

The Kingdom of Great Britain

On 1 May 1707, the Kingdom of Great Britain came into being through the Treaty of Union which bonded the Kingdoms of England and Scotland after a long history of enmity.

- The Kingdom was symbolized by its new flag that combines the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George .
- Both of England and Scotland kept their distinct legal systems and court.
- Scotland accepted the Hanoverian succession to the throne.
- Both the English and Scottish parliaments were abolished, but the new parliament of Great Britain sat at Westminster and followed English procedures. The Scots were given 45 seats in the Commons and 16 in the Lords compared while the English had 513 seats in the Commons and 196 in the Lords.
- Scotland was to pay a fortieth of the British tax burden.
- Britain was to be a common free trade area using English sterling and English weights and measures.
- Scotland gained access on equal terms to English ports in Britain and in the colonies.
- The Equivalent: As Scotland has become part of the British tax system, it was obliged to share with England the burden of its huge national debt. Thus, several temporary tax concessions on essential items were imposed (salt and malt). To ease the Scots, the English Exchequer agreed to pay a sum of compensation to Scotland known as the **Equivalent**.
- The Company of Scotland was obliged to stop trading, but shareholders were compensated for their losses in the **Darien Scheme** (The company of Scotland was founded in 1695 to encourage trade in Africa and the Indies. The Scots planned a trading post on the Darien peninsula in Panama to control the exchange of goods at the narrowest point of the Americas. The Scheme, however, failed).
- The Scottish Privy Council was abolished in late 1707 while a new Treason Act for Scotland was enacted in 1709 (based on English law).
- The Tory administration in London offered freedom of worship to Episcopalians and enforced a public holiday at Christmas. These acts angered the Scottish Presbyterians.

- By 1713, key sections of Scottish society-nobles, merchants, churchmen, lawyers- were unhappy with the Union. A bill to repeal the Union was brought in and defeated by only four votes in the Lords.