



**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well – exhausted no doubt with referendum fatigue and anxiety – but I hope you are weathering it. Despite the result it is still not clear whether we are leaving or not and it doesn't seem as if we will know for many months to come, so this is just the beginning on our road to who knows where.

I have just the right vegetables for you – this is your Post First Referendum Pick-Me-Up Bag. Lovely new season carrots to restore your blurry eyesight, B vitamins in the mushrooms to restore your nervous system, potatoes to comfort you, Chinese leaves to distract your mind while you work out what to do with them. Let's keep calm and carry on cooking.

There weren't street parties celebrating Brexit – everyone was respectful that the margin was narrow and that for every person who voted 'out' there was a very upset person who really wanted 'in'. Whatever our views I believe we do understand and care about each other and want what we think is for the best.

So I was resolute about my voting intention until the morning before the election when I browsed headlines in European papers saying 'Please don't leave us'. This really upset me. I realised my heart was in Europe. I was starting to wobble. Was I doing the right thing? My head wanted democracy. I then felt angry at the EU for not being progressive enough or flexible or democratic enough, to drive us to have to make this terrible decision one way or the other. I decided I wouldn't vote, I couldn't vote. Then that I couldn't not vote, but would spoil my vote. I wrestled with it into the early hours as if the future of Europe lay in my hands, and in the end, I made my decision. I spoke to other people and they too felt that same terrible wrangling, as if it were their decision alone which would determine our future. I don't think anyone took their vote lightly – not this time. Everyone recognised the magnitude of what they were voting for – even here in the ruddy, scummy North.

Head on pillow and by now about 3am but mind abuzz, I started trying to predict the result, trying to work out why the polls were so adrift from the results in the last general election, and had the flaw been fixed. In order to gain data the pollsters have to presumably ring a random number and have the phone answered. Who was more likely to pick the phone up to an unknown number. A quick mental scan led me to believe it would be the Brexiter group and that they were therefore understated in the polls. I fell asleep around 5am now feeling convinced, that despite the polls, that we were going out.

Next morning I left it a few hours then went to the polling station. Myfa came with me. I have never seen so many dogs in Richmond – all trotting into the booths. When I got home I saw it wasn't just Richmond – trending on twitter were pics of 'dogs at polling stations'- thousands of them. I'd barely slept and knew it was going to be a long night ahead. Friends were coming round with a takeaway curry. At 10pm we switched on for the beginning of the coverage and the wait for the results. Almost immediately and before a vote was counted, Farage made his speech conceding. I didn't know what we'd missed. Boris had gone home on the tube telling fellow passengers that he had lost. We must have missed something, not one vote had even been counted yet. My friend then got a text out-of-the-blue saying could she go straight to Scotland to meet Donald Trump's helicopter which was arriving at 8.30am. I was left blissfully alone to hunker down on the settee with a cup of tea to see it out. So many people must have gone to bed thinking that we were in, that it was done and dusted. I wondered how many people across the country I was sharing the night with and how many were blissfully unaware of what was unfolding. At about 5am I drove into town to buy some teabags. Curtains all shut, no lights on, nobody knew. Weren't they going to get a shock. I couldn't resist beeping my horn to wake a few up.

I stayed glued to the TV as the reactions came – the shock, followed by the meltdown. Our future was going to depend on what sort of deal the EU would do with us. We waited for them to react. Juncker was furious and told us to just get out now. Cameron resigned, Osborne disappeared. The markets were in freefall – or so it seemed – the world and Continental ones far worse than our own. This gave me some hope that actually the EU might be kinder to us – they were suffering more than we were. And the tone did then change and Angela Merkel seemed conciliatory and amenable to perhaps looking at new type of associate membership for us. There was an admission from its leaders that the EU now needs to reform to be more 'flexible, human and democratic' – finally. Half the shadow cabinet resigns but Corbyn won't. Scotland is leaving. There will be another election, another referendum. And so it went on. Now it has turned into meltdown Monday. It's all going to be strung out for so long and be so damaging. It needed decisive action one way or the other but the vote out has just brought us to a limbo land - prevarication until the means are found to keep us in.

It was a binary choice and I would have been happy with either outcome knowing that it was the will of the majority, that we had had our vote.

My final thought. Whether you are a tinker or a tailor, an ex-miner or a vegan, a farmer or a steel worker or an architect, whether you work at HSBC head office or Grimsby fish market, whether you are 20 or 80, are rural or urban, shop in John Lewis or the Pound Shop, whether you vote with your head or your heart or your instinct or your expertise, or your madness or your prejudices, or your generosity of spirit – we are society, we are equal and no man's vote is worth more than another's. Democracy is the leveller and for all our sakes and for all our futures we must unite....please. Amen

I can guarantee that for the next month at least, the newsletter will be completely referendum-free. But honestly, what else could I write about on such a week.

Warmest wishes, Isobel