

= The National (Scotland) =

The National is a Scottish daily newspaper owned by Newsquest that began publication on 24 November 2014 , and the first daily newspaper in Scotland to support Scottish independence . Launched as a response to calls from Newsquest 's readership for a pro @-@ independence paper in the wake of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum , it is a sister paper of The Herald and the Sunday Herald , and is edited by Callum Baird . Initially published on weekdays , a Saturday edition was added in May 2015 . The National is printed in tabloid format , and is also available via online subscription .

Details of its launch were announced on 21 November , with further information given at a Scottish National Party (SNP) rally the following day . It was launched on a five @-@ day trial basis against the backdrop of a general decline in newspaper sales , with an initial print @-@ run of 60 @,@ 000 copies for its first edition , but this was increased the following day as a result of public demand , and Newsquest decided to print it on a permanent basis after healthy sales continued throughout the first week . By January 2015 , daily sales had fallen to below 20 @,@ 000 . The first front page carried a story about charities urging devolution of powers over welfare legislation to Scotland .

Reception to the newspaper 's launch was mixed in both media and political circles . Libby Brooks of The Guardian praised the depth of its news coverage , but suggested announcing its launch at an SNP event could prove " auspicious " , while the Labour peer George Foulkes branded it " McPravda " . However , the Scottish journalist and broadcaster Lesley Riddoch was more positive , feeling its launch could be a " sound business move " by its publishers . Upon its launch , The National stated that it is a separate entity from the SNP .

= = Background = =

The National describes itself as " the newspaper that supports an independent Scotland " , and has a masthead depicting a map of Scotland . Details of the newspaper were revealed on 21 November 2014 after The Guardian obtained a copy of a letter being circulated to retailers by Newsquest announcing its forthcoming publication . A sister paper of The Herald and the Sunday Herald , The National would be the first daily newspaper in Scotland to support Scottish independence , and was being piloted in response to a request from Herald readers for a pro @-@ independence newspaper . During the 2014 independence referendum , the Sunday Herald had been the only newspaper to support the " Yes " campaign , and saw an increase in its circulation ? with sales rising by 60 % in the week preceding the referendum and 111 % in the week afterwards . Richard Walker , editor of the Sunday Herald , was announced as the new paper 's editor . On 22 November , Walker told a gathering of Scottish National Party (SNP) supporters assembled at Glasgow 's SSE Hydro that The National 's publishers would trial the newspaper for five days , but that it would become a permanent addition to the market if there was demand for it . Copies would cost 50p , while an online version would also be available via subscription .

The paper was launched with an initial print @-@ run of 60 @,@ 000 , and was edited by a skeleton staff during the trial run , with plans to employ more journalists if it became a permanent publication . Initial contributors included Sunday Herald journalists Jamie Maxwell and Peter Geoghegan , as well as freelance reporter Sarah Cooper . During the initial week of publication , Walker spoke of his belief that The National would continue beyond the trial period , but said the decision was in the hands of its publishers . Following healthy sales in the first few days , Newsquest executives decided on 27 November to continue printing the newspaper , and to allocate it additional resources . On the same day , Neil Mackay , The National 's news editor , confirmed that the paper would be published on a permanent basis . Publication then continued on weekdays until the introduction of a Saturday edition in May 2015 .

On 27 November 2014 , Alex Salmond , the former First Minister of Scotland , publicly endorsed The National when he took a copy of it on stage to accept The Spectator 's award for Politician of the Year . On 27 January 2015 , Newsquest area manager Tim Blott announced that the newspaper 's website would be relaunched in February , while Callum Baird would be appointed as assistant

editor . The first Saturday edition of The National was published on 9 May to provide coverage of the results of the 2015 UK general election . Walker subsequently described the response as " very strong " and said that the newspaper would continue to be printed on a Saturday for " as long as there ? s a public demand for it . " In September 2015 Walker announced his resignation from Newsquest , and consequently the Sunday Herald and The National , but he agreed to continue with The National as a consulting editor . He was succeeded as editor by Callum Baird . As Scotland prepared to welcome its first batch of refugees from the Syrian Civil War an edition of the newspaper published on 17 November 2015 carried the headline " Welcome to Scotland " . The Independent reported that an image of the front page was subsequently shared multiple times among users of social media .

= = Launch = =

Launched as a 32 @-@ page newspaper , and printed in tabloid format , The National was first published on Monday 24 November 2014 , and according to its editor received an " amazing response " from readers , with its print @-@ run for the following day 's edition increased to 100 @,@ 000 . The Press Gazette reported that 80 @,@ 000 copies were produced on the third day , while 12 @,@ 000 online digital subscriptions had been registered at a price of £ 1 @.@ 50 per week . Other sources , including The Guardian , and subsequently The National itself , put the online subscription figure at 11 @,@ 000 . On 27 November , The Guardian reported that of the 100 @,@ 000 copies printed on 25 November , unofficial sales figures indicated that only 50 @,@ 000 had been sold , and that daily sales were stabilising at around the 50 @,@ 000 mark . Sales figures for the first Friday edition , published on 28 November , were reported as 40 @,@ 000 by The Guardian , with an average daily sale for the first week of 44 @,@ 000 copies . On 3 December , The Guardian reported that unofficial industry sales figures indicated 36 @,@ 000 copies were sold for the Monday edition of the second week . On 27 January 2015 , The Guardian reported that daily sales had fallen to below 20 @,@ 000 ? a figure consisting of around 15 @,@ 000 print sales , with a further 2 @,@ 500 to 3 @,@ 000 digital subscriptions .

On 27 November 2014 , Newsquest announced plans for the Friday edition , published the following day , to be expanded to 40 pages to accommodate news coverage of the Smith Commission 's report into increased devolution for Scotland , which was published on 27 November , and due to a large demand for space from advertisers . The 28 November edition also included an editorial thanking readers for backing the new publication . Speaking to The Guardian shortly after its launch , Walker said that the initial print run had been set as 30 @,@ 000 , but a last @-@ minute decision was taken to double it , something he described as " in hindsight , a good decision " . The National 's launch and success came at a time of general decline in the print media industry , where news providers were cutting staff and resources due to a downturn in newspaper sales . Douglas Beattie of the New Statesman and Alex Massie of The Spectator reported that copies of the first edition , which sold out , were being auctioned on eBay for at least £ 10 . The Financial Times reported that pro @-@ independence campaigners used social media to help potential readers locate available copies of the paper when the first edition had sold out in many areas .

However , the launch was not without its problems when three major supermarkets did not stock copies . On launch day , Sainsbury 's said that its tills had not been updated in time to enable them to sell the paper , but that it would begin doing so from the following day , while Tesco and Morrisons planned to monitor sales before deciding whether or not to stock it . Morrisons also said that it did not have the space to sell the newspaper without doing so at the expense of local titles . On 27 November , The Guardian reported that the distribution issues had been resolved , while STV News suggested the distribution problems were responsible for the fewer number of printed copies in the latter part of the launch week . Stewart Kirkpatrick , the former digital chief of Yes Scotland noted that The National had no digital presence at the time of its launch , something that prompted him to observe " We 're in the age of ' digital first ' not ' digital when we get round to it ' . "

The first edition of The National carried the headline " Give Scotland the powers to cut child poverty " , an article in which charities urged the Smith Commission to devolve welfare powers to the

Scottish Parliament . The newspaper also included a mixture of national and international stories , with Libby Brooks of The Guardian noting the international coverage was " [stronger] than one is used to from a Scottish title [with] stories from Tunisia and Gaza as well as a profile of [Iranian President] Hassan Rouhani " . There was also sport and business coverage , but the BBC 's Jamie McIvor wrote of the first edition that " stories related to independence , Scottish politics and issues which featured in the referendum campaign characterise the news pages " . The newspaper 's opening edition also set out its mission statement :

The status quo is no longer an option and there is an unquenchable desire for greater devolution . Quite simply , the Scottish people want to be more directly and deeply involved in the decisions that affect them and the generations to come . It is with this uppermost in mind that today we launch The National , a daily newspaper that will fly a vibrant flag for independence and the right for Scots to govern themselves .

= = Reception = =

Despite having details of its launch announced at an SNP political event , the newspaper has stated that it is politically independent of that party . Its inaugural editorial says that being a mouthpiece for the party " would not be a healthy course to follow . We will be critical where appropriate and complimentary when merited . " But in The Guardian , Brooks suggested that launching The National at an SNP political rally " might not have been the most auspicious of starts " for the newspaper , while Labour peer George Foulkes quickly dubbed it " McPravda " , a reference to the political newspaper associated with the Communist Party of Russia . Damian Thompson , an associate editor with The Spectator , described the launch event as " creepy " . McIvor wrote that the calibre of its stablemates together with a respected editor had ensured The National was being taken seriously in political and media circles , but that the onus was on it to prove its credibility as a publication that supports independence rather than being viewed as " a propaganda organ , a cynical business exercise or the old media equivalent of some pro @-@ independence websites " . Alan Roden , political editor of the Scottish Daily Mail , claimed it had " rehashed SNP press releases " and was too expensive for its size .

Writing for The Guardian , the journalist and broadcaster Lesley Riddoch took a different view , suggesting that the launch of a pro @-@ independence newspaper in a country where 45 % of the population had recently voted for independence " may be a large but calculated risk and a very sound business move " , and that " Perhaps the novelty and sheer boldness of the National newspaper will match the national mood " . Kirkpatrick , although critical of its online shortfalls , was positive about the paper 's content , describing it as " a lively mix of briefs and longer pieces " . Douglas Beattie of the New Statesman said The National " has a clear raison d'être and will be welcomed by a large number of the 1 @. @ 6 million Scots who voted Yes " . Stephen Daisley of STV News wrote that it was " both frustratingly light [and] stodgily worthy " , but drew favourable comparisons with the Scottish Standard , a weekly pro @-@ independence paper launched in 2005 that ceased publication after just seven issues , suggesting The National would succeed because it had more financial backing , and as there was a latent demand for a news sheet supporting independence . Writing in The Guardian , the journalist and author Peter Preston said there were " many good things to say about the National " including its editor , who was leading a newspaper that " helps to reflect public opinion better " .