

[West Park Road – street sign](#)

Residents have contacted me regarding the fact that street sign in West Park Road at its junction with Perth Road (west side) is very faded :



I have therefore asked the council's Roads Maintenance Partnership if it can be replaced.

[Equipment collapse kills 9 at China power plant](#)

Nine people died and two others were injured when an operation platform collapsed at a power plant in south China's Guangdong Province Saturday, local authorities said.

The accident happened at around 8 a.m. at No. 7 Thermal Power Plant in the provincial capital Guangzhou, said sources with the local government of the outer Conghua District.

The plant, located in Conghua, is still under construction.

The government has launched an investigation.

Happy Birthday to the EU

I wish the EU well on its 60th birthday. The exit of the UK gives the EU a real chance to complete its currency union, and its borders union, two central features of the EU project that the UK under all parties in government was unwilling to accept. Freed of UK scepticism and reluctance, maybe the EU can now press on with building its vision of an integrated continent with a single economic policy, a single budget and more powerful Treasury at federal level, and common citizenship with external policed borders. Or maybe they will discover that the people of the other countries of Europe do not buy into that wider vision either.

It should also be time for the EU to reflect on why the UK left, why many parties on the continent are now pressing for their countries to leave the currency or even the whole Union, and why there are persistent and intense problems including high unemployment, migrations, a lack of agreement on the next steps in the Union, and a lack of proper opposition to EU policies within an EU level democratic framework.

Why, for example, has someone like me been such a critic of the EU? After all, I belong to many of the groups that are meant to be believers in the project. I am a globalist. I believe in an outward going foreign policy, freer trade where possible, democracy and tolerance, and the pursuit of peace. These are meant to be the values of the EU leaderships as well, so why didn't they carry me with them?

The answer is two fold. I watched their actions, and saw that so often they did not follow their own stated aims. I also saw that where they thought they were following their aims, they often chose policies which achieved the opposite of their stated ambition.

The biggest disappointment was their wish to build a large one size fits all bureaucracy seeking to control every aspect of life. This was never compatible with the wider ideals of liberty and democracy. It made creating a single demos even more difficult than it was going to be. With so many different languages and levels of economic development it was never going to be easy to get people to believe in a new European state.

They never followed the aim of building democracy into the EU properly. The Parliament was added, but it does not provide the government nor control the government. Too much power rests in the unelected and often unaccountable Commission. These full time officials can manipulate the member states and play them off against the Parliament. There is no organised opposition to the EU government suggesting an alternative programme or approach, or ready to take over when people have had enough a particular EU government. In practice

all the new laws are usually Commission ideas brokered with fluctuating factions of member states and the Parliament. The whole development is a ratchet to greater Union, even where past steps have demonstrably failed or proved unpopular.

They never followed the aim of promoting prosperity. Their currency scheme was bound to produce wild booms and busts in differing member states economies, as Ireland, Spain, Greece and others found to their cost. It was all entirely predictable – as I wrote often. After all we had seen the damage the European Exchange Rate Mechanism did. The Euro was just the version of that you could not easily get out of.

Their austerity policies which followed the boom bust entry of the Euro into many economies has created resentments and confined a whole generation of southern young people to unemployment.

They never worked out how to decide who could be a European citizen, and how to run orderly borders. Instead of the tolerance they wanted, they have created hostile attitudes to new arrivals in many parts of the continent.

Their birthday party should be a meeting for reappraisal. Do less, and do it better. Or get consent to the grand vision. Above all, try being democratic for a change. I saw from the beginning that the EU would not be to our liking. I read the Treaty of Rome which was never a Treaty for a free trade area as advertised. It was always a country in the making, where ambition far outran practicality.

Returnees lower income expectations

Chinese students returning from overseas studies have lowered their expectations of income amid fierce competition, a report has found.

Published on Friday by overseas recruitment company Lockin China, the report said overseas returnees “are becoming more rational” in their income expectations as an estimated 660,000 returnees are going to join a record high 7.95 million domestic college graduates in the job market this year.

According to the report, which surveyed 150,000 Chinese overseas students and professionals as well as thousands of Chinese enterprises, nearly 64 percent of overseas returnee respondents said their expected annual income ranges from 70,000 (\$10,170) to 120,000 yuan.

More than 27 percent of them expect more than 120,000 yuan, “which is much higher than the average level of the market”.

Compared with last year when 23 percent of those surveyed expected an annual income of more than 150,000 yuan, this year the group with such an

expectation has decreased to only 10.4 percent of respondents.

“There have been a great number of people returning from overseas, and the number is still on the rise. This makes overseas returnees more rational in their income expectations,” said Ge Wei, a manager with Lockin.

The report said there has been an “obvious” increase of returnees since 2005 and it was “a turning point” in 2015 when the country saw more than half of those who left to study abroad come back. About 450,000 returnees came back to China in 2015.

The tightened immigration policies in foreign countries, especially in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, are one of the major reasons for the increase of returnees, according to the report. Another major reason is the “global economic recession”, it said.

While 63.2 percent of returnees chose the tightened policy as one of the reasons to return, more than 54 percent chose China’s rapid economic growth.

Ge also said returnees don’t have many advantages when competing with their domestic peers for jobs. On average, they could make only about 500 yuan more a month than their peers who study at home.

It’s partly because it is difficult for them to show their advantages in interviews, she said, adding that many domestic graduates gain interview skills through training, but there is no such training in foreign universities.

But usually the returnees show their advantages after working for several years and see more possibilities for promotion and salary increases, she added.

Overseas students now start looking for jobs earlier, the report found.

More than 32 percent of overseas students started applying for domestic jobs six months before graduation.

The proportion of those who seek job opportunities only after returning to China has decreased from 64 percent in 2016 to 44.5 percent in 2017, according to the report.

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