

## **Operation Brexit**

*Or the Brexit operation*

Everything we do, everything we plan, all conversation about development, is now done relative to what the situation will be if and when we leave the European Union. We live in the shadow of Brexit. It is the great unknown, an amputation where the UK is the limb being cut off with the dream of thriving as an independent body. We don't know how well the operation will go and what we will be post-op. We will survive, the consultants say, but will we thrive?

We know that in March 2017 Article 50 will be invoked and the operation begins; the clock will start ticking for the two year severing of the flesh and bone and the untangling of the myriad of veins and nerves that comprise the UK connection to the EU. It won't be easy. We hope that there is a skilled team of surgeons and nurses, and we would really like an anaesthetic please, though it looks unlikely that one will be offered. It is going to hurt.

Whether Scotland is with the limb or the body after the operation, is an unknown. We also don't know what the life-blood budget will be for Scotland, how it will be divided between sectors, how much will come to agriculture and rural development, how much of that will come to crofting, and so on. In other words, our food source is insecure. But crofters are used to that and it is more important than ever that crofters stick together and have a collective voice in the negotiations that will have to take place to get a fair share.

Despite what happens, despite the many unknowns and the insecurity, despite the losses and opportunities, we can look forward to eventual disambiguation, the clarity that will follow as we come out of the operating theatre and convalescence.