

## **Times letters: The Continuing Fall Out from Brexit**

**Wednesday September 18th 2019**

### **MASTERY OF SURGERY**

Sir, Further to GW Aylward's letter ([Sep 17](#)) comparing David Cameron's response to the referendum result to that of an inappropriate management of a surgical problem in the operating theatre, as an anaesthetist I once persuaded a surgeon to leave the theatre, have a cigarette and a cup of coffee and calm down. That worked brilliantly and the patient survived.

**Suzanne Powrie, FRCA** London W1

Sir, In considering the management of complications, GW Aylward reflects upon a heroic age of surgery that has passed. The true mastery of surgery lies in the anticipation of complications and in the avoidance of unnecessary operations in the first place.

**David Rew, MChir, FRCS**

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### **Background**

The UK Brexit Referendum of June 2016 caused continuing reverberations in the Letters Column of the Times. I seized my opportunity for allegorical comment on the back of Mr GW Aylward's letter on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2016. As reproduced below.

## **Times letters: David Cameron's reasons for calling a referendum**

Tuesday September 17 2019,

Sir, As a surgeon I know that surgical complications, like political ones, have serious consequences. What defines a great surgeon is the ability to treat complications when they arise and limit the damage. The morning after the referendum, the "complication" of losing could have been managed in a way that reduced the harm. However, David Cameron did the political equivalent of tearing off his gloves and storming out of the operating theatre, leaving the patient with an open and bleeding wound. That is the definition of cowardice and will for ever be his legacy.

**G W Aylward, FRCS** London SE22