

Leavers of Britain, arise! Your time has come

*Former CIB chairman **Petrina Holdsworth** reports on a new social initiative designed to bring together communities of Brexiteers around the country.*

Many of you who live in London will be aware of an organisation called Leavers of London, which was set up after the EU Referendum to enable Leave voters in our capital to meet and socialise with like-minded people, without fear of judgement or recrimination.

Well, the project has now gone nationwide – with the launch of Leavers of Britain. I was lucky enough to be invited to its launch at a pub in Westminster on 1 November.

We all know that the fallout from the referendum has resulted in harsh words, broken friendships and in some cases broken families – a sort of civil war without the organised battles. But those Leave supporters who live in our capital city seem to have suffered the greatest levels of insults and isolation.

It was this continuing unpleasantness that led Lucy Harris – a quietly spoken, charming young Londoner – to set up Leavers of London, a community for Leave supporters in the capital. Lucy was understandably appalled by the treatment being meted out by some London Remainers to those brave souls who voted Leave. Leavers of London offered a sort of modern-day coffee house system where Brexiteers could meet and talk to other people who share their views, without the fear of getting involved in yet another argument with the “bad losers”.

Lucy is now extending the idea to the whole of Britain. The Leavers of Britain website will enable Leavers around the country to create our own communities and events.

Last Thursday evening I climbed the stairs of the Westminster pub with some trepidation. But I was quickly delighted to find myself stepping into a large room full of chat and bonhomie. It filled up very quickly, mainly with people who were straight from work. The average age was hovering around late-30s to mid-40s, although I have to confess that I am not too hot on guessing ages. I was certainly one of the older people there. So much for Leave voters being a bunch of old codgers!

After a few drinks we were treated to short, well-executed speeches from Brendan Cilton (Labour Leave) and Suzanne Evans (ex-UKIP). Lucy Harris then showed us her latest video (see below), and to great applause launched the new campaign to spread the community around the country.

It was particularly pleasing to see a number of other eminent Brexiteers in the crowd, including Bill Cash MP, Steve Baker MP (with whom I had a lively chat, well I thought it was lively), and Matthew Elliot (Vote Leave Campaign CEO), plus CIB supporter and author Hugo Van Randwyck, with whom I commiserated concerning the never-ending Brexit negotiations.

Congratulations to Lucy and her friends for having the courage and energy to form this fantastic networking group for all of those informed and intelligent people who put their country and their democracy first by voting Leave. No doubt many CIB supporters will be keen to sign up and get involved. I am certain it will be a great success!