

Scottish Independence Referendum – the last push

There was no rest for the referendum-weary.

Last night Yes campaigners gathered on Lauriston Place for a final lap of canvassing and leafletting. Down the street, a day-long Yes gathering at the entrance to the Meadows was swelling into the hundreds, cultivating a mood that might be called celebratory if it wasn't a day too early.

The canvassers, however, weren't resting on any laurels. With machine-like precision, clipboards of names and addresses were hauled from the back of a megaphone-equipped van and handed out to the several dozen volunteers. A TV camera poked its nose into the crowd. Without delay, the campaigners dispersed.



For anyone who hasn't witnessed it in action, the very act of canvassing—regardless of what platform you're pushing—requires a unique blend of diligence, energy and patience. (Physical stamina should probably be added to the list; there are usually countless stairs involved.) If you go in the day, people might be at work. If you go in the early evening, like last night, dinner is usually being cooked, and, despite the shuffling heard from inside the apartment, no one will come to the door. Every once in a while, a resident will insist on not being registered, while a confirmation from the electoral register is pinned on the bulletin board right behind their head. Door-knocking isn't for the faint of heart.

Even though Edinburgh seems inundated with Yes paraphernalia, even one round of heading out with campaigners proves that the city is still very much up for grabs. Voters leaning toward No aren't as vocal about their—if we can use the term—support. And, heading into the referendum, undecided voters are still mulling their options. Last night, one student was visibly flustered when asked which way she was leaning—she fanned her face with two hands, as if swatting at gnats, trying to clear

her head and explain her outlook.



The canvassing rounds ended as the sun went down. Campaigners headed toward the Meadows just as the crowd began to march. To say the procession was large doesn't quite capture the mood or the effect. It was gargantuan, and literally stopped traffic. The screeching of pipes, guitars, kazoos and harmonicas accompanied the whoops and hurrahs of the marchers (along with, unfortunately, a few choruses of "Shame on you!" directed at No voters). Candles were lit, making it seem like the happiest vigil you've ever attended. Flags, of course, were prominent and swaying, but also diverse: saltires were flanked by Palestinian, Quebecois and Catalanian banners, among others whose allegiance I couldn't gather.



Today, as the vote got underway, a more serious—if not still excitable—mood has enveloped the city. The fanfare has subsided a bit, and the weight of the outcome rests heavy. Edinburgh, like the rest of Scotland, is holding its breath. If you're going to keep up with the results tonight, tune into our Edinburgh Reporter live blog—we'll be at the count bringing you each and every announcement, right into the wee hours of the morning.