

## **“Prince MacGorrdon and the Magick Cabinet”.**

### **A transcript of the pantomime now in its closing days at the Nation’s Play House in Westminster.**

The story thus far: After many years of rule in the islands of Ultima Thule, situated off the western coast of Europe, the Dark Lady Konservathatch and her hosts were defeated at the Battle of the Shires by General Antonius Blah, KCMG, Northern Irish Cross, Afghan Star, Grand Order of Baghdad, etc. etc. The General ruled for ten years with declining popularity and then, fed up, he resigned and appointed his best friend Prince MacGorrdon and his courtiers to bring peace and improvement to the lives of the Ultima Thulians. Act Two saw them getting to grips with government matters. (see previous issue). Act Three leads to the inevitable Finale and opens as the Prince and his Courtiers hold a Cabinet Meeting.

#### **Act Three.**

A room in Westminster. Present are the Prince, Ballsy, Harriet (now a Minister), Qyrne and Think-tank. In front of Harriet is a small card reading ‘Home Affairs’, in front of Qyrne, ‘Chancellor’, in front of Think-tank, ‘Polls’.

The Prince: Furst things furst. I would like you all to welcome our new Chancellor, Liam Qyrne.

Harriet: What happened to Starling, then?

The Prince: Retired. Wanted more family life. Weel. What’s furst on the wee agenda?

Ballsy: Item number one, Prince, is the re-branding of the country.

The Prince: Re-branding?

Ballsy: Yes. Re-branding. The country needs a new name. Ultima Thule doesn’t mean anything. Sounds a bit odd. I’ve asked our PR agency to come up with a few ideas.

He rings a small bell and in walk two PR people.

PR man: Hi! I’m Damien and this is our designer, Roddy.

Designer: Hi there, people!

Ballsy: Yes. Let’s get on with it.

The PR man ostentatiously produces a batch of large white cards.

PR man: Right. I think we're all agreed that Ultima Thule is a bit off. No raysong dettruh. What we've tried to do is to give the suggested new name some kind of rashunarl. Like it should mean something - or at least suggest something. Positive, of course.

Designer: And coowull.

The Prince: What's that?

Designer: Like relevant.

The Prince: Ah. Good.

PR man holds up the cards and reads out what is written on them, while Ballsy gives a running commentary.

PR man: Fifeania!

Ballsy: In honour of yourself of course, Prince.

The Prince: I don't like self-aggrandisement. Ye know that.

Ballsy: Of course, Prince.

PR man: Exemplaria!

Ballsy: Demonstrates the country's world-class position.

The Prince: Too declamatory.

PR man: Atlantia!

Ballsy: Shows our independence from Europe.

The Prince: Aye. And points too much the other way. Ye would think these ideas were dreamed up for my predecessor, General Blah.

PR man: Empirium!

Ballsy: Shows respect for the country's glorious past.

The Prince: Och, Ballsy! I thought we were all agreed that change is the watchword

for the country's future.

PR man: Angpisceltea!

Harriet: Yer what?

Ballsy: It's a sort of anagram of the tribes who make up our nation.

Harriet: 'Oo are they, then?

Ballsy: I'll tell you later.

Harriet: The sooner the better. I am the Minister for 'Ome Affairs, mate.

The Prince: Too difficult to pronounce.

PR man: Well. That's it, I'm afraid. But we'll brain-storm some more!

Harriet: Wot a lot of cobblers! Looks like you've already 'ad a brain-storm, mate.

The Prince: Can we no' think of something ourselves?

Silence for a few minutes.

Think-tank: What about using a sort of heroic name that people half know but can't exactly define? Might work well in the Polls.

Ballsy: Like what?

Think-tank: Well. I was thinking of Britannicus.

Harriet: 'Oo?

Think-tank: Britannicus. I'm not exacty sure, but I think he was the Roman who founded our country back in the whenever. I was thinking of the name 'Britannicum' for the country.

The Prince: It has a certain ring to it. 'Britannicum'. Not a bad name at all. Ballsy?

Ballsy: 'Britannicum'. H'm. Do you like it, Prince.

The Prince: Aye. I think I do.

Ballsy: Then let's test it. Think-tank. Set up a rapid Poll on this, OK?

Think-tank exits, followed by crestfallen PR people.

Ballsy: With respect, Prince, there is another rebranding exercise we should address.

The Prince: What's that, then?

Ballsy: Well, Prince. Um.

The Prince: Get on wi' it, man!

Ballsy: I'm not sure that 'Prince' is the right name for the leader of a democracy. For today's world. And tomorrow's.

The Prince: Och. Dinna fret thissen aboot that. I don't care much for it as a name or title either. What are you recommending as an alternative?

Ballsy: Well. We're all Ministers so it's got to be something that clearly shows you are the supremo.

The Prince: Och! I don't like thet at all!

Ballsy: Eh?

The Prince: Supremo.

Ballsy: No, no. I didn't mean that. I was thinking along the lines of 'First Minister'.

Harriet: That's no good. All the uvver ministers would start fighting for the place of second minister. So they could go on them big world trips leaders have to make. You know, fancy banquets, reviewing the troops, signing economic agreements. getting luxury gifts 'n stuff.

Ballsy: You may have a point.

Harriet: May I then? A point, eh! I'd rather 'ave a pint! Haw haw!

The Prince: How about 'Prime Minister'?

Silence.

Ballsy: Brilliant, Prince! Or should I call you 'Prime Minister'?

The Prince: Och. 'Prime' will do.

Harriet: Where's Milliprat?

Ballsy: In Outer Mongolia.

Harriet: Eh?

Ballsy: He's trying to track down some lost CDs with confidential information about our spy rings on them. You do realise, Prime, that he may not come back.

The Prince: H'm I always thought he was a bit too friendly with the dwarf Sarkozym, anyway. And a tad ambitious. Well, we'll see.

Think-tank: I hear Starling is making a fortune from his book.

The Prince: What book?

Think-tank: It's called 'Stealth Taxes - the Modern Way to Enlarge Government Funds'. An international best-seller apparently. May even get the Nobel prize.

The Prince: Bluidy Hell! Bluidy nerve! I'm the one who invented stealth taxes! Not that little Sassenach! I'll bluidy sue him for plagiarism!

Ballsy: Yes. Quite. One can well understand your indignation, Prime. However. There is something else which needs our attention. Len Livingbone.

The Prince: Who he?

Ballsy: Mayor of London.

The Prince: Eh? I thought we were in charge.

Ballsy: Not of London, Prime.

The Prince: But we govern the country from here! In London. Presumably he's just some jumped-up City type with a chain around his dinner jacket.

Ballsy: Far from it. He runs London. With full plenary powers and budget control. And his budget is - and you may be surprised at this - £11 billion. Which he gets to spend based solely, I repeat solely, on his decision.

The Prince: What? But he doesn't run us here. In Westminster!

Ballsy: True, Prime. We're a sort of enclave. A bit like the Vatican in Rome.

The Prince: It's unacceptable!

Ballsy: Even more so, when you think that London represents 30% of the country's wealth!

The Prince: 30%? 30%? Are ye telling me that we only run 70% of the country?

Harriet: Until I become a Minister, I couldn't drive me Lambo 'ere wivart paying summat. Some tax or uvver.

The Prince: He sets his own taxes?

Ballsy: Absolutely, Prime.

The Prince: He'll have to go. We're in charge here.

Ballsy: He's democratically elected, Prime.

The Prince: What? I can't believe all this. I thought I had everything under control!

Qyrne: May I make a suggestion, Prince, er, Prime?

The Prince: Aye, ye may.

Qyrne: I'll set some of my press attaches on to it. See what dirt they can dig up on him. If he's got £11 billion pounds to spend, it's a racing certainty that some of it may not have been correctly handled.

The Prince: Do it! Make sure we can get him out!

Qyrne: Yes, Prime Minister. May I raise another issue? A rather delicate one. While Think-tank is out of the room.

The Prince: Not more hassle? I'll be going back to biting my nails after this meeting. What is it now?

Qyrne: I've been going over the accounts since you made me Chancellor and I've discovered something worrying.

The Prince: If it's anything to do with a lack of party funds, we can raise taxes or borrow from Abie. So let's not worry about that.

Qyrne: No, it's nothing like that. This is to do with Think-tank. It seems he's had

his hand in the till.

Cries of horror all round.

Qyrne: There's a very large discrepancy between his out-goings and what he draws from government funds.

Harriet: Employing his in-laws as political researchers, is he? Nuffink new in that.

Qyrne: No. These are very large sums. Which he has transferred to a Swiss bank account.

More cries of horror all round.

Qyrne: As you know, he employs many market research companies to do his Polls. Well, there are large differences between their bills and what he draws down to pay them. Those differences disappear to Switzerland. I have ascertained the funds go to an account in his name.

Enter Think-tank. Silence around the table.

Think-tank: Great news! 'Britannicus' - has a 79% approval rating! Fantastic!

Silence.

Think-tank: But that's a great result!

The Prince: Think-tank. Sit doon. I have a wee question for ye. Why are you salting away government funds - taxpayers' money - in an account in Switzerland in your name?

Think-tank's jaw drops.

The Prince: Well?

Think-tank: Oh, my God.

The Prince: Well?

Think-tank: To be honest, prince, it's for my retirement. That's all. You see, a junior minister like me doesn't make as much as you others and the pension. Well, it's peanuts, really. And I couldn't see this job lasting much longer because I'm sure you'll out-source it before long. And then where would I be? Out on my ear. With not much to show for it. I'm not a politician like you all are. I couldn't just bounce back. I'm really sorry. I really am. I'll

pay it back! All of it!

Enter a worried-looking lackey carrying a piece of paper which he hands to Harriet.

Harriet: This had better be important. Bloody 'ell. That's bleedin' torn it!

The Prince: Och, this is really turning out to be a bad day. Torn what, for Heaven's sake?

Harriet: You're not gonna like this, Prince.

The Prince: Just get on wi' it, will ye?

Harriet: It says here that Stave and Klegg are gonna join forces! That they're gonna put their two parties togevvver. And call for an immediate general election. Accusing us of malcompetence, wotever that is. Like next week! And an independent poll says the larsy little creeps are gonna win. Easy!

Cries of horror all round.

Harriet: That's it for us, then, innit?

Qyrne: Think-tank, old chap. Exactly how did you divert those funds to Switzerland?