

TALES OF BREXITS PAST
AND PRESENT

'Culkin and Simmons new book offers an insightful, timely and fresh perspective on Brexit. Tales of Brexits Past and Present provides a novel historical perspective of prior Brexit-type situations interwoven with evaluations of future impact. Since the EU referendum in June 2016, attention has been invariably focused on the rationale behind Britain's decision to leave; however, as we approach the start of the transition period, the real question for the UK's economy is what will Brexit mean in terms of entrepreneurial innovation and growth? The authors present a series of questions and pointers towards potential solutions in order to understand the many challenges and opportunities that Brexit offers for entrepreneurs, innovators and policy makers. This book offers a meaningful and valuable contribution to the debate that I would highly recommend.'

Dr Paul Jones, Editor in Chief,
International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research and Professor of Entrepreneurship & Innovation,
Swansea University, Wales

'There is a sense that Brexit is territory uncharted, that what we are experiencing is entirely unprecedented. This book explains that, really, there have been similarly disruptive experiences in Britain, and in England in particular. The book is part history lesson, part stakeholder manual and in part a stepping stone to help wider public debate. It advocates socially responsible policy to enable people to aspire, a focus on supply and markets, and in a departure from most economic and political narratives, it uses the experiences of the past as underpinners for a rational approach to how opportunity might be engendered in the future. In doing that, in the current context of panic-laden Brexit noise, it delivers informed commentary and sensible suggestions.'

Dr Laura Galloway, Professor of Business & Enterprise,
Edinburgh Business School, Scotland

'It is said that History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce. But what if Brexit is already the fourth time the same drama unfolds? In their socio-economic tour through English history, Culkin and Simmons provide three illuminating case studies of how the English have tried to break away from the continent before. A highly enjoyable and informative read that will provide new arguments for both "Remainers" and "Brexiters", as well as much needed insight for European scholars trying to make sense of British sensibilities.'

Dr Norbert Morawetz, Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship,
Henley Business School, England

"There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things". Machiavelli (1513)

The one certainty, at this stage of developments is uncertainty, no one really knows how Brexit will all pan out. We can speculate, that's all. As ever the matters in Ireland, in particular the border in Ireland is proving an obstacle and possibly a brake on a smooth exit for the UK. Will there be a hard border? And so, what if there is or even where will it be? In a recent survey undertaken by the Ulster University Business School most business entrepreneurs in Northern Ireland who responded felt they could deal with the uncertainty that BREXIT would throw up at them. NI's business owners have demonstrated themselves to be entrepreneurial in the past, they are the sort of people who know a thing or two about how to deal with uncertainty and change. Culkin and Simmons present us with a radical new perspective on the issues, providing us with a different lens through which to view the possibilities and challenges facing modern-day UK. Historically Britain has been here before and survived. The authors contribute to the ongoing debate thrown up by BREXIT as to its benefits and threats. It is likely to be one that will go on for some time yet, engaging opinion in Ireland and across the European Union, never mind the UK. This text is a timely addition to that debate.'

Dr Pauric McGowan, Professor of Entrepreneurship & Business
Development, Ulster University Business School,
Northern Ireland

TALES OF BREXITS PAST AND PRESENT

Understanding the Choices, Threats
and Opportunities in Our Separation
From the EU

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFME	Association of Financial Markets In Europe
BIS	Bank of International Settlements
DARPA	Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (in United States)
DFID	UK Department For International Development
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EU	European Union
FANG	Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google
GPS	Global Positioning System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
UNCTAD	United Nations Trade and Development Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

FOREWORD

Writing any book concerning contemporary issues runs the risk that events will overtake the narrative; this is especially true with a book going to press just as the Brexit saga reaches one moment of natural climax, namely the agreement and ratification of the UK treaty to withdraw from the European Union. Every day brings a new twist and turn to the story. Will there be a deal? Will Parliament ratify a deal? Which government minister will resign today? Against this febrile backdrop an obvious question, then, is why write such a book now and not after we know the actual Brexit deal?

The answer is as simple as it is challenging.

As we see it, the wounds of the 2016 Brexit Referendum have not healed – they have seemingly intensified. It is easy to imagine similar thoughts and emotions in the early 1530s at the start of the Reformation. It was when things started to hurt citizens on the ground (such as closure of the monastic welfare system in the mid-1530s) that serious trouble in the form of insurrections (e.g. the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace) started to brew.

Brexit is potentially a more substantial change than the Reformation that is likely to impact both the economic and social dimensions of British life, rather than just one of them. It is not always apparent that the current round of negotiations is a starting rather than an ending point in the Brexit narrative 585-page draft ‘Withdrawal Agreement’ together with a short seven-page outline looking to a future that commits both sides to “combining deep regulatory and customs cooperations, building on the single customs territory provided for in the withdrawal agreement”. These talks have led to publication of a “draft”. The detailed discussion about future arrangements will continue after the UK leaves the EU and either be ‘eased’ by a transition agreement or take place against a sharp change, if there is no transition. This statement remains true despite a collective UK Cabinet decision to support the draft withdrawal agreement made on 15 November 2018. The furious reaction to the proposed deal on 16th November with ministerial

resignations and talks of votes of “no confidence” reinforce the already uncertain atmosphere.

It seems like we now face an inflection point in the debate, as reality sets in and the grand statements are translated in to material actions that will impact on individual lives. Reality has a habit of either forcing change or forcing conflict notwithstanding the reams written about what sort of trade deal is best, and what sort of Brexit Britain wants. In practice, these discussions will, just as in the Reformation, only become real for most people if and when their daily lives are impacted. For example, if Brexit means the UK is effectively excluded from pan-European manufacturing supply chains we expect this to engender a vibrant debate as to what employment will replace the substantial number of relatively well-paid jobs dependent upon existing pan European supply chains. At the moment, the elements involved in this debate are being aired through ‘megaphone diplomacy’ where one side of the Brexit divide shouts at the other and vice versa. Listening and reasoned debate is often an early casualty of political and economic invective.

At some point, usually when change actually happens, reality dawns and one of three things can occur. If the change is benign, people will likely grumble a bit and adapt. On the other hand, if the change is perceived to be destructive, two further options present themselves. The first, what we term the golden option, is that a reasoned debate takes place about what to do to next; and the second (sometimes the more common) is that the divides harden, often with very unpleasant social and economic consequences.

Our book is about this second “*reality*” stage of Brexit, when peoples day to day lives start to be impacted as reality starts to bite. In this context, we pose the question, *‘How can we make Brexit work as an engine for UK economic success and social coherence over the next quarter of a century and beyond?’*

We make no apologies for identifying that entrepreneurs and innovators need to be at the heart of this future story; it will only be by constant adaptation to build and maintain a competitive edge in today’s that economic “social” success will be realised.

Our book is intended to contribute to the ‘debate yet to happen’. Just as Ebenezer Scrooge was forced to witness his Christmas Past, Present and Future, we have Brexit Past, Brexit Present and Post Brexit Future. Unintentionally our narrative in some sense ‘mimics’ Dickens as ours are intertwined with each other; and yet our future seeks to offer a way of

breaking with our present through understanding some of the better moments in our past and applying these insights into today's complex and ever-changing world.

This book is for the Brexit Leaver, Remainer and Agnostic alike. There are no right or wrong answers in it. Our conclusions are in one sense a set of informed observations towards potential solutions. Perhaps one necessity for success could end up being all of us 'Taking Back Control' not only from Brussels but also from the 'Westminster Political Village' and its associated ecosystem of lobbyists, think tanks and consultancies.

If the entrepreneur is central to our future success, we collectively are central to equipping them with the practical framework to succeed. This book is about practical realism rather than high-minded theoretical dogma.

We would like to thank our publisher, our families and all of those around us for their support as this book has moved from clouds of ideas into words on paper. Especial thanks need to be given to John Cox for his thoughtful comments on an early draft of part of the manuscript, to David Finch for his very clear exposition of 'Leave Campaign' underlying concerns, to Michael Simmons for his help with the proofing and to all our colleagues and peers who have given their time to thoughtful debate on these issues.

For us, and we hope for you, this book should be a positive starting point and a springboard to action as to 'what comes next' in the 'Brave New World' of Brexit.

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