kingdom at home.

And an active, force for good in the world.

Thank you very much.

[Press release: Sentence increase for man who subjected child victim to years of sexual abuse](#)

A man who repeatedly sexually assaulted a young girl over a period of years has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it for being too low.

Usmaan Ahmad, now 35, repeatedly sexually assaulted his victim over a period of 8 years, while she was between the ages of 3 and 11. Ahmad was between the ages of 14 and 21 at the time. The effect of these crimes has been lasting and severe, causing ongoing psychological struggles.

Ahmad was originally sentenced to 4 years and 6 months imprisonment at Sheffield Crown Court. Today, after the Solicitor General's reference, the

Court of Appeal increased his sentence to 8 years and 6 months in prison.

Commenting on the sentence increase, the Solicitor General said:

I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has agreed that Ahmad's sentence should have been higher. He subjected a vulnerable child to consistent and repeated sexual abuse which has had a lasting impact. I hope this decision can bring some comfort to the victim.

[Press release: Coal Authority calls for full consideration of legacy issues](#)

The Coal Authority has today called for local authority planners, surveyors, developers and geotechnical and engineering consultants to ensure coal mining legacy issues are considered in light of their findings from a recent subsidence event in north-east England.

The government body, which manages the effects of past coal mining across Britain, said it had issued the information to share its early recommendations.

Initial ground investigations were undertaken at a housing development in North Tyneside by the Coal Authority in July 2016, after it was contacted by the National House Building Council in relation to an extensive area of subsidence. It has since carried out further extensive ground investigations, including underground camera and laser void surveys, to identify the root cause of the subsidence, and installed 300 survey points above and below the ground to monitor for ground and property movement.

The Coal Authority's ground investigations revealed coal mine workings at a depth in excess of 30 metres. These dated back around 120 years and had not been recorded on the historical mining plans held for the former colliery for this specific area.

The ground investigations proved this specific area had been extensively worked with extraction rates at over 70%, however the plans had showed an area of solid coal. Recorded workings adjacent to this area had typical extraction rates of between 45% and 50%.

This high level of extraction resulted in narrow residual supporting coal pillars and wide extraction rooms in the High Main coal seam, leading to compression on the remaining coal pillars and roof instability. This, together with a fractured sandstone layer above the coal seam, resulted in an

underground collapse and subsequent movement at the surface that affected 35 properties on an estate and had an elliptical subsidence zone footprint of around 150 metres x 70 metres.

Coal Authority engineers designed a solution to stabilise the ground, and work to drill and grout the voids has been completed. Ground monitoring will continue to ensure the ground is stable for redevelopment.



Simon Reed, Chief Operating Officer, Coal Authority, said:

“We have released our initial recommendations to ensure there is awareness of the risks posed by historical coal mining legacy, in light of our findings from this recent subsidence event.

“In this instance, given the depth and age of the workings, and knowledge about risks of subsidence at the time, we cannot criticise the developer’s approach taken with respect to these mining circumstances, but we must now build on this new knowledge to address these risks better moving forward.

“This was an area of unrecorded mine workings and caution must be adopted in assuming that the absence of a record means the absence of mining. Although our historic plans did not, in this case, reveal the coal workings they are a vital part of any site assessment prior to development, therefore in future we may ask for more information, or for more works to take place, to reduce the likelihood of a similar subsidence event happening again.”

The Coal Authority expects to release further information in the form of a Technical Guidance Note later this year, after works are completed and

following a period of monitoring.

Information issued by the Coal Authority

Historic mining plans are invaluable but don't always give a true representation of the coal workings underground, meaning:

- areas mined may vary from those shown on historical plans
- extraction rates may vary from those shown on historical plans
- plans held in historical records may not be the final abandonment plan for the seams and the mine
- not all historical coal workings are recorded

Both desk-based research and ground investigations should be undertaken to confirm the:

- potential for unrecorded shallow workings
- accuracy of the shallow coal old working plans
- competence of the strata overlying the coal
- potential effects of groundwater, including assessment of recovering levels post mining which are still taking place today

The 10 times rock cover guidance outlined in CIRIA SP32* is only 'a rule of thumb':

- in this case, the coal was at a depth that exceeded the 10 times rock cover
- appropriate ground investigations should always be undertaken to confirm site specific conditions and local geology also needs to be considered

*Special Publication 32

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