

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

8th Mar 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

- A survey of the automotive industry, by leading independent law firm Brabners, has found that almost three quarters of the companies expect to move part of their operations outside of the UK during the next three years because of Brexit
- A labour market survey reported that UK employers were holding off from hiring permanent staff in February, adding to growing nerves prior to Brexit. February's survey reading was the second weakest since June 2016
- Estate agent Countrywide cited Brexit woes amongst its problems, as it slid to a second consecutive annual loss of more than £200m
- LK Bennett has become the latest victim of the high street downturn, as it entered administration with 500 jobs at risk
- The Scottish government economist's prediction that there would be a sharp rise in unemployment and a potential shock to the nation's GDP of up to 7%, in the event of a No Deal Brexit, continues to be reported on
- The CBI said Brexit has negatively affected sales (down 58%) and UK investment (down 43%) and costs to businesses have increased (up 59%), as a result of Brexit uncertainty, and stockpiling of goods has become an everyday business reality (up 43%), because No Deal is 'still on the table,' leaving businesses in the dark
- A study by the Office of National Statistics said that 'life was getting better before the Brexit vote,' according to its measures of satisfaction and lifestyle. However, its data went on to capture a growing sense of buyers' regret over Brexit
- The Institute and Faculty of Actuaries said the average British adults' life expectancy has been cut by six months, a downward trend that began in 2011 and continues today
- There are reports that dissident Irish republicanism is viewing the prospect of a hard border in Northern Ireland and Brexit as an opportunity to recruit and to invoke the nationalist notion of Irish resistance to British rule once more
- No Deal Brexit will hit catering in schools, hospitals and care homes, according to a report in the Sunderland Echo
- The UK said it is preparing to launch an international research fund to fill a gap left by the loss of European Union funding
- Jeremy Corbyn has been discussing a Norway-style, Common Market 2.0 Brexit, with a number of former Tory Ministers - Nick Boles, Oliver Letwin. This is a departure from his recently announced plans to back a second referendum.
- The Independent reports that Corbyn's second referendum announcement was more about party management than a firm policy commitment. It warns Jeremy Corbyn to tread carefully as large numbers of Labour Party members could feel a strong sense of betrayal
- The UK has been urged by the EU to submit acceptable Irish backstop plans. Reports from the media make it clear that there has been very little progress in negotiations between them. For example, The Guardian reported Geoffrey Cox flummoxed negotiators when he argued that a backstop per se could threaten Northern Irish human rights
- An Irish Times poll said the majority of people in Northern Ireland are unhappy with the

handling of Brexit by Theresa May and the DUP

- German finance minister Olaf Scholz said the country was prepared for all Brexit scenarios
- The Financial Times said Theresa May's authority is on the line in next week's 2nd meaningful vote as she looks set to receive another crushing defeat. Perhaps by as many as 100 votes.
- Arron Banks' company 'Better for the Country' filed accounts. It is now £3.3m in the red. He continues to bankroll the organization, with £2m in loans. There are no new figures for Leave EU, which was £6.17m in the red as of September 30th 2017
- Fewer than half of Britain's trade deals with non-EU countries will have been rolled over by the scheduled date of departure from the EU, the government confirmed. It has identified 161 agreements which need to be signed, and expects 64 to be so by March 29th, or shortly after, 64 may or may not be, and 33 agreements will definitely not happen

Jobs at Risk

UK automotive industry warns of Brexit exodus

Almost three quarters of automotive businesses expect to move part of their UK operations overseas in the next three years, according to a study by leading independent law firm Brabners. The new research, conducted with senior leaders from across the UK's automotive supply chain, found that nine in 10 viewed the EU as the most attractive destination if they were to relocate part or even all of their UK operations.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/business/business-news/uk-automotive-industry-warns-brexit-15937360>

UK firms hold off on permanent hires as Brexit nears - survey

British employers held off from hiring permanent staff in February, adding to signs of growing nerves ahead of Brexit in the country's otherwise strong labour market, a survey of recruiters showed on Friday. February's reading was the second-weakest survey reading since the shortly after the Brexit referendum in June 2016 following January's slump to 49.7.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-economy-jobs/uk-firms-hold-off-on-permanent-hires-as-brexit-nears-survey-id UKKCN1QP032>

500 jobs at risk as LK Bennett collapses into administration

LK Bennett has become the latest victim of the high street downturn after collapsing into administration, putting about 500 jobs at risk. The upmarket fashion retailer, which has 41 shops and 480 staff, announced last week that it could enter administration unless funding is found to keep it afloat as it struggled with soaring business rates. Five stores - Brent Cross and Westbourne Grove in London, Meadowhall in Sheffield, as well as Bristol and Liverpool - will close immediately. Workers at the stores as well as some in head office have been made redundant immediately by ad

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/03/07/500-jobs-risk-lk-bennett-goes-administration/?li_source=LI&li_medium=li-recommendation-widget

Market report: Brexit woe hits home at Countrywide

A second consecutive annual loss of more than £200m for Countrywide sent the UK's biggest estate agent sliding to the bottom of London's market as Brexit angst threatens to derail its turnaround. The company is implementing a "back to basics" plan to kick-start its recovery but Countrywide revealed that the turnaround has been hampered by a slump in property transactions as Brexit uncertainty bites. The company's shares have been under pressure since last summer when it tapped investors for a £140m lifeline, aiming to slash its debt pile.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/03/07/market-reportbrexit-woe-hits-home-countrywide/>

Economic Impact

Unemployment would rise after no-deal Brexit, top economist warns

A no-deal Brexit would be a “sharp shock”, increase unemployment and could shrink the Scottish economy by 7%, Scotland’s top economist warned MSPs. With just three weeks until the UK is due to leave the EU, the Scottish Government’s chief economic adviser said that they would not be able to mitigate all the damage caused by a no-deal Brexit. Giving evidence about his report into the economic impact if the UK leaves without an agreement in place, Dr Gary Gillespie told MSPs the Scottish economy would be between 2.5% and 7% lower compared with remaining. He said: “Despite the best government mitigation, a no-deal would impact a short, sharp shock to the economy.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/unemployment-rise-no-deal-brexit-140918899.html>

'Brexit stalemate means growing damage today and weaker economy tomorrow'

Less than one month before the UK is set to leave the European Union, CBI affiliated firms believe: The recent uncertainty around Brexit has negatively affected sales (weighted balance of -58%) and UK investment (-43%) - Costs have increased significantly (+59%) as a result of Brexit uncertainty - Stockpiling of goods is an everyday business reality (+43%) with ‘no deal’ still on the table

<http://www.cbi.org.uk/news/brexit-stalemate-means-growing-damage-today-and-weaker-economy-tomorrow/>

Subsidy for wages can protect jobs, say Bank researchers

Temporary wage subsidies to stop companies laying off staff in a recession are an effective tool against joblessness, Bank of England researchers have said in analysis that might feed into the policy response to a no-deal Brexit. On its Bank Underground blog, the Bank published a study of “short-time work” (STW) schemes, which are used in other European countries to stabilise the economy in a shock. The researchers found that “the presence of STW schemes can reduce the fall in employment brought on by a recession”.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/subsidy-for-wages-can-protect-jobs-say-bank-researchers-wjddb0kkr>

Brexit vote brought UK feelgood factor to abrupt halt, says ONS

It’s official: life in Britain was getting better before the Brexit vote. In the years up to 2016 people in the UK were on average feeling better about their lives, enjoying the data also captures a sense of buyer’s regret about Brexit. Between 2016 and 2018 the increase in the number of people believing that it was a good thing for EU citizens to have the right to work in the UK was higher than any other EU state - up by 11 percentage points. Then comes 2018, the proportion of people in the UK disagreeing that the country faced a better future outside the EU increased by six percentage points from spring 2016 to spring 2018. The ONS data reflects a sense of buyer’s regret about Brexit.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/06/brexit-referendum-brought-uk-feelgood-factor-to-abrupt-halt-says-ons>

It's a complete myth that a no-deal Brexit would cripple the British economy

Like most Leave voters, my position has hardened. I still don’t relish the idea of leaving without a deal, but I’m now, for the first time, reconciled to doing so. As matters stand, a so-called no-deal (in reality, we’ve already agreed lots of mini-deals) would be our least bad option. It wouldn’t be pretty, especially for one or two industries, but would probably cost just 1-2 per cent of GDP.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/06/complete-myth-no-deal-brexit-would-cripple-british-economy/>

Administrative Fall Out

Life expectancy falls by six months in biggest drop in UK forecasts

British adults’ life expectancy has been cut by six months in the biggest reduction in official longevity forecasts. The Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, which calculates life expectancy on behalf of the UK pension industry, declined to speculate on why longevity is deteriorating for men and women in England and Wales. Some analysts, however, blame austerity and cuts in NHS spending, others point to worsening obesity, dementia and diabetes.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/mar/07/life-expectancy-slumps-by-five-months>

UK community groups receive funding to help vulnerable EU migrants

UK organisations such as food banks, addiction centres and libraries are to receive public funds to help vulnerable EU nationals apply for settled status, to avoid a “second Windrush” generation losing their legal rights after Brexit. Migration campaigners have been warning that the pressure to register 3.5m EU citizens with new immigration credentials in the next two years could result in mass disenfranchisement, especially among the elderly, disabled, homeless and mentally ill. Those lacking internet access or necessary language skills are also at risk. Immigration officials are working on the basis that as many as 10 to 20 per cent of all EU nationals in the UK could be considered vulnerable and in need of assistance with the process.

<https://www.ft.com/content/4c3f42c0-401e-11e9-9bee-efab61506f44>

Brexit is a 'huge help' to Irish republicanism, says dissident leader

Brexit is a “huge help” to Irish republicanism and will fuel violent resistance to British rule in Northern Ireland, a dissident republican leader has claimed. The UK’s departure from the European Union has refocused attention on the border and the “colonialist” partition of Ireland, boosting efforts to politicise a new generation of Irish nationalists, Brian Kenna, chairman of the political party Saoradh, told the Guardian. “Brexit has been a small pilot light in reigniting that side of physical force to British occupation,” he said. Kenna spoke in an interview before three improvised explosive devices were found at separate transport hubs in London on Tuesday. At least two of the packages bore Irish stamps and postmarks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/06/brexit-is-a-huge-help-to-irish-republicanism-says-dissident-leader>

No Deal Brexit will impact on catering in schools, hospitals and care homes

Public sector catering includes schools, universities, hospitals, care homes and prisons; and therefore caters for some of the most vulnerable in our society. It is estimated that 10.5 million people in the UK rely on public sector catering for some of their food, of which some are completely reliant for all of their meals. Away from all the Brexit arguing, are people, young and old, who will suffer in the event of a No Deal Brexit.

<https://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/politics/no-deal-brexit-will-impact-on-catering-in-schools-hospitals-and-care-homes-sharon-hodgson-mp-1-9632710>

East Midlands Airport battles to keep cargo moving amid Brexit uncertainty

East Midlands Airport officials are in the dark on whether all cargo will be subject to further checks after Brexit. Extra border force officers are on standby if more checks are required on cargo from the EU after Brexit. About 365,000 tonnes of freight passes through the airport every year, making it the second largest freight airport in the UK after Heathrow. No one seems to know what will happen after the UK leaves the EU or whether all cargo will be subject to further checks. “We’re still waiting for government guidance on how that will look,” Mr Morris says.

<https://news.sky.com/story/east-midlands-airport-battles-to-keep-cargo-moving-amid-brexit-uncertainty-11656691>

Eurostar cancellations and Eurotunnel delays continue

Cross-Channel train services are being thrown into chaos again today as militant French trade unions continue a 'Brexit-style' checking system. Eurostar was reporting cancellations and delays to services from its Paris hub, where long queues started to build from 6am. Although nothing has yet changed, 'aggressive' questioning and passport checking has begun, travellers said. Meanwhile ferry firm DFDS announced on Twitter at 6am that delays had already reached 60 minutes on its Dover to Dunkirk service. One frustrated driver in Calais shared a video online as he drove past parked trucks for more than four minutes in what is believed to be a 15-mile tailback.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6781129/Chaos-Channel-train-services-continues-Brexit-protest-better-pay.html>

Brexit 'means fresh look' at boosting Scottish farming

Britain's departure from the EU could be an opportunity to "look afresh" at boosting Scotland's agriculture industry, a leading expert has said. Prof Wayne Powell, principal of Scotland's Rural College, said rural economies in places such as New Zealand and Norway were well ahead of Scotland. The main EU subsidy paid to UK farmers is to be phased out after Brexit. Experts have said Scotland's economy could be boosted by £4.5bn with a rural university.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-47480407>

Brexit: Will UK Government hear the prayers of Scots? - leader comment

Brexit was supposed to have been pretty much sorted last year. We were supposed to be entering an orderly transition period towards the end of this month. But it's now March and no one is able to say with any certainty what is going to happen next. As MPs flirt with the idea of a no-deal Brexit – despite the catastrophic effect this could have on our economy and, also, relations with the EU – they should bear in mind that, across Scotland, people are literally praying for this crisis to be averted.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/brexit-will-uk-government-hear-the-prayers-of-scots-leader-comment-1-4885584>

Birds Bakery begins stockpiling as Brexit deadline looms

Birds is stockpiling a number of ingredients it imports from the European Union as the Brexit deadline looms closer. Staff at the well-known bakery, based in Derby, revealed on Sky News that they have started squirrelling away their stash from the continent due to the uncertainty of what will happen come the end of the month. Mike Holling, head of retail at the company, is calling on the Government to end the uncertainty "once and for all". He said: "Fifty percent of our ingredients comes from the UK and 40 per cent come from outside the country but from the European Union.

<https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/derby-news/birds-bakery-begins-stockpiling-brexit-2620288>

'Terrified' produce growers in southern Spain brace for Brexit pain

Farmers in Spain are concerned that Britain's impending departure from the European Union could have a huge impact on their business. The trade in fresh produce hinges on getting goods to market promptly. By throwing up borders with the 27 countries remaining in the EU, Brexit could mean long, costly waits for trucks at customs posts. The prospect of UK import tariffs, volatile exchange rates and a potentially wounded British economy is also setting off alarm bells among farmers, workers and officials on the Mediterranean coast.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/terrified-produce-growers-in-southern-spain-brace-for-brexit-pain-1-5923284>

Brexit: Why are vets being recruited?

The Irish government is advertising a 4m euro (£3.4m) contract to recruit vets to carry out animal inspections in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Northern Ireland has already recruited additional vets and says further appointments are planned. It remains unclear whether any checks could take place at the Irish border. But EU law says animal products (including livestock) have to be inspected at the point they enter the single market. "We could see a surge in demand for border checks on animals and animal products," says Aurelie Moralis, president of the Northern Ireland branch of the British Veterinary Association.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47359306>

'I'm embarrassed!' Top violinist vows to leave the UK due to Brexit

A top violinist has claimed he is ready to leave the UK due to Brexit, claiming he was "embarrassed" to be associated with the country. Nigel Kennedy lashed out at Brexiteers, claiming most of those who voted to leave did not realise the consequences. And he praised calls for a second referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Speaking to Germany newspaper Die Welt, Mr Kennedy said: "I'm

embarrassed to be British - even though I'm half Irish.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1096979/brexit-news-nigel-kennedy-leave-uk>

UK considers post-Brexit research fund open to world

The UK government is considering creating an international research fund to fill a gap left by the loss of prestigious European Union funding after Brexit. Adrian Smith, director of the Alan Turing Institute in London, will lead a "major" project with the research community to look at establishing such a fund, UK science minister Chris Skidmore told a parliamentary science committee on 5 March. He said that such a fund, if established, would be open to international as well as British scientists.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-00808-4>

How five smaller UK firms are preparing for a no-deal Brexit

Britain has 5.7m small and medium-sized enterprises, defined as businesses with fewer than 250 employees, and concerns about a potentially disorderly departure from the EU span many sectors. Theresa May's deal is due to be put to a parliamentary vote on Tuesday. If the government is defeated, MPs will vote on successive days on whether to block a no-deal Brexit and whether to extend the departure date. Meanwhile, British SMEs try to plan for an uncertain future.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/07/how-five-smaller-uk-firms-are-preparing-no-deal-brexit-plan-uncertain-future>

Brexit: Why Derby isn't changing its mind about voting Leave

In 2016, nearly 60% of voters in Derby opted to leave the European Union and there is very little evidence since then that Derby regrets that decision. "It was divisive. It continues to be divisive. But issues like funding for the NHS, council cuts, immigration and a feeling of regaining sovereignty are still very strong amongst our readers," says Oliver Astley, digital content editor of the Derby Telegraph. And whilst in some areas of Britain there is some evidence to suggest a change of heart towards Brexit, a recent poll carried out by the newspaper suggested that the result would remain the same if a second referendum was held.

<https://news.sky.com/story/brexit-why-derby-isnt-changing-its-mind-about-voting-leave-11657237>

European parliament to keep Scotland office after Brexit

The European Parliament has decided to retain an office in Scotland after Brexit. BBC Scotland understands the parliament's Edinburgh operation will stay open until at least the end of next year. MEPs said it would provide advice to EU citizens living in Scotland and Scottish organisations seeking to maintain EU links. The Scottish government said it hoped the office would become permanent.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-47477629>

Brexit: Millions face 'Friday deadline' to renew passports in case of no-deal, says Which?

Millions of UK holidaymakers have been warned they need to renew their passports by tomorrow or face being barred from entering several European countries under a no-deal Brexit. Up to 3.5 million people risk falling foul of rules for entering countries in the Schengen zone, such as France, Spain and Italy, according to consumer group Which?. The rules state that visitors from non-EU countries must have at least six months left on their passport before its expiry date on the day of travel.

<https://news.sky.com/story/brexit-millions-face-friday-deadline-to-renew-passports-in-case-of-no-deal-says-which-11657376?dcmp=snt-sf-twitter>

Additional sources: (Vox.com)

Political Shenanigans

'Common market 2.0' - Jeremy Corbyn talks to former Tory ministers

Jeremy Corbyn has met Conservative former ministers promoting a Norway-style Brexit, raising the possibility that Labour could join a cross-party majority to force Theresa May's hand. Former

ministers Nick Boles and Oliver Letwin, as well as Labour MPs Lucy Powell and Stephen Kinnock, met Corbyn after prime minister's questions to discuss their "common market 2.0" plan. Shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer was not present. A Labour spokesman said they had met to "discuss how to achieve a deal that would be good for jobs and could bring leave and remain voters together".

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/06/common-market-20-jeremy-corbyn-talks-to-former-tory-ministers>

Additional sources: (Slugger O'Toole)

Brexit: UK urged to submit 'acceptable' backstop remedies

The PM is seeking legally-enforceable changes to the backstop - an insurance policy designed to prevent physical checks on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, but there have been few visible signs of progress. MPs are due to vote for a second time on the Brexit deal next week. If they reject the deal again, they will get to choose between leaving without a deal or deferring the UK's exit from the EU beyond the scheduled date of 29 March.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47476942>

Additional sources: (BBC News) (The Guardian) (BBC News)

Here Are The Two New Ideas Geoffrey Cox Presented To The EU

Tuesday's meeting is described in the note as "negative." It states that Cox, who is leading the talks for the UK side, presented the idea of an "arbitration panel" that would determine if the two sides were acting in good faith and were being reasonable in their efforts to identify alternative arrangements to the backstop — the insurance policy that guarantees that there can be no hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in all circumstances. Cox also proposed the concept of a new "mini backstop" that would limit the mechanism to only cover elements that relate to border infrastructure. Both ideas were rejected by Barnier. "[Barnier] requested fresh drafting," the note read.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/albertonardelli/here-are-the-two-new-ideas-geoffrey-cox-has-presented-to>

May should 'of course' deny another Scottish independence vote - Hunt

Britain's government should "of course" deny a request for a new referendum on Scottish independence if one is made, foreign minister Jeremy Hunt said on Thursday, wading into a row about secession fuelled by Brexit. Speaking at the University of Glasgow, Hunt said British Prime Minister Theresa May would reject any request by Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon for a fresh vote on secession - something nationalist activists are pushing for because of unhappiness about Brexit.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-scotland/deputy-snp-leader-says-new-scottish-independence-vote-could-happen-without-uk-blessing-idUKKCN1Q01AL>

Germany is prepared for all Brexit scenarios - Finance Minister Scholz

Germany and its customs authority are prepared for all Brexit scenarios, including Britain crashing out of the European Union without a divorce deal setting out future relations, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said on Thursday. "All necessary precautions have been taken," Scholz said during a visit to a logistics hub at an airport in the eastern city of Leipzig, adding that the government had already agreed to hire 900 additional customs officers.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-germany-scholz/germany-is-prepared-for-all-brexit-scenarios-finance-minister-scholz-idUKKCN1Q01Z5?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&rpc=921>

Fears post-Brexit prosperity fund could go to LEPs

Senior councillors have voiced concerns that the post-Brexit shared prosperity fund will be allocated to local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) rather than councils. During meetings today of both the Local Government Association's councillors' forum and executive, some councillors said they had been led to believe by Ministry of Housing, Community & Local Government officials or their local LEP that the fund would not be distributed through councils.

<https://www.lgcplus.com/politics/devolution-and-economic-growth/fears-post-brexiteer-prosperity-fund-could-go-to-leps/7028140.article>

This is Brexit's week of Waterloo

A maximum extension period, with it possible for the UK to leave at any point short of its termination, is a wholly different proposition. It doesn't matter if May says she 'definitely' doesn't want more than two or three months. The EU response would be: 'Fine if you can agree the present deal by the end of June, but since we are not convinced on past form that you can do so, we are giving you a longer period too, without the need for any further crisis negotiation this year.'

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/andrew-adonis-brexiteer-21-month-extension-1-5923248>

BREXIT FURY: 'Unless miracle happens' May deal will FAIL - Remainers blamed for deadlock

Cabinet ministers Geoffrey Cox and Stephen Barclay returned from Brussels yesterday without any sign of a breakthrough in the wrangle after EU chief negotiator as Michel Barnier rebuffed their demands for changes to the so-called "backstop" measures. Their failure to make progress left Theresa May facing a fresh crushing Commons defeat over her Withdrawal Agreement at Westminster next Tuesday. While EU and UK officials were continued the talks, angry Brexiteer MPs blamed the hard-line Tory Remainers pressing the Prime Minister to rule out a no-deal departure for the impasse.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1096611/brexiteer-news-latest-theresa-may-deal-latest-ERG-jacob-rees-mogg-no-deal-eu>

Additional sources: (The Independent) (Irish Times)

Theresa May faces these TWO key problems blocking her deal from passing in Parliament

Two problems will arise when Attorney General Geoffrey Cox brings a Brexit deal back to the House of Commons, predicts Mark Francois. The Brexiteer MP pointed out the Attorney General will not be able to give a legal opinion on the agreement as he is involved in the negotiations and, secondly, Theresa May has not secured a "clear mandate" on replacing the Brexit backstop.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1096672/brexiteer-news-latest-theresa-may-deal-vote-parliament-vote-date-geoffrey-cox-today-uk-eu>

Here's how Britain and Poland's relationship will continue to thrive after Brexit

Poland's UK ambassador, Arkady Rzegocki, writes for readers of the Daily Telegraph. He argues that Brexit is not going to impact on the UK-Polish relationship an desire to work together which has remained strong over time

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/07/britain-polands-relationship-will-continue-thrive-brexiteer/>

What happens if May's Brexit deal is voted down? And if it passes?

May will breathe a sigh of relief if her deal manages to squeak over the line on Tuesday, but not for long. She will probably still have to obtain a short technical extension of article 50 from Brussels to pass the legislation that needs to be in place for Brexit Day. At that point, having achieved a departure from the EU that pleases neither Brexiteers nor remainers, she would have to decide whether to try to limp on as prime minister or announce a timetable for standing down to avoid being pushed out by her party.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/07/what-happens-if-mays-brexiteer-deal-is-voted-down-and-if-it-passes>

May's authority on the line as defeat on Brexit vote looms

Theresa May is making contingency plans for a crushing defeat of her Brexit deal next week, amid fears in Downing Street that her authority will be swept away in a series of humiliating Commons reverses. Mrs May is expected to make a dash to Brussels on Sunday — or even at dawn on Monday — as she tries to extract last-minute concessions from the EU that might turn parliamentary opinion

in favour of her Brexit deal.

<https://www.ft.com/content/cc519ab0-40f7-11e9-b896-fe36ec32aece>

Brexit row hits Scottish Labour on eve of conference

In a sharp illustration of tensions within the Scottish party, Mr Leonard's predecessor as Scottish party leader this week accused him of censoring anti-Brexit opponents. In a leaked letter, Kezia Dugdale formally complained to Mr Leonard about "wholly inappropriate" changes to a statement by departing Scottish Labour members of the European Parliament that was published in the official conference guide.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8d146afa-40d2-11e9-b896-fe36ec32aece>

Political Setbacks

Backstop may threaten Northern Irish human rights, says Cox

Geoffrey Cox said unless the Irish backstop could be shown to be a temporary arrangement, it risked breaching protocol 1, article 3 of the Human Rights Convention, which protects the rights of people to vote in order to choose their legislature. In what appeared to be a curve ball, Cox told the EU that Northern Irish citizens would be unrepresented in the EU's decision-making institutions, including the European parliament, thereby diminishing their rights.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/07/attorney-general-geoffrey-cox-rejects-eu-brexit-deadlock-complaints>

Irish Times poll: Majority in North unhappy with handling of Brexit by May and DUP

The poll finds that Northern voters are deeply dissatisfied with the management of Brexit by the UK government and, most significantly, with the Democratic Unionist Party, with more than three-quarters of all voters saying they are dissatisfied with the UK government. Two-thirds of all voters (67 per cent) say the DUP is doing a bad job of representing Northern Ireland at Westminster, while 69 per cent of people – including 57 per cent of those from a Protestant background – are dissatisfied with DUP leader Arlene Foster.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/irish-times-poll-majority-in-north-unhappy-with-handling-of-brexit-by-may-and-dup-1.3818264>

Labour warned against 'betraying' members as party admits it may not back fresh Brexit referendum

Sources close to the Labour leadership confirmed that the party is not advocating a referendum on anything other than a "damaging Tory Brexit" and will not support one if Britain leaves the EU on terms that Labour backs. The Independent has learnt that the issue was the subject of a row between Mr Corbyn's shadow ministers that pitted Keir Starmer and Emily Thornberry against Brexit-backing frontbenchers led by Jon Trickett. As it dawned on Labour Remainers today, a prominent MP who backs the People's Vote campaign warned that a failure of the party to follow through on the pledge to back a new referendum would be seen as a "betrayal".

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-brexit-eu-referendum-members-deal-jeremy-corbyn-theresa-may-a8813041.html>

Breaking point: The brilliant poster showing the real threats to the country

Led By Donkeys, together with For our Future's Sake, today hired the exact same van used by Farage to launch his referendum poster showing a queue of mostly non-white migrants and refugees with the slogan "Breaking point: the EU has failed us all" and drove it to Westminster's Smith Square, the same place he launched it. But they gave it a redesign: replacing the migrants with Brexiteers such as Boris Johnson, Liam Fox, David Davis and Farage himself, and tagging it "The UK is being swamped by a tide of incompetents". The campaigners said: "By taking the exact same ad van that Nigel Farage used to launch his vile poster in 2016 and replacing it with our own version,

we hope to go a little way towards cleansing our country of that noxious moment.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/poster-showing-the-real-threats-to-the-country-1-5924466>

Delay Brexit for year to prevent ‘impending national disaster’, urges Gordon Brown

Brexit should be delayed for up to a year to prevent an “impending national disaster” and allow proper consideration of the UK’s future relationship with Brussels, Gordon Brown said. The former prime minister said an extension to Article 50 was “inescapable” to avoid chaos on the scheduled March 29 departure date from the European Union. He said that extending the period by 12 months would allow MPs to listen to the public through a “citizens’ consultation” on the detail of current Brexit proposals and the alternative options.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/delay-brexit-for-year-to-prevent-impending-national-disaster-urges-gordon-brown-1-4885625>

May’s authority on the line as defeat on Brexit vote looms

The prime minister’s team fears another defeat on Wednesday when MPs are likely to vote on whether to allow Britain to leave without a deal, an option Mrs May says the UK should retain for negotiating purposes. A third vote could take place on Thursday next week on whether to extend the Article 50 exit process from the EU. Mrs May’s team says that the votes on delay and no-deal could be held back-to-back on Wednesday to avoid a cascade of humiliations for Mrs May through the week, even if there would no disguising the scale of the defeat.

<https://www.ft.com/content/cc519ab0-40f7-11e9-b896-fe36ec32aece>

Former Brexit minister Suella Braverman insists Portsmouth port will work ‘just as effectively’ after Britain leaves European Union

Former Brexit minister Suella Braverman has insisted the city’s port will function ‘just as effectively’ after Britain leaves the European Union. Hampshire’s local resilience forum has drawn up contingency plans for a no-deal Brexit, including preparing land and a triage system near the port at Tipner West. Planners fear any delay at the border would lead to the backing-up of lorries on the M275 – rapidly spreading to the M27 within minutes.

<https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/politics/former-brexit-minister-suella-braverman-insists-portsmouth-port-will-work-just-as-effectively-after-britain-leaves-european-union-1-8838514>

Theresa May urged to safeguard emergency food supplies in no-deal Brexit

Theresa May has been urged by more than a dozen major charities to safeguard food supplies for vulnerable people in the event of a no-deal Brexit. The Trussell Trust, Church Action on Poverty and FareShare were among 15 organisations to write to the prime minister calling for a “hardship fund”, which would be used to help those worst hit if Britain crashes out of the European Union without a deal. They warned that services like meals on wheels and free school dinners, as well as supplies to food banks, homeless hostels and refuges, could be adversely hit if food prices increase. These services feed millions of people every day. Children, the elderly, hospital patients and low-income families could all be affected, the charities said.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-no-deal-theresa-may-food-shortage-supply-poverty-a8811836.html>

MANDRAKE: Arron Banks' Brexit campaign outfit £3m in red

Arron Banks is not letting a National Crime Agency investigation dampen his ardour for Better for the Country. New accounts, just in at Companies House, reveal that Banks has continued to bankroll the controversial outfit with £2 million in loans, but, for all his largesse, it’s now £3.3m in the red. The multi-million-pound admin expenses were reported in the 2017 accounts for Better for the Country at at £611,184 for 2017, plus £12.4m for 2016. There are no new figures for Leave EU, which was £6.17m in the red at September 30, 2017. Officially, the NCA investigation concerns the entities Better for the Country and Leave.EU, as well as Banks, Elizabeth Bilney and other individuals.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/mandrake-diary-on-arron-banks-s-brexit-campaign-1-5923731>

Belfast Shows the Price of Brexit

If the U.K. exits the EU warrant system, it will have to stand up its own—and if that new system does not pass muster with EU courts, Irish police might not be allowed to extradite wanted criminals. The harder border will militarize. Over the past three days, as I've had many conversations with Irish politicians and officials, both with those still serving and even more with those who are retired, the word that recurred most often in discussions of Brexit was betrayal. They imagined that they had at last awoken from Joyce's nightmare. Now it has returned, scarier than ever.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/03/brexit-could-reawaken-northern-irelands-troubles/584338/>

Brexit is a 'huge help' to Irish republicanism, says dissident leader

Brexit is a “huge help” to Irish republicanism and will fuel violent resistance to British rule in Northern Ireland, a dissident republican leader has claimed. The UK's departure from the European Union has refocused attention on the border and the “colonialist” partition of Ireland, boosting efforts to politicise a new generation of Irish nationalists, Brian Kenna, chairman of the political party Saoradh, told the Guardian. “Brexit has been a small pilot light in reigniting that side of physical force to British occupation,” he said. Kenna spoke in an interview before three improvised explosive devices were found at separate transport hubs in London on Tuesday. At least two of the packages bore Irish stamps and postmarks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/06/brexit-is-a-huge-help-to-irish-republicanism-says-dissident-leader>

Brexit talks contain uncanny echoes of events a century ago

The tortuous talks on Brexit, which are now entering a critical stage, contain uncanny echoes of the events of a century ago that reshaped the continent of Europe. One of the threads that links past and present is the Irish Border, which had its origins in the great political controversy over Home Rule that dominated politics in Ireland and Britain on the eve of the first World War. Back in the summer of 1914 in an effort to avert a political crisis that threatened to unleash a civil war across the United Kingdom, King George V convened a conference of British and Irish political leaders at Buckingham Palace. One of the big issues was whether some counties of Ulster should be excluded on a temporary basis from the remit of an Irish parliament and if so which ones.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/brexit-talks-contain-uncanny-echoes-of-events-a-century-ago-1.3816641>

New IRA 'has recruited dozens of dissidents amid mounting anger over Brexit'

Up to 200 active members have signed up to Republican terror groups amid anger over Brexit, a source has claimed

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/new-ira-has-recruited-dozens-14093143>

Government 'in chaos' as Brexit department boss to quit on EU departure date

Pro-EU campaigners have blasted the Government after it emerged the top civil servant in the Brexit department will quit the day the UK leaves the EU. Philip Rycroft will retire as permanent secretary at the Department for Exiting the European Union on 29 March after just over a year in the role. It means the office will soon be on its third boss in less than three years, after former permanent secretary Olly Robins was moved to the Cabinet Office in 2018. Labour MP and People's Vote campaigner Jo Stevens said the personnel moves at the top of the department were “a reflection of the whole Brexit process – shambolic and doomed to fail”.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/102350/government-chaos%E2%80%99-brexit-department-boss-quit-eu>

Additional sources: (The Independent)

Facebook finds UK-based 'fake news' network

Facebook has removed more than 130 accounts, pages and groups it says were part of a UK-based

misinformation network. The company said it was the first time it had taken down a UK-based group targeting messages at British citizens. The same group set up pages posing both as far-right outlets and anti-fascist activists. Facebook said it had shared its discovery with law enforcement and the government. The group was able to gain followers by setting up innocent-looking pages and groups. It later renamed them, and started posting politically-motivated content. MP Damian Collins, who chairs a committee investigating fake news, said it was the "tip of the iceberg".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-47482145>

The political plot to engineer a soft Brexit is doomed to fail spectacularly

The pressure on pro-Brexit opponents of May's deal continues. This morning, Chancellor Philip Hammond threatened that if Parliament does not pass May's deal, the UK will not leave on March 29th as scheduled and the delay will be used by opponents of Brexit to achieve a much "softer" post-Brexit deal. This argument is confused and unconvincing. It is confused in that the main objections to May's deal are not how "soft" a Brexit it implies. The main objections are that it makes the EU, not the UK, sovereign over the key economic laws of Ireland, in violation of the Belfast Agreement, and that it involves paying £40bn we don't owe the EU for nothing in return

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/07/political-plot-engineer-soft-brexit-doomed-fail-spectacularly/?li_source=LI&li_medium=li-recommendation-widget

After Brexit, Britain will be a rule-taker

Free-enterprise Brexiters railing against supposedly excessive EU red tape have never understood the relationship between common rules and open markets. Liberalising trade across national frontiers requires shared standards to ensure a level playing field. The single market has had great success in promoting trade because the EU has been able to harmonise the rules. They are wrong. The simple fact is that in today's global economy, rulemaking is the property of the most powerful players. If you are one of the world's biggest importers you can insist others meet your standards. Likewise, if you have a serious grip on a particular industry you can set sector-wide norms. The EU, the US, and, to varying degrees, China, Japan and India all fit this bill. Britain is not big enough. Within the EU it has been at once a rulemaker and a rule-taker. Outside, its only real choice will be between whether it should accept rules from Brussels or elsewhere.

https://www.ft.com/content/67701b76-4007-11e9-9bee-efab61506f44?_twitter_impression=true

James O'Brien just proved that these old promises about Brexit have turned out to be completely false

There are no two ways about it, James O'Brien has an excellent skill for cutting through obfuscating Brexiters' arguments, and getting to the truth of the matter. Now, the long-suffering Remainer, and LBC radio host, has turned his ire on politicians' historical claims about Brexit, and proved them to be complete and utter 'hogwash'. With only 23 days to go before Brexit, and no deal with the EU in sight, his frustration at the situation is getting more and more palpable, as he tears those responsible for this 'shambles' to shreds.

<https://www.indy100.com/article/james-obrien-lbc-brexit-promises-theresa-may-jacob-rees-mogg-boris-johnson-leave-8810116>

For leavers, it is not about the economy

Few of the 17.4 million who voted Leave in 2016 ever wanted any of that. Most of them come from a different place than Boris Johnson or Jacob Rees-Mogg. I've tried to understand Leave voters partly by going through surveys, with help from Matthew Goodwin of the University of Kent. I've also consulted my private hotline to a subcategory of Leavers: several hundred FT readers who have emailed me since 2016 in response to my out-of-touch elitist Remoaning. The vast majority of Leave voters know what they voted for, still believe it and are unmoved by the latest Remainer arguments. That's because the three-year dialogue of the deaf between the two Britains continues: Remainers

talk economics, while most Leavers talk culture.

<https://www.ft.com/content/ebaeabcc-3f9b-11e9-9bee-efab61506f44?segmentId=080b04f5-af92-ae6f-0513-095d44fb3577>

@JolyonMaugham Cummings made the tactical choice to allow Brexit to mean different things to different people. That was the only way he could get a "mandate".

Before elevating Cummings to sainthood, remember: he made the tactical choice to allow Brexit to mean different things to different people. That was the only way he could get a "mandate". There was no way then and is no way now to resolve the contradictions. That's the problem.

<https://twitter.com/JolyonMaugham/status/1103296914693541888>

As foreign secretary I argued against an EU referendum. Now I back one

The UK is in a Brexit dead end and May's deal satisfies no one. I don't see any way out other than allowing voters the final say

https://share.qz.com/news/2316845?ref=user_370630&u=r83ohb&from=twitter

Brexit deal 'will be defeated by 100 votes', ministers believe, after talks in Brussels collapse

Theresa May's Cabinet is resigned to her Brexit deal being defeated by up to 100 votes next week after talks in Brussels collapsed without progress on Wednesday. Downing Street is already making plans for a third "meaningful vote" on the deal on the assumption that Tuesday's vote is lost, and Mrs May is considering making a major speech on Friday to plead for support from MPs. One minister said it appeared "certain" that the Commons vote on the Brexit deal will be lost, and that Mrs May's next move would depend on the scale of the defeat. Meanwhile the Chief Whip, Julian Smith, has warned MPs their Easter break could be cancelled if Brexit is delayed

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/06/brexit-deal-will-defeated-100-votes-ministers-believe-talks/?WT.mc_id=tmg_share_tw

Trade Deals/Negotiations

Majority of UK's non-EU trade deals still up in the air

Fewer than half of Britain's deals with non-EU countries will have been rolled over by the country's scheduled date of departure from the European bloc, the UK government has said. The Department of Exiting the European Union said that it had identified 161 agreements with non-EU countries — including trade and aviation deals — that would need to be updated after Brexit. Of those, 64 are certain or highly likely to be replicated by March 29 or shortly after, 64 may or may not be, and 33 definitely won't be.

<https://www.ft.com/content/3da34950-40ff-11e9-b896-fe36ec32aece>

Most EU treaties won't be replicated in UK by 29 March, says minister

Brexit secretary confirms only 43 of 161 agreements seen as essential have been rolled over

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/07/most-treaties-not-ready-for-uk-being-outside-eu-admits-brexit-minister>

Fear of Brexit disruption stalks Turkey-UK trade ties

Turkey and the UK have a strong political relationship, and have spent the three years since the Brexit vote informally discussing the outline of a future free trade agreement. But Theresa May's government made clear last month that an Ankara-London deal would not be in place in time for Britain's scheduled exit date of March 29. Turkey's status as a customs union partner but a non-EU state means that its hands are tied until the EU has itself struck a deal with the UK, experts said.

<https://www.ft.com/content/1db2bcf4-3eaf-11e9-b896-fe36ec32aece>

Brexit: Will it affect the Kenyan flower trade?

As Britain prepares to leave the European Union, workers in Kenya's flower industry are closely monitoring developments. Flowers are big business in Kenya and earnings from exports have doubled in the past five years. A key export destination is the UK, which most of the flowers enter after being auctioned in the Netherlands. Growers and exporters in Kenya are asking the same question - what impact will Brexit have on the flower trade?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-47400859>