

The Archbishop of York is right about England, wrong about the remedy

It has taken the Anglican Church long soaked in the views of the international elite an age to discover the cause of England. Despite carrying our country's name in its own the C of E has regularly adopted fashionable global and EU tropes that are unwelcome to many in a doughty independent island country with global reach and ambition.

The Archbishop is by inference attacking the Lambeth Palace and Brussels oriented views of recent Archbishops of Canterbury by remembering his own Northern roots. He then reveals he too lacks understanding of how Englishmen and women feel by recommending we get another dose of regional devolution within England. So like the EU elite he wants to break up and balkanise England whilst leaving Scottish and Welsh devolution whole at the country level. The whole point about the English case is we wish to have for England some of the same devolved rights that Scotland enjoys.

I proposed to David Cameron that we gave England EVEN, English votes for English needs, in the Commons. Instead of setting up a costly new English Parliament with extra MPs and a new building, why not let UK MPs elected to Westminster carry the dual mandate and meet as a Grand Committee at Westminster for any legislation or budgetary review matters that would mirror those powers devolved to Scotland or Wales. Mr Cameron on advice from Mr Hague watered that down to an English veto on English laws, with no right to initiate an English proposal for English MPs. Now Mr Gove has removed even that.

Meanwhile we need a BBC that gives equal billing to England as to Scotland. Why is there no BBC England? We need an anthem for English teams that we know and want to sing, and a better and more sympathetic presentation of English history, literature and culture by English and UK institutions.