

Brexit Views

Brexit has been a hot topic for many months now. There are many different opinions on Brexit from people of different generations and different parts of the UK. As my Mummy is Scottish and half of my family live in Scotland; I thought I would interview my Grandad who lives in Aberdeen and my Mummy who lives in Bingham to see how their opinions differ. Finally, I will offer my own opinions as the third generation; living in England but half Scottish!

**What’s your name and where do you live?**

David Burnside, Aberdeen

Julia Sutton, Bingham, Nottingham

Florence Clunas, Bingham, Nottingham

**When were you born?**

5th March 1943 – almost 74 years’ old

23rd January 1975 – 42 years’ old

2nd January 2005 – 12 years’ old

**What’s your profession?**

A Lawyer

HR Manager

Year 7 pupil

**Are you employed or do you work for yourself?**

Have been employed, have owned own company and currently self-employed Consultant

I work for Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service

At school

**How did you feel when you found out that there was going to be a referendum?**

I felt pleased. I felt that the British people hadn’t had an opportunity to make their views on Europe heard as the previous referendum was in 1975 and a lot has changed since then.

I was concerned that this was an extremely serious decision to be handed over to the UK population. Given that there had been a lot of negative and misleading propaganda published by certain newspapers regarding immigration and its impact on our job market and health service; I was concerned that it would be difficult for the general public to be able to access a factual and balanced view of the potential impact of each decision. I was worried about the impact that this would have on my children’s future options regarding travelling and working in other parts of Europe, as well as reducing the diversity and many positive cultural influences that we enjoy in Britain today.

I felt confused at first on why they wanted to change everything when things seemed so harmonious! (relatively!) I didn’t know much about what was going on at first, so I began looking at the news and talking to people about it.

**Can you tell me what you voted and why?**

I voted LEAVE. Principle reason was as a lawyer, I was unhappy that our parliament had lost its sovereignty because a lot of our laws in employment had been overturned by European court or by European legislation. I knew there was a great deal of unhappiness in the country and felt that people who held them should be able to have their opinions heard. Many people were unhappy that unfettered immigration from the EC was putting pressure on schools and medical facilities in particular areas.

I voted REMAIN. I had a great number of different reasons for voting Remain. I felt that we had made a lot of positive progress in creating a united Europe following the atrocities of the Second World War. We had free trade as well as the right to travel freely, live and work in other European countries.

I have a French sister-in-law who was able to settle in Aberdeen with my brother and set up her own business in Scotland. My other brother moved to Holland where he met and married my Dutch sister-in-law before moving to Southern Ireland to work. They are now living in Southern France. All of this was possible without any restriction or bureaucracy – my family would not be the same if it wasn’t for the fact that we lived in a united Europe. I wished for this to continue rather than risk any of my family facing issues such as being asked to leave, or to obtain a backdated right to remain in a country they have called home for many years.

I also felt that the majority of the information provided in support of ‘Leave’ was inaccurate and was ‘blanket blaming’ foreign nationals for all that was perceived to be wrong in society; such as lack of job opportunities and pressure on the NHS.

The suggestion that ‘immigrants are taking all our jobs’ makes me very frustrated. I work for the Prison Service and we have had a recruitment crisis for many years and struggle to recruit to a whole host of different roles. We cannot recruit enough Operational Assistants or Prison Officers in many parts of the country because people don’t want to do the work for the money we are paying. There are numerous organisations who cannot get UK nationals to fill their vacancies because they can get almost as much or more in tax credits and benefits. Without immigrants taking on roles many organisations would be struggling to exist. Equally many talented medical staff in the NHS are immigrants.

Obviously, I am not eligible to vote yet but if I had the choice to I would have said REMAIN. I don’t understand why people would want to leave when there are so many job, trading and easy travel options available in the EU! I find it incredibly annoying that some people of the older generations reason for leaving the UK is so that the UK will have stronger borders… will that affect **their** futures – NO! I think we should welcome immigrants into our country because if the UK was in a war and most of our population would have to flee then how would the pro- Brexiteers like it, if **they** were completely turned down and were made homeless? TREAT OTHERS HOW YOU WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED!

And the idea that says immigrants are talking all of our jobs is rubbish, as the immigrants are only doing the jobs that the British people don’t want to do! What about my generation’s future? What if I wanted to live in France or Germany? No one thought of that! Why would you want to weaken the pound making it more expensive buying from other countries? I just don’t think it makes any sense!

But I do understand some points of the pro- Brexit campaign though. Maybe some of us just don’t want to be controlled by another country?

**Was the vote outcome what you expected or where you surprised?**

I was surprised; I went to bed having looked at the newspapers poll and predictions and thought that Remain would win by a margin of 5%.... when I woke in the morning my wife said ‘we’re out of Europe’ and I was very surprised….

I was totally gobsmacked! I went to bed pretty relaxed thinking that Remain would win by a fairly small but significant enough margin; say perhaps 8%. When my husband woke me saying ‘oh my god you’re not going to believe it. We’re OUT!’ I was devastated. Really, really shocked. Saddened. Worried. Confused.

I WAS FLABBERGASTED! I went to bed after watching the news, pretty confident that I would wake up and we would still be in the EU- BUT NO ! I can remember being huddled on the sofa with my family watching the news in disbelief and shock….and I was even late for school because we were having a rant at the telly!

**Were your friends opting for remain or leave**?

We had a referendum in Scotland for Scottish independence. Most of my circle were in favour of Scotland remaining – Scotland voted 62/48 to remain. However, most of my friends were voting to leave Europe. One of my colleagues (who was a Judge) said he hadn’t met an educated person who had voted for Scottish Independence!

Everyone I knew was voting Remain – are at least that’s what they told me – apart from my Dad!!! All my friends were equally shocked and concerned by the result.

My friends and I had a rant about Brexit at school the day we found out! We all said we were on the side of ‘Remain’ because we didn’t think it was fair to turn down immigrants who were getting away from a war and had nowhere to be safe. We also thought it wasn’t fair that we wouldn’t be able to easily travel or work in Europe without a visa in our future jobs.

**Were you surprised about people acting negatively towards foreign nationals after the result?**

No. I could see that in Aberdeen we are fortunate enough to be quite prosperous; but I do read a lot and I know that in certain areas of the country there were lots of jobs lost because of immigration, so I wasn’t surprised that people were being negative. There was a lot of bad language used by both sides.

I was horrified when my friend from work who is German and has recently married a UK national, called me 2 hours after the result in tears. She told me that she’d been on the bus in London talking in German to her Mum on her mobile, when an old lady tapped her on the shoulder and said ‘Isn’t it time for you to be going back to your own country now then?’ The next day my husband told me his work colleague was shouted at on the way to work ‘Get back to where you came from!’ and he said ‘I was born in Nottingham!’ (He is dark skinned and his grandparents originated from Morocco.) This I found abhorrent – the apparent legitimising of racial hatred within a matter of hours. Perhaps I’m naïve but I did not realise that there were so many people in Britain who held such beliefs.

I was so astonished that people could act so negatively towards people from different countries, would you like it if you went to a different country and they told you to, ‘get lost!’ ? It’s just disgraceful that you would say, ‘go back to your own country!’ to a stranger because they have a different skin colour and nationality to you !

**Do you regret your voting decision or do you think you did the right thing!?**

I don’t regret it – I think I did the right thing. The gloom and doom and financial Armageddon hasn’t arrived. Yes, the pound dropped in value, but the pound was probably over-valued in the first place. I don’t regret it and don’t think prophets of doom are proved correct.

No, I do not regret my decision and I’m still saddened and concerned by the outcome. We face many years of political and financial uncertainty ahead; which is just what we didn’t need when we have been struggling to move forward positively since 2008. As someone who is trying to build a pension and has still got over 25 years of mortgage payments; this is unsettling!

**Did you consider how this would impact more of my generation’s future than yours?!**

I voted for what I thought was best for our country not just for me. I felt that this would protect UK laws and this would benefit future generations; not just me.

Yes – I did. I was particularly thinking about you and your sister’s future opportunities. I was concerned about how the decision might affect your future work and travel options as Brexit could negatively impact on the economy and job market if the value of the pound fell and companies decided to re-locate out of the UK, or jobs were lost due to the difficulty of establishing new trade agreements. Furthermore, I wanted you to grow up in a multi-cultural, tolerant, welcoming country where you lived with a diverse mix of people from different ethnic origins. I wanted you to grow up in a country where this was the norm and that your generation would never think to make judgements on people based on their accent or ethnicity. I wanted you and your generation to grow up seeing the people around you as equals, never thinking that white UK nationals are inherently superior, something that has become a worrying by-product of Brexit in some areas of the UK.

**What do you think Scotland should do as a result of the Brexit decision?!**

Accept the result because it was a UK ballot – we’re fed up of Nicola Sturgeon whinging about all the referendum decisions and it’s a UK decision. People decided very decisively in 2014 what they wanted.

I think they should accept the decision. They had an Independence referendum in 2014 and it was a majority win to remain in the UK. I think it would be a big risk for Scotland to try to separate from the UK now.

I think they should accept it (I don’t know because I don’t live in Scotland!)

**Do you think the British people got the right information to make the decision?**

A lot of information was given – both sides distorted – there was no neutral information. What is patronising is that those who voted remain say that those that voted to leave were stupid! A first class honours degree person has the same rights as everyone else – everyone had access to the same information – and all should have the right to decide.

No I do not think that fair, accurate and balanced information was provided. The ‘spin’ that was put out appealing to disgruntled people who were sick of years of austerity and the talk of making Britain Great again was appealing to many people but for all the wrong reasons! I think it was dangerous and misleading and many of the people who were targeted by the ‘Leave’ campaigners have ended up worse off than they were before as they were perhaps unaware that their local economies were being supported by EU funding! But as I said earlier, I think that it was and is too momentous a decision with too many far reaching financial, political and social implications to be given to the general public.

I naturally assumed that the info was true but I can’t get my head round the fact that government could lie just to get what they want!

My thoughts…

I decided to do this article because I have read and heard about lots of interviews and thoughts of different adults about Brexit. I believe that this is a really important subject as it is a momentous thing to have happened at this stage in my life.

The interviews with my family showed me that opinions differ because of the way and the generation you were brought up in. It also depends on what stage of your life you’re at, for example I am 12, but I’m very interested in this as it can affect my life for a very long time.

I think my Mummy has these strong opinions because she works in HR and for the Prison Service and she deals with lots of different types of people and personalities and feels that people should be treated equally, no matter what gender, nationality, skin colour or faith. She feels strongly about how this will also affect her children, so her views are still about half and half of how this will affect the rest of her life as she is in the middle of her life, but she also has children and needs to think how this will affect them as well.

I think my Grandad also has very strong opinions as he was a very successful employment lawyer and he has to think about how the laws and the rules of the country work if we were to stay or leave Europe as well as what he wants for himself. He is at a much later stage in his life than me or my Mummy so I hope he thought about how this will affect me and my sister’s future as well as the laws and rules!

I have just heard today that Scotland is to hold another referendum to see if they could separate from the rest of the UK and stay in Europe. I think it is interesting as when they voted for the first time, they didn’t know that there would be a Brexit referendum, which might have made them vote differently. However, it seems like it will cause lots of stress and trouble again and it seems unfair to go through this again after having clearly made a choice and then voted in European referendum and now have to vote again!

To conclude, I feel that all these referendums shouldn’t have happened because I believe that everything was fine in the UK before. No one seemed to be in danger, or being harmed or abused because of their nationality. I didn’t feel that job options and travel were ever going to be a problem and that now the pound is weak and we seem to be in a lesser position as a country it seems like we have made the wrong decision and that people didn’t properly think it all through. Having what seemed to be one goal of not having other countries control us I think is actually causing us more harm than good.

I understand that we cannot vote until we’re 18, but it feels like the older generations made all the decisions when it is going to massively affect the younger generations. Maybe if children had been taught in more detail about the different reasons for voting ‘Leave’ or ‘Remain’ at their schools we could have discussed it more with our families and shown them how this will affect us for longer so we should have more of a say.