

# Nostradamus lives! Anthony Scholefield's projections and the actual result

On 26 March, I circulated a paper entitled 'Projection of EU Referendum Vote' in which I forecast how all the major political party supporters would divide up between Leave and Remain, based on an ORB poll around that time.

I concluded "Opinion is now solidifying ... For these reasons, I am calling the result of the referendum now – a win for Leave – by about ten points."

"We must remember the referendum is not the end, it is a stage, and what happens afterwards is what matters."

"It is inevitable that, after a Leave win, our proposals must be the only safe, sane way to execute withdrawal."

I got some forecasts wrong. The turnout was much higher than I forecast but the forecast for lower than average turnouts in London and Scotland was correct.

The key was indeed the moderate Conservative voters. The Leave side did not quite get the 60/40% projection of vote for Leave among Conservative voters, but nearly got there.



My projections were accurate and, in most cases, very close to the result.

Why? Around 45% of the electorate had already decided, according to Ashcroft, before the beginning of 2016 so it was a reasonable inference that the late deciders would approximately decide in the same way on such a long running issue – 'Opinion was solidifying'.

- There was no last minute surge for Leave among Labour voters. If there was a slight ripple, it was among SNP voters who were slightly more in favour of Leave than I estimated.
- Self-government was far the biggest motive for the Leave campaigners while the economic arguments were the foremost motivator for Remain.
- The percentages are quite striking. Four out of five parties (five out of six in Scotland) supported Remain and, except for the Conservatives, the party leaders DID carry 63-75% of their voters with them. It was only the Conservatives who voted against their party leadership.
- The division in the Labour vote, 37-63%, was barely changed from the March projection of 35-65% or the ORB March poll of 39-61%. The idea that there was a sudden awakening of nativism of the ignorant being conned by right wing fanatics is simply wrong. It did not exist.
- The official campaigns on both sides seem to have been completely irrelevant. There was no movement of significance in the last three months. Both campaigns were negative and scaremongering. Both dealt in dodgy statistics.
- The quiet determination of the ordinary electorate to make a considered and thoughtful decision on a major issue and turn out in staggering numbers was, however, impressive and humbling.
- Finally, 81% of those described as "*in full time education*" voted to Remain, quite extraordinary. Youth seems conformist, ultra-conservative.