

Organising and managing across boundaries



Journal of
the Association for Management Education and
Development



Guest Editors: Chris Blatern and Tom Boydell

This is an experimental edition, likely to evolve over the coming weeks

Thanks to [Triarchy Press](#) for their continuing support.



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Cover illustration:. Original quotation – 'Two monologues don't make a dialogue' – Jeff Daly, from an original photograph by Mark Cardwell, composed by Chris Blatern, December 2002.

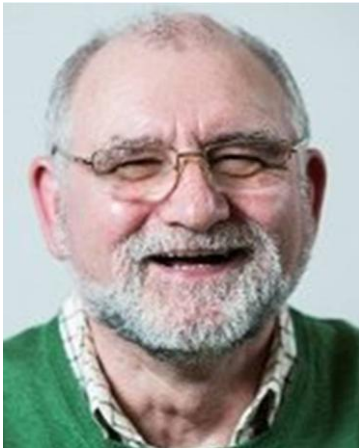
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A Narrow Escape

Peter Sheal



In our summer edition, anticipating the Scottish Independence Referendum, Peter expressed his strong feelings that a 'Yes' vote would be a terrible mistake. Here's his postscript

'It's just emotion,' the Bosnian wife of a friend commented from Sarajevo. Over Skype I'd been trying to explain the Scottish Referendum, but she understood within a few sentences. She'd suffered from the Balkan nationalist wars of the 1990s which destroyed the multi-national state of Yugoslavia and left a wrecked society and hundreds of thousands dead and wounded.

A Lebanese friend, who'd rescued his extended family from the Lebanese civil wars of the 1980s, was similarly bewildered. Ironically, he'd relocated his family to Quebec, Canada, and been shocked by the separatist referendum there. Significantly, it was immigrant families like his own fleeing from oppression and war who'd made the difference when that referendum was close.

We live in a prosperous and peaceful social democratic bubble. We tend to assume that this is how the rest of the world lives or wants to live. We watch the atrocities in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and the Ukraine as if they couldn't happen here. Our society is more fragile than we think and history teaches us that nationalism has its dark side and looks for scapegoats, particularly when through its policies there is economic failure.

On the night after the No vote there were violent scuffles between Nationalists and Loyalists in Glasgow. A Yes vote followed by a flight of capital and economic crisis would have brought Scotland and the UK into new and more dangerous territory. Negotiations would have become more hostile and as in Northern Ireland, questions about the reliability of the police and the role of the army would have begun to be asked. We have experienced a narrow escape.

About the author

Peter Sheal is a writer and training consultant with MDT International www.mdtinternational.com and delivers management development courses for the international oil and gas industry. He is the author of *How To Develop & Present Staff Training Courses* and the *Staff Development Handbook* published by Kogan Page.

Peter was born in Manchester of Scottish ancestors who took advantage of the opportunities afforded by the United Kingdom to move between Ireland, Scotland and England in pursuit of personal and family prosperity. He describes himself as British and has lived in Aberdeenshire for over 30 years.

Peter can be contacted at: p.sheal@btinternet.com

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We are specialists in learning and development – with particular emphasis on collaborative management and organisational learning. We have extensive experience in public, governmental and commercial sectors and are pioneers of effective methodologies for enabling ‘integration’, ‘co-production’, multi-stakeholder working and resolving ‘wicked problems’.

Our registered office is in S. Yorkshire with a satellite office in Dumfries & Galloway we have extensive UK and international experience.

Directors and associates are renowned practitioners and authors (Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell) of seminal works on organisational learning and self development.

Contact Chris Blantern or Tom Boydell: cblantern@inter-logics.net or tboydell@inter-logics.net

A note about *AMED*



AMED stands for the Association for Management Education and Development, www.amed.org.uk. We are a long-established membership organisation and educational charity devoted to developing people and organisations.

Our purpose is to serve as a forum for people who want to share, learn and experiment, and find support, encouragement, and innovative ways of communicating. Our conversations are open, constructive, and facilitated.

At AMED, we strive to benefit our members and the wider society. Exclusive Member benefits include excellent professional indemnity cover, free copies of the quarterly journal *e-O&P*, and discounted fees for participation in a range of face-to-face events, special interest groups, and our interactive website. We aim to build on our three cornerstones of **knowledge**, **innovation** and **networking** in the digital age. Wherever we can, AMED Members, Networkers and Guests seek to work with likeminded individuals and organisations, to generate synergy and critical mass for change.

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