

Some of the Edge reactions to the vote on 23rd June

- Prompted by the result of the referendum and the petition calling for a second referendum. Some of the emails have been reordered to show specific responses. **All contributions are made in a personal capacity**

Richard S (24/06/2016 at 16.43)

The Referendum Act didn't make provision for anything beyond holding the referendum, what the questions should be, and how the referendum was to be conducted. There's nothing legally binding about the result. Having said that, the Government and Parliament couldn't easily ignore it after enacting it. It does, though, mean that there will be lots of politicking around when the UK serves notice on the EU (Cameron originally said immediately but now says it will be for his successor to decide, while the Brexiteers have taken positions from immediately until not until after the 2017 French and German elections); what Parliament (where the majority of MPs are against Brexit) will accept as the terms of departure; and how exactly the logistics of negotiation will be handled by both sides. As you can see, it's all much clearer after the vote

Paul J

Maybe we should play the Scottish Card. ie the SNP reserved the right to call for a second independence referendum if there were "material changes" in circumstances..... What might constitute such "material changes" in the UK case after the Brexit vote? A collapse of the UK economy? Implosion/fission of the EU? Boris as the next PM? Not exactly things to hope for... Oh dear. In the run up to the Scottish Independence Referendum I thought of moving from Edinburgh to Yorkshire. Now what? A xenophobic England and Wales outside the EU is no longer quite so attractive.... The die was cast when Brexit played the immigration card.

Richard L

You're quite right to point out the potential dissolution of the UK. What PM would want to preside over that? An argument could be made that 2 of the 4 nations voted to Remain, so there may be discretion in how Parliament or a government responds. Ironic really that a Conservative / Unionist government might preside over the break-up of the UK.

If Boris were to become PM, he might say that Brexit is not feasible. He's already rowing back furiously on the claims made by the Leave campaign. I don't think for a minute that he actually believed in Brexit himself, it was just an opportunistic move for his career. So if in power, he would not necessarily follow through. But of course, the leadership of the Tories has yet to be determined so that is a "big if".

Richard S

It's well worth reading Timothy Garton Ash's Guardian piece – long but incisive:

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/commentisfree/2016/jun/24/lifelong-english-european-the-biggest-defeat-of-my-political-life-timothy-garton-ash-brexit>

In spite of feeling deeply bereaved for the European Britain that was central to my identity, I have doubts about the petition. Firstly, there's the constitutional, democratic point. The people voted Cameron in on the promise of a referendum once he'd negotiated a deal with the EU states. He was either incompetent or unrealistic (or both) and didn't get the deal he promised; but he had been elected to deliver a referendum, so, to be fair to him, he did. The referendum was conducted according to the law passed by the elected majority in Parliament. One can criticise the franchise, the simple majority system in the referendum vote, and the Conservative (and, formerly, Unionist) Party for settling their internal feuds by conserving nothing and destroying our union with Europe and the unity of the United Kingdom; but, in a democracy, you get what the majority vote for, and that's what we've got. We can't really unravel the process just because we hate the result and fear its consequences for our nation.

Secondly, the Leave vote seems, on early analysis, to have been driven in substantial part by large anti-establishment, anti-'expert' sectors of the population that feel damaged by globalisation, austerity and the wealth gap (and who have had their resentment and envy stoked by media barons and demagogues), and so

used the referendum as a stick with which to beat us (relatively) wealthy, establishment, expert (and, often, London) elites. They made no secret of what they were voting for and were explicit about their suspicions – insisting on making their mark in pen, for example, because they thought we would rub out pencil crosses and change Leave to Remain. That’s how paranoid the media, the Farages, and the internet have made them. Plus there’s the real issue of people struggling to earn a crust on zero hours contracts and the like. There’s an interesting quote in The Times from a woman in Collyhurst, a stone’s throw from Crumpsall in inner city Manchester where I was born. She said ‘If you have money, you vote Remain. If you don’t have money, you vote Leave’. I don’t think re-running the referendum is going to fix the fundamental divides in our society, especially. The danger is that it might lead to something much worse on the streets. The areas of inner Manchester where I started out (the other one being Whalley Range) were fertile sources of rioters last time we had riots. Having gained a victory over ‘them’, the victors won’t be slow in coming out to attack what they perceive to be the elites if we deny them the spoils of victory.

By the way, I see that as the experts’ predictions start to come true, the mantra from Brexit is now that the experts are making them come true to prove themselves right. Timothy Garton Ash’s point about education really strikes home when you hear that.

Sebastian

I tend to agree with Richard here, but would go a bit further. We have a democracy, its given us a shock but it’s still a democracy and we have to move on. We must now look ahead, see the positives and grab the now wide open debate of what sort of Brexit we want by the scruff of the neck or let others (who we might be horrified by) do so. The positives I see are:

- We have had a slow but steady disengagement in the democratic process for some time by a large section of society. Because it ‘doesn’t matter’ because ‘it doesn’t make any difference’ etc. Post the referendum I think there are many many people who regret either not voting or doing a protest vote. They won’t make that mistake again. They hopefully will be more engaged.
- Europe will have to reform to prevent disintegration. If they are an organisation worth their salt, they will realise this isn’t just because of mad xenophobic brits, and reform. We may reach a point where we have done them a favour...
- We have to have a debate about what 'out' means (Farage vision or Boris for example). If done well, I think this might actually ostracise Farage on the right of the debate as I think many more 'intelligent' brexiteers are scared. I think this is best done in a general election, which I suspect we will now need so we can elect MP’s on a mandate around the relationship we want with Europe and the world (70% of them are pro Europe remember).
- People will now know they've been lied to and this time it really mattered. I hope we will demand greater honesty from our politicians.
- The headline today in the FT was ‘Roar of rage from leave voters alienated by London and globalisation’. We will now listen to the rest of the country more and their hopes and fears, and not just get lost in what matters to us in the cities.

Although I am deeply worried about how the rest of the world now sees us, I would also hope the rest of the world might see that we are fundamentally democratic (unlike others who might act differently when they don’t like the result of something). This will be good for democracy worldwide.

It would be great if we could somehow be seen to be proactive in this. I am not yet sure how.

Oliver

Here’s Paul Mason’s piece on Brexit

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/25/britain-rainy-fascist-island-progrexit-brexit>

and a message from ‘the younger generation’:

It's difficult not to feel frustrated this morning. It's tempting to rail against baby boomers, against UKIPpers, against any part of England outside of the M25 - to decry the perceived selfishness, claim they just don't get it, accuse people of voting against their own best interests. To do so, though, would be to miss the point. At its core, this vote didn't occur because people were misled, or racist, but because they were given a chance to express their disillusionment - to gamble everything on a protest against Brussels, the government, the whole establishment - and decided they had nothing to lose.

The challenge now is to work out how to answer those concerns; to restore that hope. If people think immigration is to blame for their economic woes, and that's not the case, we need to do something positive to counter that perception. People have been saying for years that London, Cambridge and other cities are growing apart from the rest of the UK; pulling away economically, out of touch with the rest of a stagnating country. Instead of working out how to prevent this chasm from opening, the response from cities has been a huge collective shrug. We need to work out how to heal that divide; how to spread that wealth.

This might sound hyperbolic, but I see what happened last night as nothing less than an urgent intellectual call to arms for our generation. Britain, once any bits which are going to drop off it have dropped off it, is going to need more than trade deals and a redesigned flag. We're going to need new institutions, new proposals, fresh ideas. We are going to need to make a renewed case for the rights of refugees, for the environment, for financial regulation. Most of all, we're going to need to do this in a way which addresses the causes of the disillusionment over Britain's current course which we heard so forcefully expressed on the 23rd.

The one thing which everyone has been agreeing on this morning is that we really don't know what happens next. If we resign ourselves to disaster, to an era of increasingly right wing navel-gazing, that's what we'll get. For better or worse, the gauntlet of what it means to be British has been thrown down. Farage can't be allowed to be the only person to pick it up. If you have a cause you feel strongly about, now's the time to join it. If you are worried about people losing rights you hold dear, now's the time to fight for them.

Jane W

I agree with Oliver. I liked Jeanette Winterson's article today - we really do need a new party of the left: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/we-need-to-build-a-new-left-labour-means-nothing-jeanette-winterson>

I was also sent the good link about the impact of Brexit on Human Rights by Matt Evans:

<http://thejusticegap.com/2016/06/brexit-means-human-rights/?shared=email&msg=fail>

Chris J

(The petition calling for a second referendum is...) now 1,229,601.

Paul J

Not so much a case of Brexit, but more a case of FUKit...

Guy

I am hurting more than I can say, I feel betrayed by our politicians and absolutely furious at the lies that have led us here

But where to turn- I look to Conservatives and all I see are little englanders and the self-interested; I look to Labour and feel nothing but deep disappointment- they are lost and no longer represent me or my ideals; LibDems are destroyed and alone without leader.

And, for the first time in my life, no one is there representing me or my future; no wonder I feel like I am grieving.

So time to do something. Time to take a stand, Time for a new party, Time for a new voice on Europe - Yes, it is time to say enough is enough - time to take back control from these fools before it is too late

Richard S

While attempts to overturn or modify the outcome of the referendum continue, I have been turning my thoughts to what manifesto for the built environment The Edge might present to a new Prime Minister and Cabinet who will (assuming that Brexit proceeds) be faced with:

- A shortage of policy-making and negotiating resources and skills;
- A Herculean labour to disentangle the UK from the EU
- Possibly a second ditto to disentangle Scotland from the UK, combined, presumably, with having to campaign against Scottish independence (I have left Northern Ireland out of the equation but there is, of course, the prospect of a return to armed struggle if one or both communities there feel sufficiently disenfranchised again);
- A tricky path through Parliament for the outcome of negotiations
- A massive legislative programme for any or all of the above for years to come;
- 48% of the population who may not want them to succeed;
- The need to deliver something to Brexit voters to convince them that disentanglement from Brussels will mean less bureaucracy, as guaranteed by Leave, in the face of probably having to keep a lot of EU legislation and regulation on the books for a long time because of the scale of the task of Brexit.

Given the way that governments generally put the built environment low down the agenda, these factors create a significant risk, I think, that it will be a neglected area. Initially, of course, we remain in the EU and subject to its regulations, so we have a breathing space of as yet unknown duration. Then a demolition and rebuilding programme of unknown dimensions and duration will begin. Exactly what would go from law and regulation is, presumably, going to be based on what will catch the eye of voters and the media, what the billionaire backers of Brexit demand, and what will be easiest and quickest to do. It is difficult to predict where the built environment will come in this process.

My point is that, while most of us probably feel pretty sore, we are almost certainly going to have to live with Brexit. As professionals we should, I suggest, not just sit back and let things we don't think are wise be done to the built environment. Nor should we let it be neglected as a policy issue. Taking a position of opposition is what my heart tells me to do. My head says that perhaps we should, instead, develop some ideas on what advantages we might gain from being able to think outside the EU box, what we should conserve from within it, and then build a manifesto that could appeal to a government having to deal with the above. Our built environment (part of the bedrock on which our lives and identity are built) needs to be defended and improved in our out of the EU; the environment will remain an interconnected whole whatever artificial state boundaries are overlaid on it from time to time; and the Edge exists to think about the future and change it for the better.

In this we would have some advantages. We mainly focus on England. Planning legislation currently covers England and Wales separately from Scotland and Northern Ireland. If the latter two GBrexit it won't make much difference to what we want to say about policy. We have a good idea of what the EU does for us because of our pre-referendum debate on the subject. We are naturally inclined to define issues and problems and debate what might be done about them. We are more prepared to think the unthinkable (in a good way) than many groups that I know.

What do I have in mind? One issue I had to deal with when I had a proper job was the removal of gap funding as a regeneration tool. Before the EU got in on the act we had various grants (e.g. Urban Development Grant and its successors), loans and loan guarantees that bridged the gap between profit and loss for private developments in areas experiencing market failure. Then they were declared to be State Aids and outlawed. This happened at the time when I was negotiating the deal to regenerate a big site. The deal fell through because infrastructure costs would have taken the project into deficit and we could no longer bridge that gap. The way we dealt with it was too long and complicated to detail here but it meant that the project was delayed into the recession and the mechanisms used to correct the problem were themselves problematic. If it were possible to ditch the State Aid rules, and resources could be found once again, gap funding could help

new investment in those areas which need regeneration. They also happen to be where many of the disaffected who voted for Brexit presumably live, so they would get something out of it.

I don't doubt that The Edge can come up with a manifesto of this kind and, even if we couldn't, it would take our conversations about Brexit into new and interesting territory and maybe help us to define what we want to argue for.

Adam

Just thinking about the 'Herculean labour to disentangle the UK from the EU' ... it is all going to be in the detail and where will one be able to see the wood for the trees:

- Hole in the legislation

The House of Commons research has estimated that EU-related law makes up at least a sixth of the UK statute book. That excludes 12,295 EU regulations with direct effect — hundreds of thousands of pages of law, on everything from bank and consumer rules to food standards, which cease to apply the moment Britain leaves. [FT 26/2/16]

- Regulations

Renationalise 5,896 full EU regulations and 6,399 technical regulations by ditching them, passing legislation or negotiating a transition. Such regulations currently directly apply to the UK, but are not on the UK statute book.

- Directives

Renationalise EU directives by adjusting or repealing Brussels-inspired law to adjust to new priorities or adapt to Britain's new relations with the EU. At least 15 per cent of the UK statute book is based on 978 EU directives and 656 related technical directives.

- Trade

Renegotiate or reconfigure deals with more than 50 countries. The UK has not independently concluded such an agreement since the 1970s.

Britain on its own would lack the bargaining clout of the world's biggest trade block. Moreover, the EU and America are now deep in negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) that, if successful, will set the standards for a large chunk of future world trade. Trade negotiations are now more about regulations and standards than about tariffs, which gives more sway to big trade blocks than to individual countries. Indeed, the TTIP talks have made European countries outside the EU increasingly fretful. [Economist 17/10/15]

- Air transport

Britain potentially loses rights under 78 EU-negotiated agreements. New landing and airport access rights must be agreed with the EU and scores of international governments.

- Enforcement

National bodies replacing EU agencies need funding, manpower and legal clout to replace EU agencies. This covers competition, trade agreement and protection, farming, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and food safety standards.

Richard S

Adam - A friend who used to negotiate aviation treaties in DfT tells me that each one takes at least six months and we will have to negotiate one for each country with which the EU has current air transport arrangements. The problem is that DfT doesn't have many civil servants left who know how to do this because: a. it's done at EU level these days and, b. the DfT doesn't have all that many civil servants in any field post-austerity. Sir Simon Fraser (ex-Perm. Sec. at the FCO and BIS) said on Today on Saturday morning (0730) that there are now only 20 to a dozen trade negotiators in the civil service because trade negotiations have been done by Brussels. He says we need will hundreds. Sir Andrew Carne (UKTI) said that there would be 10 years' worth of Queen's (and, in due course I suppose, maybe King's) Speeches to replace EU law with UK law, and that governments will have time to do little else.

Sir Bill Cash, arch Eurosceptic and Chair of the Commons Europe Scrutiny Committee then came on. He said that the draft abolition act to take us out of the EU that is being proposed by him and his colleagues would simply write all EU legislation and regulation into UK law, so that it can be dismantled piecemeal over time. This might come as a surprise to some Brexiteers but he was more intent on congratulating the people on overcoming the two front benches than explaining how we actually dismantle the European armature that currently supports much of what we do.

All very well. The question is whether the dismantling is done piecemeal or with a plan; with priorities or randomly; and with policy objectives or as knee-jerk reactions to ferocious fishing and farming interests, climate-change sceptics and the like. My suggestion is that we should at least point out that there should be a strategy, that it should include protecting the environment (including the built environment) and improving it, and that it should be constructed responsibly and then applied rigorously.

Elanor

I'm still struggling to articulate quite how angry and sad and deeply disappointed and betrayed I'm feeling. Thank you Edgers - it's been heartening to read all your responses - the mix of empathy, good sense, and balanced voices of reason.

Particularly welcoming are the exhortations to move on - we're going to need motivation and determinism to focus on where we can make a difference and find some way through this mess.

Dave

First I agree with Elanor In thanking you all. Unity and Edge are words that don't normally go together but as the far right goes ever further right we are all left together - on their left.

Before we get too angry with politicians, of any political colour, could we please look at (the 5 men) who own 80% of UK media, what their politics are, agenda is, and how they spin everything. These are the "unelected elite bureaucrats" hidden, not in Brussels but in the Mini shard - "News UK". Even the name gives the game away. They *manufacture* our news like on the Truman show. They pointed the finger of blame away from themselves at Europe. It might be at greens and climate scientists next. "The global elite want a carbon tax to keep us poor" - so corrupt greedy science 'experts' made up climate change so they can tax us all. Don't laugh. I've had this onslaught.

Brexit HQ is a nest of climate deniers.

Murdoch has a 100% track record of getting the election result he wants. For 30 years or more. He poo poos climate science.

We need a calm (temporary, for now) progressive alliance of red yellow green United to overcome media monopoly power, to bring in PR/AV and to stabilise a government united against the rise of the far right, (aided by News UK media)

Here's just one story illustrating how media spin with scary effect. How Sky and BBC turn on Corbyn.

Convenient for Blairites just before Chilcot inquiry, no?

<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2016/06/news-agenda-set/>

We will be at the mercy of Murdoch and mates until we face this. And them.

Colin

Have been taking all this in from an island off the coast of Croatia with patchy Wi-Fi.

The Croatians we have talked to are completely stunned – simply cannot understand how we have turned our back on something they have struggled so hard to join and is so important to social and economic repair after the tortured history of the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Leave aside all the practical and economic stuff I am heartbroken about what this says about the sort of nation we have become ---- or that the awful core right wing press has encouraged so many of us to think we are.

On the practical side it will be good to carefully record all the promises that the Brexit campaign made – all aimed heading off objections by minimising potential damage ---- and then see which of these we want to campaign hard to make sure they deliver. In areas such as ---

- Direct replacement for Euro grant funding
- Workers' rights
- Environmental commitments

It will be a hard ask as quite a lot are caveated in terms of 'trust us' – but we wouldn't want to do things the same way --- we will protect important things but at the same time free you from ludicrous over-regulation etc. etc.

But hopefully there are some promises in core areas in our sphere of interest we could pull out.

Chris J

I believe in ancient Athens there was a vote held each year to decide who should be sent into exile.

I'm tempted to propose that as an idea for Parliament to consider, starting with the leading pro-Brexit politicians plus Cameron and Corbyn as candidates for expulsion from these islands for say 5 years.

George (personal view)

..... and let them escape from all the hassles and challenges we are all likely to face in the next 5 years? The old medieval stocks in the market square routine is more appropriate; we can make use of all the EU documents that'll be of no use - to throw at them.

Stephen

No, no...not away from these islands, but within these islands...to Hartlepool, Boston, Cornwall etc...all the places they need to understand and have neglected for the last thirty years.

See also his blog <http://stephenhillfutureplanning.blogspot.co.uk>

Jane B

Not able to sleep with the worry of this awful present, thinking and thinking as you all are, to try and make sense of it.

The new political party is seductive but it's not that easy is it?

The problem is in not offering answers, representing or listening to the 'dispossessed'. To listen you have to be, or be with. The street by street reach of say the Labour Party would have to be rebuilt from scratch. I guess the Scots did it by filling the new local branches with the old Labour people and structures. And offering convincing hope; they persuaded the young and brought them to politics.

As a printer and General Secretary with more than 25,000 union members my Father went around the country teaching printers to read and understand politics. They ran residential courses in the 50s, 60s and 70s to teach themselves. They emerged educated, with other TUs set up the Open University and crucially, anchored the Labour Party. It was self-help, not missionary zeal.

The Tories are to blame for dismantling what educational advances we have made and deepening division so disgracefully with the irresponsible referendum. They can't be let off so lightly. But even though Labour is weakened and a toxic brand I think there is still much more there to build again ground up. We can recreate the self-activism at scale. Key is the young and I take hope and will support the student protests. Immigrants are here and part of us already. They are active and progressive, second generations already leading-already setting up challenge funds. (Including outside London). There is only moving forward and challenging the madness as you are doing. So bravo, all power.

Richard L

Given Cameron's resignation and a leadership contest - what does this mean for the Bonfield Review? If it is launched this summer (as intended), will it be kicked into the long grass as a result of the change in leadership? Or will it be launched at all?

Bill

First, thank you too.

Second, exit is not a done deal. The referendum was only advisory and the result appears not to have been a vote against the EU, but the status quo, as was well put by Laurie Penny in the New Statesman:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/06/i-want-my-country-back>

See also below a comment by Tabbs (whoever he or she is), from the Guardian blog (not sure about the link, somebody forwarded it to me):

"With one fell swoop yesterday at 9:15 am, Cameron effectively annulled the referendum result, and simultaneously destroyed the political careers of Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and leading Brexiters who cost him so much anguish, not to mention his premiership.

How? Throughout the campaign, Cameron had repeatedly said that a vote for leave would lead to triggering Article 50 straight away. Whether implicitly or explicitly, the image was clear: he would be giving that notice under Article 50 the morning after a vote to leave.

Whether that was scaremongering or not is a bit moot now but, in the midst of the sentimental nautical references of his speech yesterday, he quietly abandoned that position and handed the responsibility over to his successor.

And as the day wore on, the enormity of that step started to sink in: the markets, Sterling, Scotland, the Irish border, the Gibraltar border, the frontier at Calais, the need to continue compliance with all EU regulations for a free market, re-issuing passports, Brits abroad, EU citizens in Britain, the mountain of legislation to be torn up and rewritten ... the list grew and grew.

The referendum result is not binding. It is advisory. Parliament is not bound to commit itself in that same direction. The Conservative party election that Cameron triggered will now have one question looming over it: will you, if elected as party leader, trigger the notice under Article 50?

Who will want to have the responsibility of all those ramifications and consequences on his/her head and shoulders? Boris Johnson knew this yesterday, when he emerged subdued from his home and was even more

subdued at the press conference. He has been out-maneuvred and check-mated.

If he runs for leadership of the party, and then fails to follow through on triggering Article 50, then he is finished. If he does not run and effectively abandons the field, then he is finished. If he runs, wins and pulls the UK out of the EU, then it will all be over – Scotland will break away, there will be upheaval in Ireland, a recession ... broken trade agreements. Then he is also finished. Boris Johnson knows all of this. When he acts like the dumb blond it is just that: an act.

The Brexit leaders now have a result that they cannot use. For them, leadership of the Tory party has become a poison chalice.

When Boris Johnson said there was no need to trigger Article 50 straight away, what he really meant to say was “never”. When Michael Gove went on and on about “informal negotiations” ... why? why not the formal ones straight away? ... he also meant not triggering the formal departure. They both know what a formal demarche would mean: an irreversible step that neither of them is prepared to take.

All that remains is for someone to have the guts to stand up and say that Brexit is unachievable in reality without an enormous amount of pain and destruction that cannot be borne. And David Cameron has put the onus of making that statement on the heads of the people who led the Brexit campaign.

George (personal view)

In seeing Bill's email this morning I reflect on the Sunday Express article yesterday:

PROTESTERS calling for a rerun of the historic EU in/out referendum who swamped London's streets today and yesterday have already secured a Parliamentary debate

Thousands of demonstrators hit the capital's streets and those of Edinburgh today as part of the f**k Brexit rally, banners with slogans such as "I'm not leaving", "Yes 2 EU", and others saying the older generation had 'stolen our future'.

And THE TIMES:

A poll carried out for The Times at Glastonbury music festival found 78 per cent had voted before setting off, with 83 per cent of those surveyed saying they backed Remain and just 16 per cent supporting Brexit.

With this in mind the OUT voters are robbing our young folk of their future and that should be worth getting vexed about sometime soon!

With the Scots talking about a veto by their Government, the petition at over 3.5m (continuing to approach 1000 signatures per minute) and with Cameron saying his successor should invoke article 50 after he leaves, then maybe there is a chance for common sense to prevail in the next 4 months

Of Course the mess at Westminster makes most things at this time unpredictable, but I can't help but see a lot of sense in Sturgeon's approach to be a positive leader in what is uncharted water to carve out the best deal to she can. So yes it's about good leadership and not simply following an advisory referendum that is based on false statements, misleading opinions, personal political ambitions and from what I saw little concern for the future of our young people.

We are in entirely uncharted waters. Voters didn't just vote for OUT, they also delivered a comprehensive rejection of our entire establishment; I suggest largely without realising what they were doing and given the chance would with hindsight react differently.

Searching for what could happen I see Bill's email and I think a light is beginning to glimmer; for the sake of our young people I hope it starts to glow brightly very soon.

Adam

I am persuaded by the Article 50 stalemate /checkmate argument. The chalice is completely poisoned and it is MAD (as in mutually assured destruction). It is the most encouraging news of the weekend

Caroline

The 52 aren't gonna be happy!

Adam

But I don't think the 48 are going to go quietly into the night either

<https://inews.co.uk/opinion/our-two-party-political-system-is-falling-apart>

Caroline

I should bloody well hope not!!

Dave

My guess is a lot more would vote remain now (even Boris ;-) - if poll was cast again tomorrow. After the tabloids have cynically exposed in gory detail what all the adverse consequences were, info they withheld before.

I don't think many of you 'do' Facebook, but as well as all the nonsense there, there is also some might fine talking thinking imagining and reconciling going on down there! This comment of mine on Saturday for example, demanding a re-row, hope you enjoy.

(Crucially, the suggestion is that if Leave win a second time, in a fair debate, then we of course go ahead and leave. If "the 52% "are confident - why would t they race again. Indeed it was them who pre-empted that there should be a re-row if the result was this close.)

So I am all for democracy. And when a race is won, fairly, it is won. And over.

But everyone involved in the bruising campaign knows and stated at the time that the fight was not fair. On all sorts of levels. Somehow we Brits lost our sense of fair play. Both sides cried foul on a daily basis, but there was no ref - in EUref! So we all got disillusioned, confused, and immune to all of the persistent industrial-scale cheating. Any victory won this way is empty - no true Brit would want to win an unfair race.

If it were a rowing race, there would have been holes drilled in both boats, equipment tampered with, athletes doped with performance enhancing drugs, as well as laxatives laced by the other side. Wind machines behind one crew and buckets on the end of a rope tied behind the other. Coxes bribed to cock up the steering. In short, all rolluxed up. A joke!

Now here's the thing. Imagine a new watchdog with teeth.

Imagine the public being told all of The Rules in advance.

E.g. A tight budget cap for each campaign.

Equal coverage by media channels (it wasn't)

No phone push-polling (illegal but it happened)

And very close scrutiny of all news media to ensure complete absence of intolerance, incitement, and inaccuracy.

The beauty would be that with a fresh start, and zero tolerance, the general public would assist in ensuring that not a single transgression, from honest, decent legal and truthful, occurred by either side. Both sides would police both sides. We would all be united behind a common commitment to fair play.

In fact the whole thing wouldn't end up looking like a debate or a confrontation. The whole thing would look more like an Inquiry - one Mission to find, gather and share the truth the facts and nothing but the truth: the real information the British public need to decide on.

Rupert Murdoch and the other four owners of the UK news media channels would come under particular scrutiny during the entire campaign period.

You know we might even find we enjoy fair decent unbiased accurate news information so much we insist on it ever more.

So there you have it, my proposal for a re-row. I know it will be immensely unpopular with some of you but bear in mind that - if the result to leave really was a fair result - then it will of course be repeated - and we will leave, safe in the knowledge that it really was the will of the British people.

We will have a little more time to reconsider based this time on accurate information and not lies. Those who didn't vote before will get a second chance to be included in democracy.

Andy

There is no chance Boris or Gove will say this. Their only chance is to manoeuvre a fall guy (girl?) into this position and then riding in to pretend to save us. But I do agree with the point

Simon

I am amazed at everyone's ability to go to it on this. I have been too shell-shocked to respond let alone to have any serious thoughts about how to get us out of this mess (admittedly this might have been compounded by the decision of our 20+ year old cat to stage her own (also somewhat messy) exit over the weekend - probably in disgust at the state of the country she found herself in on Friday morning, possibly to avoid the final appointment at the vet this morning).

I can see the temptation to rail and particularly at anybody and everyone who have got us here, but I am also a fervent believer in democracy and am largely prepared to live with democratic decisions, however much I may think them stupid, misconceived, damaging etc. So, I'm with Richard on this too and recognise the need to regroup and make a stab at taking destiny into our own hands rather than using them to cradle our heads in despair.

But I also don't think we should be focusing just (or even very much) on the built environment. My belief is that as professionals (for which also read 'experts' - that much derided species) we should be making common cause with other professions and professionals (as well as with civil society in general) to build a view of where we want to be in, say, ten years' time. Such a coalition is likely to have an internationalist perspective working to put together a plan that deals with global issues but it also needs to deal seriously with the significant social problems that have caused the divisions that the referendum has highlighted.

So lets try and bring people together, but make it an attempt to draw in all those with potential answers over a much broader canvas. This isn't a time to go back to our knitting.

Richard S

It's beginning to look like different levels of response, including:

- Efforts to neutralise/prevent the decision to Brexit that voters surely expect to flow from the democratically expressed wishes of the majority of people who voted in the referendum. This falls into the categories that bereavement and grief counsellors call Denial and Bargaining. As a democrat I have always previously lived with the outcome of votes that I didn't like (including losing CABE and my career) with Anger (those counsellors again) but without feeling that the elected had no right to execute the consequences of their election. The best argument I have heard for (maybe) not accepting the consequences of the vote was from Michael Heseltine on Today this morning. He said that the Brexit deal should be put to a referendum once negotiated. This is consistent with the spirit of the law on changes in our relationship with the EU through major treaty changes. They must be put to a referendum and parliamentary vote. In this case, of course, a Brexiteer could equally argue that a vote to leave trumps all previous legislation; but if it's a good deal, Brexit should still win, so why fear it? I think it could be sold as a sound proposition but it was immediately booted into touch by a senior Brexiteer, who said Hezzer should just keep quiet. As Hezzer is always worth listening to and my only living Tory hero, I disagree. There's also a good letter in The Times today from a QC asking why, when Brexiteers argue for the sovereignty of Parliament, they aren't going to let Parliament have the final say on whether or not Article 50 should be triggered. Meanwhile, everyone from Cameron down has said that there won't be another referendum and the exit door will be opened eventually. Only Parliament could change that, so write to your MP and support Hezzer's position if you think it's rational.

- New political parties or realignments of existing parties – interesting to read colleagues’ views. Inevitable, to some extent at least (see Labour’s regrettable implosion); but surely way above our pay grade when it comes to action under the Edge’s banner.
- Tactics around the post-referendum settlement – I agree that it would be within our pay grade to try to get the professions together to help chart a course; but I also think that the poor old environment (including the built environment) always come so far down the list after immigration, the NHS etc., while having so much importance in people’s lives, that the Edge should stick to its last and start to focus on what next. Maybe we could organise a series of debates on these matters?
- Conspiracy theories – e.g. Boris pulled the whole stunt to become PM. Once he is in No. 10 he will delay Article 50, go to Brussels to negotiate informally, pull a rabbit out of his hat and Boris’s your uncle. Denial, I’m afraid. He could have been just as persuasive for Remain, he knew Cameron was going anyway and he could have come across as a statesmanlike and obvious successor. Anyway, he would still have 27 hacked-off EU states to pull out of his hat. He has a big head but I suspect that even his hat size couldn’t accommodate all of them.

Returning to my limited bereavement and grief counselling training for a moment, those of us who are for EU membership are no doubt going to feel Depressed, but if the neutralisation/prevention tactics fail (and I hope they don’t, because I am Bargaining too), then beginning to think about and take next steps is the route to Acceptance and Moving On. I do have scented candles but don’t offer massage! I should say that my most recent venture in counselling was with 14-18 year-old Scouts and their leaders of multiple nationalities at the World Scout Jamboree in Japan last year. I could tell you what adolescents worry about but you can probably work it out for yourselves - and it wouldn’t help this conversation!

Jane W

I agree that we need to focus on bringing people together. We'll never get anywhere with such a divided society.

But, given that there are Brexit voters who are now realising the error of their ways, and given that more than 3.7m people have now signed the petition, I think it might be worth trying to get everyone to sign it - If we could get 20m to do so, then surely a re-consider should be on the cards, even if not in the form of another referendum. I think it would show that the 'advisory' referendum has been discredited. So I'm emailing all of my friends now.

Oliver

Worth reading this as an agenda for a positive post-brexit agenda
- some of the issues that really have to be tackled.

http://www.perc.org.uk/project_posts/thoughts-on-the-sociology-of-brexit/

Lorna

Thank you for helping me keep what is left of my sanity. I am unable to comment but all your emails have given me hope that I am not alone and there may be a future

K

Lawyer at DfT has said privately our chances of negotiations to remain in Europe’s open sky's is zero, therefore Heathrow rational gone, hub for Europe gone, ba to Spain etc

Richard S

Pretty much what my ex-DfT colleague who used to negotiate the treaties thinks. It will be a silver lining for Boris if Heathrow can’t expand.

Paul J

On a rare lighthearted note, England have just executed their own coup de grace - out of the Euros... From Brexit to Engxit.

Garry

Sitting in a bar in Berlin. The only England supporter. Overheard as I left: first Brexit now Englandexit. At least the latter was merited.

Sunand (following on from Elanor)

Yes indeed, it has really helped to have the passionate and thoughtful emails of the Edge during the chaos and despair of recent days. (By the way, was that you, Guy, on R4 'Any Answers'? Really moving.)

Personally I feel serious contrition alongside a sense of loss, anger, etc. We have to recognise that we did not understand the country we live in, and there is little excuse for that. Cummings, Farage and co did understand it (leaving aside Gove and Johnson for a minute). Through their post-truth politics they were able to sell their sad, small minded, pernicious ideology to the people who have gained nothing, and lost much from globalisation - I am guessing somewhere around 5 million people who before long will find out just how shameless they have been lied to; except let us not underestimate the ability of the right to deflect that too. (Nick Cohen in the Guardian/Observer at his best taking Gove and Johnson apart: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/25/boris-johnson-michael-gove-eu-liars>).

But why was that constituency captured by the very people guaranteed to worsen their plight? We know the Labour Party has been in hock to neo-liberalism throughout this century and even worse, been asleep. (By the way where was Alan Johnson during the referendum campaign?) But there can be no denying the charge that the metropolitan elite of whom the Edge is a part (with apologies to anyone who feels otherwise) is out of touch with the non-metropolitan working class constituency that Leave so effectively recruited (almost in its entirety it seems) to their cause. We read The Spirit Level and Picketty and totally get how inequality corrodes but who amongst us actually lives with the impact of that inequality year after year decade after decade. Teesside, Hull, East Lancashire, the list goes on, have been without real regeneration for over three decades. Is it not interesting that similarly post-industrial communities in Scotland and Northern Ireland did not vote emphatically to leave? Could it be to do with political leadership? Overall their picture of EU immigration there is not much different from England's.

Yes it is unbelievable that the British Prime Minister in order to sort out a conflict in his party recklessly endangered a fundamentally progressive political economic and cultural edifice that many tough-minded idealists had worked since the second world war to build, which has already done much good to UK and which has so much to offer especially with the reforms that were certain to come. But that has happened, and via a democratic vote. We also have to recognise that the edifice was badly contaminated and undermined by self-interested capital, bureaucracy and corruption of many kinds. We are in mourning for having lost a continent through Cameron's folly and the Leaver's lies, but we have also to own up to having mis-placed a large part of our country which is now harshly visible.

The Leavites, who are as motley a crew as the Remainians, have three broad groups, to make a huge approximation of a complex picture. On the right, a die-hard nostalgic, xenophobic group with more than a sprinkling of racism, which is pretty much beyond reach. On the left, and far less numerous, the anti-centralist 'progressives against the EU' implacable in their convictions. We understand both of these because they are vocal and everywhere. Then there are the 'left behind' whom UKIP's success has underlined and about whom Owen Jones, Polly Toynbee and others have written perceptively. This was the group of course for whom immigration was the overwhelming single issue in the referendum. And no one was there to convincingly argue that their problems had deeper causes.

It is clear that huge number of working class people who have seen their living standards and access to services decline or stagnate for decades relate that to the arrival of people from the EU. We all believe passionately that they are mistaken but no one in politics today is convincingly articulating exactly what is going on here, let alone what to do about it. To reduce it to xenophobia, or even ignorance, is as wrong as to claim that every immigrant takes away a job, or a place on the NHS waiting list that a 'true Brit' should have had. There is clearly a strong sense of loss. Loss of dignity and the loss of a sense of security that jobs for life once provided, loss of community coherence which gets focused on the presence of foreigners but has much deeper causes. The taking of a relatively menial job and working long hours is a very different deal for an

ambitious aspiring immigrant than to a native resident whose family and community were co-opted into a very different economic model.

I can draw no conclusion from all this, other than to say that the referendum has laid things bare like a shoreline uncovered in the storm. So we wake up in what feels like a very different country - but it was there all along. A silver lining is that a serious political debate has become inescapable. While the Edge should and will no doubt focus on the built environment aspects of the Brexit vote, we will not be able to avoid the stark new political landscape.

But: *nil carborundum illigetimi!* ("Don't let the bastards grind you down".)

Adam

There is also all the things that are wrong with the country as highlighted in powerful piece Oliver linked us to and in Sunand's moving words. How is this gulf to be mended?

George (personal view)

I think, if this matter of the referendum and of article 50 isn't debated fully by our MP's in Parliament, then we are a democracy that will have impacted the World on a basis of blatant untruths.

I keep asking myself why should Scotland and N Ireland who voted to stay IN have their majorities overshadowed by parts of England voting OUT on a referendum that's constitutionally only advisory. How can it be considered as a decision to come OUT on such a massive issue with only a 2% margin from a split vote to instigate such a fundamental action with huge international, social and economic impacts? Where's the democracy in that which impacts on 500million of our European friends as well, who have no say at all! Surely, before the Government act on this advisory referendum they should democratically debate it taking into account the 2% and the impact on all of Europe and the future of all our young people.

It seems to me that every chance no matter how small of getting this situation re considered / debated in Parliament is a chance that should be pursued.

Also I don't underestimate the power of our young people and their influence in amongst all this political upheaval; the protests have only just started. The one by the young people yesterday expressed what I'm hearing from all young people; they feel their future is being taken away from them.

In support of our young people, and they are so important to the built environment as well, I just signed the petition "Parliamentary Debate On Decision To Ratify Article 50" via the link as provided by Dorte' and repeated here.

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/parliamentary-debate-on-decision-to-ratify-article-50?bucket&source=facebook-share-button&time=1467035235>

It's for sure we won't mend any gulf in our society if the young feel that are being left out in the cold!

Adam

Is it even a choice between risking our economy (on a hobsonian choice sort of way) or our polity. Which festers longer or heals quicker?

Richard L (following on from Sunand)

Your acknowledgement of the divide between those in a metropolitan, thriving economy and working class people in the hinterland is a breath of fresh air and raises some important questions - both for the nation as a whole and for the professions. It is refreshing to hear you acknowledge that "we did not understand the country we live in, and there is no excuse for that". Most of the discussion within the Edge about Brexit is about the political way forward - we need to respond to the situation at the national and international scale.

However, a deepening divide within the country suggests that we also need to reflect on OUR (ie construction professional's') contributions to the problem of divide and discontent. There are questions to be asked about the role of architects, planners and other designers (as well as the commissioning side) in relation to society

and particularly whether we have been complicit in the growing inequality and marginalisation. What is our role and relationship in creating or reinforcing this division? What can we do now? How can we create hope where there is outrage or despair? What kinds of engagement and narrative are needed? (Clearly some of the high profile "grand projects" funded by the Lottery and other lauded projects have not succeeded on these terms.) One can and should bemoan that there are few council architects these days, but we need to get real about it and discuss what we can do under the current regime and change the regime. It's not a wild utopian dream, as Canada and other countries have mechanisms to support small, local communities to ensure that they thrive. Yes, the provision of public services (health, education and housing) in England have suffered hugely under the name of "austerity" and this is the elephant in the room.

One thing we can do is to take a hard, critical look at many of our own beliefs and practices surrounding why and how we create buildings and places, how we define 'good' or successful projects and whether we are rewarding/celebrating the right things. This may entail a shift from talking about the functions of a place to the roles of a place. Of course, it also looks at the distribution of "power" within a project, and several aspects of community facilitation and engagement, such as the notion of co-production. There are questions to be asked about whether our forms of engagement with communities are adequate and successful.

The word "sustainability" has been much abused (particularly by professionals). We have little collective sense of what the "social" agenda is when conceiving or appraising a project. One important aspect that I believe is missing is the Human Development Index - to evaluate how a project actually affects the more fundamental aspects of people's lives. But it seems to be lacking in our collective discourse and actions.

What I value in your message are that we need serious political debate (on healing the divisions within society) and also that the Edge can contribute to two (overlapping) aspects: the large political questions and the built environment. We are "experts" in the latter, so we have insights and knowledge that can be useful for framing the discussions. My hope is that the Edge will work on both aspects (not just the political settlement). One likely challenge we face is that the national and regional economies will be profoundly different after this, which will affect what gets funded and built - do we have a role here to influence this?

Bill

Yes, indeed: much regeneration has been gentrification, accentuating the two-speed society and doing little or nothing for most local people, and too often forcing them out.

Ideally, this vote would be a spur to more local self-sufficiency; but of course we lose some regional self-sufficiency by turning our backs on Europe. The idea that we can instead do more trade long distance is hardly sustainable!

However as Naomi Klein described in *The Shock Doctrine*, a much more likely outcome is a neo-liberal triumph in hollowing out our public services and social and environmental capital as we spiral deeper into our already deep debt trap. So we end up, for example, servicing PFI loans for facilities we can no longer afford to use.

Oh, dear. But lots of potential scope for new professionalism in doing more with less.

Richard S

I gather that YouGov say the Leave vote was divided between the disaffected and another group – believers in libertarian globalisation. I don't know who, or how many, of the latter there were but, given how many Edgers work for globalised companies or in globalised economic paradigms, we could do to understand that dimension too. Are they right to say that the EU is a busted flush and (as Farage claims) inhibits rather than fosters free trade. And what would the world (and the climate, for example) look like if we had free trade. I assume that unfettered = unregulated. This is a debate we could lead.

and

Bill - I'm glad you mentioned the Shock Doctrine. We are living out a beautiful demonstration of it, are we not? I don't think it could be what Cameron had in mind but, as for Murdoch, the Barclay Brothers, Desmond (and his lapdog Farage) et al., I'm sure what you describe must be where they are herding us.

Sunand

Scapegoating the Other is the tried, tested, and all too often successful tool used by the Right of all kinds to recruit the Left Behind. Rationalism seems to be quite unable to combat such scapegoating with facts and evidence - hence the limited success of the 'hour in the local pub' that Richard S has mentioned. But Reason is most of what we have to offer.

So I find Yvette Cooper's proposal to set up a Commission on Immigration interesting. It potentially leapfrogs the Right's hegemony on the topic. If it properly evaluated the effects of immigration, showing for example that its impact on the economic standing of the post-industrial communities is small and possibly positive, then at least there will be less room for rumour and indeed lies. It should also establish that while the presence of more people clearly requires more services, it is underinvestment that is creating the tension around access to health and other local services. If reducing, or as some would like, reversing immigration disappears as a credible answer, the voices proposing truly credible answers might be heard, not by the neoliberal and/or chauvinistic ideologues and their paymasters, but by the people who have suffered most under them.

Richard L's challenge is very, well, *challenging*.... How do we get beyond the political, and onto deploying, our expertise and knowledge in the service of creating a better society? And I take expertise and knowledge to include the values associated specifically with them. The nearest I come to feeling I am doing anything useful in this regard is in working with local education and health services and co-creating design with the people who will be using the buildings; seeing that good design was not only of material benefit but also able to promote dignity and a sense of self-worth. Not very radical, and the Government was paying.

Richard B

I haven't contributed to the 'Edgers' post-Brexit debate up to now. I have found the email 'debate' very consoling/thoughtful/constructive/challenging in equal measure, and would like to contribute and share some of my specific thoughts with you all.

With my various current involvements with architects' professional education, regulation, international trade development and the EU, since last Friday I have been canvassing views and thinking about what the options now are for our UK Built Environment Professions (BEPs), which are the constituent parts of the Edge. I would like to share these thoughts with you, but first I should declare an interest as (*amongst other things*) I sit on the Executive Board of the Architects Council of Europe, which is the umbrella body of all the professional institutions and regulators for architects across the EU and wider Europe (includes Switzerland, Norway, Turkey etc.) My role there is pan-European not as a UK representative. So you can imagine how gutted I am by the Brexit outcome.

So here are my emerging views on the issues and options facing us as UK Built-environment professions (BEPs), and would welcome your thoughts on this too...

Although Brexit is an unexpected and unwanted (*by most UK professionals at least*) outcome, it does pose a new range of opportunities and challenges for the UK based Built-Environment professions and particularly for the qualification/regulation/recognition of the UK's architects profession, which is far more highly regulated than other BEPs (more like medics) with layers of international (UN-UIA criteria), European (EU Professional Qualifications Directive) and UK statutory regulation (Architects Regulation Act and ARB). Whilst our political leadership (Government and opposition) is still in self-destruct mode and not focusing on post-Brexit solutions, in my view, it is up to those of us with the specialist knowledge and engagement (the Edge?) to come up with solutions for our politicians and civil servants to consider when they are in receptive mode.

Since the Brexit result I have been taking soundings from some UK architectural practices who are in the international/EU arena. The key concerns expressed to me so far seem to be two-fold:

1. Slow-down of UK design and construction (particularly office/retail/high range residential) due to economic/market uncertainty delaying clients' decisions and investment. All the more reason for the UK BE professions to be able to now focus on International (outside of EU) projects, where the most vibrant construction market for architects' skills will be for the near future. Although there is a risk

that 'Brexit' could trigger wider uncertainty into a fragile global financial/political market and lead to another global recession -then bad news for all BE professionals everywhere!

2. Restriction of supply of specialist professional staff and students from abroad (particularly in London) due both to possible greater immigration controls and 'foreigners' not feeling as welcomed in the UK. This is an issue the Government (when we have one that's working) could easily address by specifically allowing access for professionals and students in the construction professional services sectors (*Australian type system with high point scores for the BEPs?*) . I know that UK universities, who provide BEP subjects/qualifications are also worried about access and attractability for their high proportion of international students.

Brexit is a 'game changer' for the UK's professional services in Construction/built-environment, and particularly their export and inward investment earnings and international markets access, threatening our 'global-hub' supremacy in BEPs, for the reasons outlined above. I know more about architects than other BEPs, and UK based architects/design practices have by far the highest proportion and value of fees from international projects (particularly those based in London), than any other country. Just looking at the EU market - UK architects' fee value from EU based projects is far greater than all of the EU architects' fees for their work done in the UK (RIBA & ACE statistics). So there is much for us to lose from Brexit. The UK's construction professional services generate a net export income to help UK's balance of payments, unlike the overall UK construction industry, which is a net importer of construction products/materials/labour. UK's education/qualification of BEPs (architects/engineers, surveyors, planners, etc.) is also a significant generator of international income and influence for the UK. Therefore, our Government should be very interested in whatever we come up with in helping to maintain and develop this important knowledge economy market (not just financial services).

I would think that our emerging political leadership would now be even more interested in focusing on these issues:

1. Market stability is crucial to maintain (or re-start) the UK's construction industry and therefore the work-load of the UK professional services industry. Decisions on major infrastructure projects (HS2, London Airport, Hinkley nuclear power, etc.) should not be stalled, as investing in infrastructure is a good way to grow the economy, keep people employed and increase UK's effectiveness/capacity in recessionary times.
2. Access to international markets are also key. If EU becomes more restricted to trade with, there could be alternative and greater opportunities elsewhere, free from EU requirements/restrictions
3. Keeping UK's borders open to professionals (engineers, surveyors, architects etc.) and students of these professional disciplines -including Europe.
4. EU's own stability and longer term prosperity is threatened by UK's exit, and has its own growing EU discontent, Euro debt problems, immigration issues, political upheavals (forthcoming changes to French/German/Spanish/Italian leaders) to deal with, so they will still need (*and maybe welcome*) some form of continuing engagement with the UK.

There are 2 opposing solutions for the UK. Anything between these seem less attractive, with more down-sides than ups. They are:

1. Try to replicate as closely as we can UK's current open access to the EU, which would mean still playing by the rules of the EU Professional Qualifications, Services, Procurement directives, etc. UK's new relationship with the EU will take some time to work-out (2+ years). The EU is unlikely to be generous and any compromise solution may not be politically acceptable as it won't deliver the referendum outcome and could cost us more to achieve less benefit. Therefore this option may not be achievable, even with the growing pressure to re-run the referendum (I signed the petition too). With the 2 main political parties completely misjudging their electorate, they will be very wary of any re-run.
2. Go for independent 'Global broker' status, relying on WTO and bilateral national agreements, having an open free market (low corporate tax) knowledge economy free of EU constraints (but playing by their standards -or higher - for trading with the EU). Being the respected broker between the various economic/political power bases US/China/EU etc. This would have great benefits for all of the UK's

professional services (including architects), as we are already the world leaders in international professional standards, institutions, qualifications, education etc. For example - IStructE is the only world-wide recognised qualification standard for structural engineering and they are already validating the structural engineers in Asia, Africa etc. RICS has a similar global grip on surveying, but that is a less established profession worldwide (Qs are unknown in USA, for eg.). Architecture is more complicated because of its high level and layers of regulation (UK Architects Regulation Act, EU-PQD, UN-UJA rules). But the EU complexity could be removed for UK/RIBA/ARB architects. Our BEP institutions are well placed internationally, with a wider international outreach and high regard than any other nation's equivalent organisations. As the incubator of the 18/19thC industrial revolution, the UK invented this peculiar and unique concept of a professional 'Charter body' focused on the public interest. Despite its separate tribal and protectionist mentalities, this concept and established UK based institutions are still a very exportable and highly regarded format worldwide.

This second option is well worth exploring and putting to the Government. Not only does it deliver the referendum's mandate it could also be used as a bargaining tool (*if needed*) to negotiate a better option '1' with the EU, if it looks like we have an attractive alternative path that could leave the EU lagging behind.

Despite the Brexit distractions (opportunities?!), we also need to consider how we continue to promote, maintain and improve the export and inward investment potential of the UK's construction industry's professional services and our current world-leading position. I have been working (pre-Brexit) on the 'London Global Hub' initiative for the architects livery company (*I declare another interest here as 'Upper Warden' of the WCCA*). I am informally advising the City Corporation and members of the Construction Leadership Council about this to answer the challenge they have been given by the Government to improve the export potential of the UK's construction industry and professional services (beyond just the City's financial services). I am also having some very preliminary and informal discussions with some of the professional bodies that are in the CIC, to see if we can widen the focus and the evidence base of this initiative beyond just architects. Any such campaign would inevitably have a London-centric focus, but that is the reality of the international dimension of the UK's BEP services, which benefits the whole UKplc. Is this a mantle for the Edge to take up?

Apologies for going on for so long. But there is a lot for us to digest and think about here. I would welcome fellow Edgers' views on this, if I haven't already sent you off to sleep and when you get a moment.

Paul J

Dear Richard – and all those who have been in “Worth a Try”

I'm sure you are right, but the lesson of the Referendum debate is that – to rephrase Clinton/The Sun – “*it's the immigrants (or any other shibboleth) what won it, stupid*”.

Add to that that being told that every household would be ~£4500 worse off with Brexit doesn't wash if you have buggar all to start off with and that the complexion of your local community has changed beyond all recognition. Brexit appealed to the raw issues. Politics is visceral.

We might not like it – not very Edge! – but we need get down and dirty....

Richard L (to Dorte)

Thought this might be of interest to you - an editorial from New Scientist. It's about the debasement of "experts" and how we need to counter this and reconnect with wider society.

Although the politicians in the Leave campaign were mostly rubbishing the economists, they were tarring all experts with the same brush and discrediting the role of experts. This is reminiscent of Mao's Cultural Revolution where the experts were sent out to the farms, and uneducated agricultural workers were given the jobs of the professionals without any training whatsoever. It was a complete disaster. Many people died....

(I was pleased to see Sadiq Khan's simple and robust response to this in the debate. If I recall correctly - well, you'd pay attention to a car mechanic if he tells you not to take your car on the highway; so yes, we do rely upon and trust experts.)

But the malaise about mistrust and discrediting of experts goes deep in English society. It needs to be countered and certainly affects the status and influence of built environment professionals. So it seems a topic that Edge and the Prof Institutes need to discuss and address (and join forces with other disciplines too).

What's needed is much more than a PR exercise saying how wonderful experts are. Built environment professionals are seen as aloof and serving only the client. Sadly, that's probably true. We do little to serve the community - even planners do less and less for the community. So in going forward, we need to ask whether our remit, role and services can serve society in some fundamental ways like the Human Development Index and Sustainable Development Goals. And if so, what those propositions would be.

I find it difficult to see some Edge colleagues talk about UN Habitat 3 Conference but don't actually connect this to what we do (or don't do) as professionals. This is not only a "developing world" set of issues.....

Footnote from Elanor on 3rd July

I was in Manchester on Thursday and heard Lord Heseltine denounce Boris. He transformed from amiable old cove to avenging wraith - all scathing tosses of the head and flashing eyes -in an instant

“He’s ripped the Tory Party apart; he has created the greatest constitutional crisis in peacetime in my life; he’s knocked billions off the value of the savings of the British people.

“He’s like a General, who marches his army to the sound of the guns and the moment he sees the battleground he abandons it, to the enthusiastic endorsement of his adjutant who says he wasn’t up to the job in the first place.

“I have never seen anything like it, and he must be answerable for the consequences, but the pain of it will be felt by all of us and – if it isn’t resolved shortly – by the generation yet to come.”

Quite a performance!
ends

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