

16th November 2020

Scotland

“O flower of Scotland, when will we see your likes again.”

Roy Williamson, Flower of Scotland

This past week, I watched a football match on TV – Scotland *versus* Serbia in a play-off final as the final step towards the delayed Euros next summer. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, appropriate social-distancing with my daughter, son-in-law and grandsons had been arranged, which consisted of all of *them* in their kitchen-diner and *me* sitting in a garden-chair outside, complete with thick coat, Scotland scarf and “Tartan Army” hat, watching the game through the open door.

Scotland won in a penalty-shootout, *cue* me leaping about like a mad thing up and down the garden steps, and the rest of the family dancing wildly round the kitchen. We had done it! We’d won! We’d qualified with the senior men’s team for our first major tournament in twenty-two years. We’d completed our longest run of games without defeat in forty-four years. Now, note the pronoun here. It wasn’t “they” who’d won the game. Not “they”, not “them”, not “that team”. But *we* had done it and come out on top! This was *our* victory – me, my daughter, son-in-law, grandsons, hundreds of thousands of Scots, *and* a few guys kicking a ball into a football net in Belgrade, of course – but not *they* – no chance!

The song *Flower of Scotland*, sung before this match and other sporting events in which Scotland is represented, was written in the 1960s by the late Roy Williamson of the folk group *The Corries*. It’s Scotland’s unofficial National Anthem. In July 2006, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted an online poll in which voters could choose a national anthem from one of five candidates. 10,000 people took part, and *Flower of Scotland* emerged as the winner with 41% of the votes. There will be many reasons for this. But for me, it’s because of one word – “we”. “When will *we* see your likes again”, we sing. *We* ... together, proud Scots.

When one of us saved a penalty to ensure we’d won against Serbia, we were *all* victorious, and the Flower of Scotland blossomed and looked wonderfully beautiful again in the greyness of our world.

A prayer for today

Lord, if there’s no “I” in team, remind me that there can be no “me” or “them” in the oneness of our togetherness as your people. Amen

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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