

**SUMMARY OF OPINION POLLS 1986/87**

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Following the established pattern of this Appendix, the invaluable monthly series of polls on voting intention carried out by System Three (Scotland), and commissioned by the *Glasgow Herald*, is reproduced in graphic form for the year June 1986/June 1987. However, given that June 1987 was the month of the General Election, the six-monthly trend between the 1983 and 1987 election is also reproduced, courtesy of System Three. For comparison the MORI polls carried out for *The Scotsman* are reproduced in bar chart form. All these figures should be self-explanatory.

One of the most interesting aspects of polling in 1987 concerned their effect (if any) on voting behaviour. Attention was focussed on opinion polls in three marginal seats, carried out by System Three on behalf of Scottish Television and the *Herald*.

Table 1 below gives the figures for the three constituencies, with the preceding and ensuing General Election results for comparison.

**TABLE 1**

**Constituency Polls %**

	a) Edinburgh South		General Election 1987	Change 1983-87	
	General Election 1983	27 May 1987		Local	National
Con	37	27	34	-3	-4
Lab	29	38	38	+9	+7
Lib/SDP	29	24	23	-6	-6
SNP	5	10	5	0	+2
Green/Ecol	1	1	1	0	0

	b) Stirling		General Election 1987	Change 1983-87	
	General Election 1983	31 May 1987		Local	National
Con	40	29	38	-2	-4
Lab	28	39	37	+9	+7
Lib/SDP	24	18	15	-6	-6
SNP	8	13	11	+3	+2

**c) Strathkelvin & Bearsden**  
**General Election 1983**      **5 June 1987**      **General Election 1987**

Con	37	31	33	-4	-4
Lab	26	37	38	+12	+7
Lib/SDP	29	24	21	-8	-6
SNP	9	9	7	-2	+2

One of the talking points of the Election campaign concerned the "Doomsday Scenario", i.e. what happens if Scotland were to return a substantial majority of non-Conservative (particularly Labour) MPs while the position in England, and therefore the UK as a whole, was reversed. (This outcome was of course correctly anticipated by those suggesting the Doomsday Scenario.) Two opinion polls carried out by System Three (one for *Radical Scotland*, one for STV/Channel 4) produced virtually identical results: only one Scot in three was prepared to accept that the Tories in such a situation had a mandate to govern Scotland. Both polls indicated, through different wording, substantial support (a majority of those expressing a view) for the attempt to have a Scottish Assembly set up.

On the preferred constitutional options for Scotland, the poll carried out for Scottish Television/Channel 4 found 26% in favour of "a completely independent Scotland", 54% for a devolved Assembly "with substantial powers" and 19% for the status quo. In the past, against similar expressions of preference had usually to be offset the low saliency of the issue of constitutional change. In 1987 however the importance attached to this issue increased. In the poll just cited those who saw the issue as important outnumbered those who saw it as unimportant by 5:2 (and, into the bargain, those prepared to pay higher taxes to a Scottish Assembly outnumbered the contrary view by 55:45). A further survey by System Three for BBC Scotland found that the setting up of a Scottish Assembly came sixth out of 14 issues in terms of importance; and - perhaps unsurprisingly - 56% thought the Scottish National Party the best party to support in order to achieve an Assembly (although in the Election the SNP received only 14% of the total vote).

**Technical note**

As usual, percentages have been rounded; "don't knows", "won't votes" and refusals have been ignored; and where dates are given they refer to the completion of fieldwork rather than publication.

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