Right or wrong, our country

It has hard to find the words, original or borrowed, that best describe what has happened. Greater minds will have to apply themselves to the challenges ahead. I wish them well, it will not be easy.

Scotland Stronger in Europe developed a distinctive and discrete campaign. We sought to be fact-based, positive and, in the best sense, non-Party political. I will always believe we achieved that, and more.

Frank Roy quietly and diligently assembled a team of staff and volunteers that covered the entire country with enthusiasm, humour and genuine devotion. That the single colour of Remain covers the map of Scotland and two-thirds of the voting population, are a testament to Frank and all those who brought the best of Scotland, from all sides, to the campaign. They hold no blame for what took place on Thursday.

In covering many miles myself, I spent as much time explaining what the EU could, would and should not do, than the many benefits the community actually fostered. We heard of, in the starkest terms; an EU army, the inescapable Euro, unprecedented mass migration from new members, and the “truth” behind the aims of Ever Closer Union.

Those who campaigned against those last three words and the Prime Minister’s deal concerning them, would do well to read the words that follow them in the original Treaty. The Community was created “to ensure ... the economic and social progress of their countries ... constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their peoples ... concerted action to guarantee steady expansion, balanced trade and fair competition ... reducing the differences existing between the various regions ... the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade”.

On Thursday, by a margin greater than the entire Remain vote in Scotland, the UK resolved to step away from those commitments and from the counsel - given in good faith - of all its major partners, allies and neighbours.

I reflected on Friday morning, with some of the rather stunned foreign press, on some of those who worked for 43 years to put Scotland and the UK at the heart of Europe. Ewing and Johnston; Millan and Thomson; Martin, Collins and MacCormick; Mackenzie Stuart and Edward. Their names and work, and many more beside them, are part of the architecture and the history of what John Hume told the Nobel Prize Committee is “the best example in the history of the world of conflict resolution”.

The EU has been built on the rule of law and on group and individual freedoms. It has helped trade and innovation flourish, within its borders and beyond. It has
shown soft diplomacy and leadership in the world on issues like climate change and international development - all for less than the price of the average bar bill.

Those who asked for it, now have their country back. I dearly hope they have thought through what they wish to do with and how. I, for one, lost a part of my own country for good.