

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

30th Apr 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

Brexit undermines the pound's global currency status

- [Brexit will threaten the pound's](#) status as a global reserve currency, according to a survey of central bank money managers

British car output falls for the tenth month in a row

- [Output tumbled by an annual 14.4% to 126,195 cars](#) in March, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. Exports, which account for nearly four out of every five cars made in Britain, were down by 13.4%

Britain trapped in a Brexit 'No Man's Land' - next decade could be weakest for growth since WW2

- [Andrew Sentence, a former member of the Bank of England](#) central bank interest rate setting monetary policy committee said 'I can see the UK limping along for a while, right up until Brexit negotiations are fully resolved. I can see the UK being in this limbo-land for quite a while, certainly up until the late 2020's'

Brexit will slow the UK economy for the rest of 2019 - forecaster predicts

- [Howard Archer, the EY Item Club's chief economic](#) adviser said 'Delays to Brexit, a difficult domestic economic and political backdrop and slower global economic growth will result in a weaker outlook for UK GDP this year'

UK consumers remain unfazed by the Brexit storms, firms a little more upbeat - survey says

- [The GfK consumer confidence index held](#) steady for a third month at -13 during April. Spending by UK consumers has helped soften a slowdown in the overall economy, with help from a combination of low employment, rising wages and modest inflation

Number of UK firms in critical financial distress soars by 17%

- [A survey by insolvency group Begbies Traynor](#) found that half a million businesses - one in seven of all UK companies - were in significant financial distress during the first three months of 2019. The number of distressed companies in the property sector jumped by 13% to 48,182 from 45,512 from a year earlier. Property was the worst hit sector for the second quarter in a row as people are holding off making big purchases like new homes

UK will ask for assurances from the European Union on the fate of British citizens living in the EU bloc

- [The UK parliament passed a resolution in February](#) to mandate the government to seek assurances

of the fate of UK nationals in the EU bloc post-Brexit. The EU Commission said it would not negotiate mini-deals, therefore, the UK should pass the withdrawal agreement in which this issue has already been negotiated

Eyes down for today's Labour Party National Executive Committee Meeting

- [An almighty clash between the Labour Party's pro-Europeans](#) and its Lexiteers looks set to take place Tuesday. At stake is the fate of the wording of any commitment to a confirmatory, or second Brexit referendum, in Labour's European Election manifesto. Both factions look set to clash with the Labour leadership likely to propose that the party 'agrees a formula which is a restatement of the party's equivocal and prolix party conference resolution from last September.' Often described as a position of 'constructive Brexit ambiguity'

Brexit compromise talks to end deadlock over Brexit move on to discuss 'nuts and bolts' of any future deal

- [Labour's shadow environment secretary said](#) the Monday meeting with senior government ministers was very constructive, that there was more to discuss, but the government is starting to indicate a willingness to drop some of its red lines

Second referendum options are part of the cross-party talks, says David Lidington

- [Senior Conservative MP David Lidington confirmed](#) that a second referendum has been discussed as part of the cross-party talks on a Brexit deal. He did add that it was not government policy to support a second referendum and that the idea has been defeated the last couple of times it was voted on in Parliament

Former Tory Universities Minister said the government's plans to hike university fees for EU citizens means it risks being seen as 'against young people'

- [Sam Gyimah said the government plans undermined the](#) universities sector. The government seems to be taking steps to make it more difficult for young people in this country to live, work and study abroad

No decision as yet on post-Brexit student fees

- [With the media focussing on government](#) plans to increase fees for EU students wishing to study in the UK after Brexit firmly in the public domain, the sound of ministerial backpedalling could be loudly heard across Whitehall. Accusations flew among Parliamentarians suggesting that 'the government is building walls between the top British universities and the EU' and 'the EU would likely reciprocate meaning only the richest from the UK could afford to study abroad.' So later in the day the government said it had not yet agreed this new charging policy yet so it was purely hypothetical at this stage

MPs could vote again on Brexit options if the cross-party talks break down

- [Theresa May's spokesperson said cross-party](#) talks would continue as long as there was still a prospect of reaching a single position to put to parliament. But, he added, if they end, the PM would then look to bring forward a small number of votes to try and find a way through Parliament.

Farage's Brexit Party eyes seat of disgraced ex-Labour MP Fiona Onasanya

- [Nigel Farage's party will contest the Peterborough](#) by-election if a Parliamentary recall petition triggers it later this week. Nigel Farage is bullish about his party's chances declaring that it would fight to win the seat

The shadow of a future Tory leadership contest starts to loom

- [Current prisons minister, Rory Stewart was](#) quoted as saying he'd likely quit if Boris Johnson became leader. Former Tory minister, Chris Patten, also said; '[I can certainly think of some candidates in my party](#) who I could not conceivably vote for'

Nigel Farage refuses to reveal who made the 'one big donation' to his party

- [The fall out from Farage's LBC interview](#) in which he dropped the news that he had one big donor and loads of small ones funding his party is starting to spread to the mainstream media

Nigel Farage's 'British streets split by race' speech to a U.S. audience begins to be reported

- [In an inflammatory speech to conservative students](#) at Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania, Nigel Farage said 'Oldham was so racially divided that blacks lived on one side of the street and whites on the other and there was no assimilation whatsoever just a divided society'

Theresa May will just delay a Queen's Speech to Parliament until 'after Brexit is delivered'

- [Any new session of Parliament, scheduled to begin in June](#), would simply not begin until the Brexit withdrawal agreement has been ratified. Theresa May's spokesperson said there was now no specific date for a new session of Parliament to start

Theresa May is the first Tory leader in 185 years to face an emergency grassroots vote demanding her resignation

- [The Sun reported that the PM is to be hauled](#) in front of a snap meeting of all 800 Conservative Party constituency chairmen and activists in June, at which there will be a discussion and vote on whether to demand her resignation for failing to deliver Brexit

Economic Impact

Brexit threatens pound's status as global currency, survey says

Brexit is likely to threaten the pound's status as a global reserve currency according to a survey of central bank money managers who say Britain's departure from the EU will alter their views on sterling. The pound's history as one of the most important global currencies has meant central banks have long held assets denominated in pounds that can be sold quickly to help curb swings in their own currency's exchange rates. But a poll by Central Banking Publications, a trade journal, suggests its status will be endangered by Brexit, with three-quarters of reserve managers predicting that central banks will collectively alter — and in all likelihood cut — their sterling holdings. More than one-third of 80 people surveyed — managers working at central banks that hold €7tn in assets — indicated that they would reduce the sterling holdings they personally control.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a9e5ddc2-6845-11e9-a79d-04f350474d62?sharetype=blocked>

UK car output falls 14% in March, worse seen if no Brexit deal

British car output fell for the tenth month in a row in March, hit by a slowdown in key foreign

markets, and the sector stands to suffer a lot more if the country leaves the European Union without a deal, an industry body said on Tuesday. Output tumbled by an annual 14.4 percent to 126,195 cars in March, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said. Exports, which account for nearly four out of every five cars made in Britain, were down by 13.4 percent. The SMMT said analysis it had commissioned predicted output would fall this year to 1.36 million units from 1.52 million in 2018, assuming London can secure a transition deal with the EU. If Britain has to rely instead on World Trade Organization rules for its trade with the bloc, which include import tariffs, output is forecast to fall by around 30 percent to 1.07 million units in 2021, returning to mid-1980s levels, the SMMT said

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-economy-autos/uk-car-output-falls-14-in-march-worse-seen-if-no-brex-it-deal-idUKKCN1S52AK>

How has Brexit vote affected the UK economy? April verdict

Britain's economy is trapped in "no man's land" by Brexit and the next decade could be the weakest for growth since the second world war, a former senior Bank of England policymaker has warned. Andrew Sentance, a former member of the central bank's interest rate-setting monetary policy committee (MPC), said: "The UK economy will be limping on for a while, until Brexit negotiations are fully resolved. I can see the UK being in this limbo-land for quite a while - certainly until the late 2020s." The warning comes as the Guardian's Brexit dashboard reveals robust growth at the start of the year, fuelled by a dramatic rise in stockpiling before the original Brexit date of 29 March, now postponed until the end of October.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/apr/29/how-has-brex-it-vote-affected-the-uk-economy-april-verdict>

Brexit will slow UK economy for rest of 2019, forecaster warns

Howard Archer, the EY Item Club's chief economic adviser, said: "Delays to Brexit, a difficult domestic economic and political backdrop and slower global economic activity have resulted in a weaker outlook for UK GDP growth this year." The report said the Bank would probably leave interest rates at 0.75% - where the base rate has been set since August last year - throughout 2019. However, it added that a 25 basis point hike over the summer to 1% could not be ruled out, if the economy continued to show resilience and the labour market strengthened further.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/apr/29/brex-it-will-slow-uk-economy-for-rest-of-2019-forecaster-warns>

Administrative Fall Out

UK consumers unfazed by Brexit storm, firms more upbeat: surveys

British consumers were unruffled by the latest twists and turns in the country's Brexit drama and companies have dialled down their worry levels, two surveys published on Tuesday showed. The GfK consumer confidence index - which was conducted mostly in the run-up to a Brexit deadline that was eventually pushed back, the second such delay since March - held steady for a third month at -13 in April. Spending by Britain's consumers has helped soften a slowdown in the overall economy, thanks to a combination of low unemployment, rising wages and modest inflation.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-economy-consumersentiment/uk-consumers-unfazed-by-brex-it-storm-firms-more-upbeat-surveys-idUKKCN1S52B7>

Employee anxiety peaks despite government's pledge to uphold workers' rights post-Brexit

Despite the government's pledge to keep and strengthen workers' rights in a post-Brexit world, research from the CIPD has revealed that over a quarter (26 percent) of British employees have expressed job anxiety. Simultaneously, a recent article from the Guardian also states that 64 percent of people believe the stress caused by Brexit is bad for their mental health.

<https://workplaceinsight.net/employee-anxiety-peaks-despite-governments-pledge-to-uphold-workers-rights-post-brex-it/>

Brexit latest: Number of UK firms in critical financial distress soars 17%

The number of UK businesses in "critical" financial distress jumped 17 per cent over the year to the end of March, with a significant deterioration seen in the first quarter of 2019 as Brexit uncertainty deepened. Research by insolvency firm Begbies Traynor found that almost half a million businesses - one in seven of all UK companies - were in significant financial distress in the first three months of 2019. The number of significantly distressed companies in the property sector jumped by 13 per cent to 48,182 for the quarter, from 42,512 in the same period a year ago. Property was the worst-hit sector for the second quarter in a row, and was hurt by people holding off making big purchases including new homes.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/brexit-latest-uk-business-financial-distress-economy-begbies-traynor-a8891451.html>

My mum fled to the UK from Somalia's civil war, now Brexit may uproot her all over again

In the case of my mother, she was suffering from PTSD from the war and followed my father, who had promised her a better life, to the UK. When I ask about the time she spent in the Netherlands, she says she doesn't quite remember - with fresh memories of the war looming over her, she cared simply about providing for her children. Since then, she has lived and worked in Britain for well over a decade. She has in all respects (although I personally dislike the connotations of this word) "integrated" into British society. Now my mother feels a sense of anxiety whenever Brexit is mentioned. I also hold Dutch nationality, but my fears do not run as deep as hers. She has asked me numerous times if she will be forced to move again and worries because her memory of the Netherlands is hazy due to her suffering from shock at the time. It may seem like the least of politicians' worries at the moment, but we need to treat the mental health of these former refugees more carefully.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-eu-citizens-immigration-somalia-migrants-home-office-javid-a8889841.html>

Government looking to charge EU students more to attend English universities after Brexit

Education ministers are looking at hiking fees for EU students at universities in England. Education Secretary Damian Hinds wants the new system in place for courses starting in the 2021/22 academic year. Under EU membership, EU nationals studying in the UK currently pay the same tuition fees as home students.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/education/government-looking-to-charge-eu-students-more-to-attend-english-universities-after-brexit/>

Brexit: UK to ask EU for citizens' rights assurance

The government will ask for assurances from the European Union on what happens to British citizens living in the bloc - and EU citizens in the UK - in the case of a no-deal Brexit. Tory MP Alberto Costa and campaign groups met the Brexit Secretary on Monday, calling for protections to be ring-fenced whatever Brexit's outcome. MPs supported an amendment to the PM's Brexit deal in February to secure citizens' rights. But the EU has rejected the plan. European Commission spokeswoman, Mina Andreeva said they would "not negotiate mini-deals", and the best way to protect citizens' rights was through the deal negotiated between the EU and UK. Around 1.3m UK citizens live in one of the other 27 EU member states, while the UK hosts about 3.2m EU nationals.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48099903>

Political Shenanigans

Will Labour commit to referendum on any Brexit proposed by this government?

Sources close to the Labour leader believe the emergency NEC meeting on Tuesday, which determines the Labour manifesto for the EU elections, will agree a formula that is "a restatement" of

the party's equivocal and prolix party conference resolution of last September. But a senior trade union source tells me that if Unison, GMB and Usdaw are bulldozed on Tuesday, if their demand for Labour to commit to a "confirmatory" referendum on any Brexit deal is simply ignored, Corbyn and his colleagues are "being delusional about the likely consequences". The well-placed trade unionist added: "They have no idea what's going to hit them and the scale of the backlash they will face" - which captures for you how emotions are running very high. And given that Unison, the GMB and Usdaw are respectively the first, third and fourth biggest trade unions in the UK, they can certainly cause trouble for Corbyn, if so minded.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-29/will-labour-commit-to-referendum-on-any-brexit-proposed-by-this-government/>

Just days to stop EU elections but Minister says 'no deadline' to sort Brexit

Margaritis Schinas, the European Commission's chief spokesman, said Brussels would not speak of Brexit until London says there have been significant developments. He said: "There is nothing else we can do, there is nothing else we can say. I will not speak on Brexit again unless there are developments in London. "It is universally known that we are on a Brexit break. Cross-party talks between the Government and the Labour Party are resuming today after the Easter break. The talks between Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn have entered the fifth week. But Downing Street's official spokesman has announced Labours and Tories still have to find a "way forward" on how to reach a compromise on Brexit.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1120246/brexit-latest-news-theresa-may-boris-johnson-local-elections-tory>

'This is not about Brexit': Labour faces credibility test in Stoke

In next week's local election Stoke-on-Trent faces a curious paradox: it is being closely watched as a bellwether for national trends, but at the same time no one directly involved in the battle seems able to predict what could happen, or what lessons might be learned. In the most simple terms, whether or not Labour can regain control of the Staffordshire city would seem a fairly basic test of the party's electability under Jeremy Corbyn, and failure to do so would be a blow.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/28/this-not-about-brexit-labour-faces-credibility-test-stoke>

New IRA says Brexit has provided it with opportunity - Sunday Times

Brexit has provided the militant Irish nationalist group that admitted killing journalist Lyra McKee with a chance to further its campaign against British rule in Northern Ireland, the Sunday Times quoted its leadership as saying. The New IRA, one of a small number of groups that opposes Northern Ireland's 1998 peace deal, has said one of its members shot the 29-year-old reporter dead in Londonderry last week when opening fire on police during a riot McKee was watching. The killing, which followed a large car bomb in Londonderry in January that police also blamed on the New IRA, has raised fears that small marginalised militant groups are exploiting a political vacuum in the province and tensions caused by Britain's decision to leave the European Union. "Brexit has forced the IRA to refocus and has underlined how Ireland remains partitioned. It would be remiss of us not to capitalise on the opportunity," the newspaper quoted one of its members as saying

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-nireland-violence/new-ira-says-brexit-has-provided-it-with-opportunity-sunday-times-idUKKCN1S4079>

EXCL Unions urge Jeremy Corbyn to put referendum pledge in Labour manifesto

The general secretaries of Unison, the GMB and Usdaw have thrown their weight behind the move as a crunch meeting of the party's ruling national executive committee looms. Deputy Labour leader Tom Watson and Shadow Brexit Secretary Keir Starmer are pushing for a clear promise that any Brexit deal approved by the House of Commons should be put to the country in a so-called "confirmatory ballot". Reports on Sunday suggested that Unison boss Dave Prentis had give the Labour leader assurances that he would support his more equivocal stance that a second referendum should only be held to stop a "Tory Brexit" or the UK leaving without a deal. But

PoliticsHome understands that Mr Prentis has joined forces with GMB boss Tim Roache and Usdaw general secretary Paddy Lillis in backing Mr Watson and Sir Keir. Labour's NEC will meet on Tuesday to finalise the party's position in what promises to be a defining moment.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/jeremy-corbyn/news/103485/excl-unions-urge-jeremy-corbyn-put>

Theresa May's Former Universities Minister Has Warned The Government Risks Being Seen As "Against Young People"

The government risks being seen as "against young people", a former Tory education minister said on Monday amid a cabinet row over plans to hike university tuition fees for EU students after Brexit. Sam Gyimah, who was Theresa May's universities minister until he resigned in November last year, said the plans — revealed by BuzzFeed News on Saturday — meant the government was "undermining the university sector and taking steps that would make it more difficult for young people in this country to live, work and study abroad".

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexwickham/tory-education-eu-students-brexite-cabinet-row>

Labour members know what we need: a referendum and a campaign for remain

The challenge we face in the forthcoming European elections is not whether Labour should back a "confirmatory vote" or a "public vote on a Tory deal", or any of the other variations on these themes circulating in Westminster's WhatsApp world. The real challenges we face are those described by the phenomenal Greta Thunberg – and the rise of the far right.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/29/labour-members-referendum-campaign-remain-momentum>

Brexit compromise talks to end deadlock move on to 'nuts and bolts'

Cross-party talks to break the Brexit deadlock have moved on to the "nuts and bolts" after the latest "positive" set of meetings. Sue Hayman, Labour's shadow environment secretary, emerged from the Cabinet Office on Monday to declare the day's negotiations with senior government ministers as "very constructive". There is still "a lot more to discuss", she added, but suggested the government had shown willingness to drop some of its red lines.

<https://news.sky.com/story/brexit-compromise-talks-to-end-deadlock-move-on-to-nuts-and-bolts-11707265>

Labour to discuss 'confirmatory ballot' for Brexit

Labour's governing body will meet on Tuesday to discuss whether to call for a public vote on Brexit as part of its European election manifesto. The National Executive Committee is split between holding a referendum on any deal; holding one with caveats; or rejecting the idea altogether. The party is also holding talks with ministers to try to agree a Brexit deal and break the deadlock in Parliament.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48099901>

Brexit talks take positive turn towards possible compromise

Talks with senior shadow ministers and officials are likely to continue this week, including on key areas of previous disagreement that had previously been swerved, including a customs union, single market alignment and dynamic alignment of workers' rights and environmental protections. It is understood no new offer from the government has been put on the table but participants emerged with a new optimism about a change in tone and a feeling that there were grounds to continue discussions, a marked contrast to last week's talks. May's spokesman said cross-party talks would continue as long as there was "still a prospect of reaching a single position to put to parliament", but added that the prime minister would then look to bring forward "a small number of votes to try and find a way through parliament". Asked whether that would be votes on new options for a Brexit deal or on legislation, the spokesman said: "I'm referring to options."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/29/mps-could-vote-again-on-brexit-options-if-talks-break-down>

Melanie Onn MP: Labour must stop its sleight-of-hand on a second Brexit referendum or risk alienating working people

Continuing to back a second referendum, a sleight-of-hand position which by nudging and cajoling incrementally, really only has one definitive intention, to revoke the 2016 referendum and remain in the EU. It will send a message of a tin-eared Labour Party, unconcerned by the views of the heartlands it needs to hang on to in order to form a Government. Any decision about the Labour Party fully endorsing a second referendum on any deal must be made, not on the basis of bolstering potential future leadership ambitions, but in the full knowledge of the impact that decision will have on the future electability of Labour as a potential Government, whether that is in 2022 or later this year.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/opinion/house-commons/103476/melanie-onn-mp-labour-must-stop-its>

Remaining In EU Should Not Be An Option In Any New Brexit Referendum, Young Labour Rep On Ruling Body Warns

Staying in the EU should not be on the ballot paper of any fresh Brexit referendum, Labour's representative for young people has declared. Ahead of a crunch vote by the party's ruling National Executive Committee (NEC) on Tuesday, Lara McNeill said that it would "not be wise" to commit to putting Remain on any ballot paper in another public vote. McNeill, a final year medical student, is one of the 39-strong body due to decide Labour's European manifesto policy as the party's senior figures gather ahead of the May 23 elections.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/remaining-in-eu-should-not-be-an-option-in-any-new-brexit-referendum-young-labour-nec-rep-warns_uk_5cc727a7e4b05379114918a7

Second referendum part of cross-party Brexit talks, says David Lidington

Conservative MP David Lidington has confirmed that the prospect of a confirmatory referendum has been discussed as part of the cross-party Brexit talks. Labour policy is to have a second referendum on any agreed Brexit deal but Mr Lidington is cool on the idea. "We've always known this is part of Labour's policy platform, so it's something I would have expected them to raise at these meetings and they have," Mr Lidington said when asked about a second referendum after Monday's talks. "Equally, they know this is not something that is government policy and the last couple of times it has come before the House of Commons, it has been defeated."

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-29/second-referendum-part-of-cross-party-brexit-talks-says-david-lidington/>

Brexit: Labour braced for showdown over second referendum

Labour is braced for a showdown over whether to back a referendum on any Brexit deal when the party's governing body meets to agree its draft European elections manifesto on Tuesday. Party sources suggested the party was likely to agree a compromise option where it would support a referendum in order to prevent Theresa May's Brexit deal or leaving without a deal, describing that wording as "the path of least resistance". However, a public drive for a stronger line has been led by the party's deputy leader, Tom Watson, who has urged remain-supporting members to write to the national executive committee's members, including Jeremy Corbyn.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/29/brexit-labour-urged-to-resolve-second-referendum-crisis>

'No decision' on post-Brexit EU student fees, says minister

No decision has been made about whether to charge EU students more to study at English universities after Brexit, the government has insisted. They currently pay the same as those from the UK, but it has been reported fees could rise from 2021. Labour's Angela Rayner accused the government of "building walls" between top British universities and the EU. Lib Dem Tom Brake warned the EU would likely reciprocate, meaning only the richest from the UK could study abroad.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48096278>

Labour's John McDonnell says UK economy requires 'revolution'

Labour is planning a "revolution" for the UK economy, John McDonnell has told the BBC. The shadow chancellor was speaking to Newsnight for a series of reports to mark 40 years since the election of Margaret Thatcher. He said he saw parallels between today and 1979 when Mrs Thatcher swept to power in a major political sea-change. "Things aren't working for people, so they're looking for change," Mr McDonnell said. Asked whether Labour's plans represented evolution or revolution he said: "OK it will be a revolution. Transformative - because we are going to change society and that's what's demanded of us now." He added: "And do you know? I think most people accept that now. We'll do it by taking people with us. But it will be done on a very pragmatic basis.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-48094621>

How the German Right Wing Dominates Social Media

Help apparently isn't just coming from Germany. Davis has found countless photos among the AfD posts that come from Russian image databases, leading him to wonder if perhaps the party is getting some social media assistance from Moscow. The AfD's spokesperson rejects this claim, at least when it comes to the accounts run by party headquarters. He said he can't be sure about the other accounts. In intelligence circles, analysts believe such a scenario to be plausible. Experts believe that support for the AfD is consistent with Moscow's strategic intention of destabilizing Western democracies by strengthening extremist forces. Just a few weeks ago, DER SPIEGEL revealed just how close Russia's relationship is with some AfD politicians.

<https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/germany-afd-populists-dominate-on-facebook-a-1264933.html>

@Haggis_UK Nigel Evans - We have a £50billion trade surplus with the U.S. @adamboultonSKY - While we're still a member of the EU.. so being a member is not actually holding us back.

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https://twitter.com/Haggis_UK/status/1122782574261227520

@NedSimons Ex-WTO director Pascal Lamy has an opinion on Iain Duncan Smith's Brexit plan.

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<https://twitter.com/nedsimons/status/1122829905811714049>

MPs could vote again on Brexit options if talks break down

May's spokesman said cross-party talks would continue as long as there was "still a prospect of reaching a single position to put to parliament", but added that the prime minister would then look to bring forward "a small number of votes to try and find a way through parliament". Asked whether that would be votes on new options for a Brexit deal or on legislation, the spokesman said: "I'm referring to options."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/29/mps-could-vote-again-on-brexit-options-if-talks-break-down>

Brexit: Cross-party talks 'productive' and 'constructive'

The latest talks between ministers and Labour to try to end the Brexit impasse were "positive" and "productive", the PM's de facto deputy has said. Speaking afterwards, David Lidington said he was "encouraged" by a sense from both sides about the "need to inject greater urgency" into the talks. He said there would be further meetings between the parties this week. Labour's shadow environment secretary Sue Hayman said there had been "really constructive discussion" on Monday. She said the two parties were "getting much more into the nuts and bolts of the detail", and that she believed the government was "open to moving forward in our direction". Cross-party negotiations have been taking place for a number of weeks after Theresa May's Brexit deal with the EU was

effectively rejected for a third time by MPs.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48090950>

@Peston Sources close to the Labour leader believe that tomorrow the emergency NEC meeting, which determines the Labour manifesto for the EU elections, will agree a formula that is "a restatement" of the party's equivocal and prolix party conference resolution of last September. BUT...

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<https://twitter.com/Peston/status/1122905308345643008>

May's spokesman - No way forward yet in Brexit talks with Labour

The British government has yet to find a way forward in talks with the Labour Party on how to reach a compromise Brexit deal, Prime Minister Theresa May's spokesman said on Monday. The spokesman said the talks would continue later on Monday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-talks/mays-spokesman-no-way-forward-yet-in-brexit-talks-with-labour-idUKKCN1S50UY>

Labour's NEC must commit to a public vote on any Brexit deal

Over 700 Labour party members and trade unionists call on the party's NEC to make an explicit commitment to a public vote on any Brexit deal, with an option to remain.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/29/labours-nec-must-commit-to-a-public-vote-on-any-brexit-deal>

My constituents backed Brexit - but they have a right to a say on how we leave

We came up with a compromise that sought to pass the Brexit deal through Parliament provided it was put to the British people in a confirmatory ballot. I am the Leave half of the Kyle-Wilson compromise, Peter is the Remain half. Our approach, with the support of parliamentary colleagues from across the House, twice came top in the indicative voting process held recently in Parliament, but unfortunately it fell short of an overall majority.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/constituents-backed-brexit-right-say-14970135>

Labour set to force Commons vote on declaring climate emergency

The party will demand on Wednesday that the country acts with urgency to slash global emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero before 2050, according to the Observer. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has said the recent climate change protests were a "massive and necessary wake-up call" and that Parliament backing the party's bid would make it the first national legislature to declare a climate emergency.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/environment/environmental-protection/news/103477/labour-set-force-commons-vote-declaring>

Brexit: Tom Watson steps up call for Labour referendum pledge

Labour's deputy leader has stepped up calls for his party to promise a referendum on any Brexit deal in its European elections manifesto. Tom Watson urged party members to message Labour's ruling national executive committee to call for a "confirmatory ballot" pledge. The NEC meets on Tuesday to decide on Labour's campaign manifesto. But frontbencher Barry Gardiner said a referendum on any Brexit deal would be a change in Labour policy. The shadow international trade secretary told BBC Radio 5 Live's Pienaar's Politics that the party's policy agreed at last year's conference was to go for a referendum "to stop a no-deal or a bad Tory Brexit." He added: "If we are being pushed into a no-deal by this government, we will have a second referendum. But we want to try - and that's why we're in there with the government now - trying to deliver on what people voted for."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48085237>

AA finance boss nicknamed 'the sledgehammer' quits to support anti-Brexit party Change UK

The AA's finance boss has quit after five years so he can devote his time to anti-Brexit party Change UK. Martin Clarke has stepped down immediately and does not have another job. He previously worked for private equity companies, where his robust approach earned him the nickname 'the sledgehammer'.

<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-6973517/AA-finance-boss-nicknamed-sledgehammer-quits-support-anti-Brexit-party-Change-UK.html>

Labour split as Shadow Cabinet minister suggests party could back Brexit deal without second referendum

Ms Long-Bailey has been among the top team involved in cross-party talks alongside colleagues Mr Starmer and John McDonnell, in a bid to break the deadlock over Britain's departure from the bloc. However when asked if a second Brexit referendum was a "red line" for the opposition in the talks, the Shadow Business Secretary said: "I wouldn't couch it in terms of a second referendum, but our party policy has always been that firstly we want to get a Brexit deal that puts our economy and living standards first and protects our environmental protections, workplace protections, health and safety standards." "We want a customs union arrangement in order to keep our borders open, so that our manufacturing industry isn't detrimentally affected, and we keep the movement of goods flowing as freely as possible. And we want a strong single market relationship."

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/103483/labour-split-shadow-cabinet-minister-suggests>

Political Setbacks

Nigel Farage's Brexit Party will let Jeremy Corbyn become PM by taking votes away from Tories, Jacob Rees-Mogg warns

Nigel Farage will end up helping Jeremy Corbyn get into No10, Jacob Rees-Mogg warned today. The top Tory Brexiteer claimed the Brexit Party risked splitting the Conservative vote and letting Labour get in. And he insisted that any Tory MPs or councillors who vote for Mr Farage's new party should be automatically fired. Mr Rees-Mogg vowed to stay loyal to Theresa May - even though his own sister has defected to the Brexit Party.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8961731/nigel-farages-brexit-party-jacob-rees-mogg/>

Farage's Brexit party eyes seat of disgraced ex-Labour MP, Fiona Onasanya

Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party plans to capitalise on its poll ratings with a tilt at a Westminster seat. It will stand in Peterborough if a by-election is triggered later this week by a "recall" petition against the disgraced MP Fiona Onasanya. The former Ukip leader's new group has startled the main parties after polls put it on course to win the European parliament elections on May 23. Surveys have also suggested that large numbers of Conservative activists and even Tory councillors plan to vote for the Brexit Party. Mr Farage has urged voters to use the European elections to send a clear message to Westminster, which he says is blocking Brexit. A spokesman for the Brexit Party said that if a by-election was called in Peterborough "it is highly likely we will stand. We would be fighting Peterborough to win it."

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/farag-s-brexit-party-eyes-seat-of-disgraced-ex-labour-mp-fiona-onasanya-z3gqj8pk5>

New IRA says Brexit has provided it with opportunity - Sunday Times

Brexit has provided the militant Irish nationalist group that admitted killing journalist Lyra McKee with a chance to further its campaign against British rule in Northern Ireland, the Sunday Times

quoted its leadership as saying. The New IRA, one of a small number of groups that opposes Northern Ireland's 1998 peace deal, has said one of its members shot the 29-year-old reporter dead in Londonderry last week when opening fire on police during a riot McKee was watching. The killing, which followed a large car bomb in Londonderry in January that police also blamed on the New IRA, has raised fears that small marginalised militant groups are exploiting a political vacuum in the province and tensions caused by Britain's decision to leave the European Union. "Brexit has forced the IRA to refocus and has underlined how Ireland remains partitioned. It would be remiss of us not to capitalise on the opportunity," the newspaper quoted one of its members as saying

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-nireland-violence/new-ira-says-brexit-has-provided-it-with-opportunity-sunday-times-idUKKCN1S4079>

Brexit 'death zone': Tory MPs to 'QUIT' if Boris Johnson becomes Prime Minister

Former foreign secretary, Mr Johnson, is a firm favourite to replace Theresa May as leader of the Conservative party. But Prisons Minister, Rory Stewart, has suggested he would quit if Mr Johnson became leader, according to The Sun. Mr Stewart told the BBC: "I would find that difficult if he were campaigning for a No Deal Brexit.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1120189/brexit-news-latest-boris-johnson-theresa-may-leave-EU-tory-leaders-hip>

Chris Patten on voting Conservative in Euro elections: 'I can certainly think of some candidates I couldn't conceivably vote for'

We spoke to Chris Patten, who was the last British governor of Hong Kong. We talked about a range of pressing issues, including Brexit, the Tories and Huawei – but first we asked him what his reaction was to the sheer size of the protests in Hong Kong.

<https://www.channel4.com/news/chris-patten-on-voting-conservative-in-euro-elections-i-can-certainly-think-of-some-candidates-i-couldnt-conceivably-vote-for>

Brexit: Rees-Mogg responds to Ahern border criticism

Jacob Rees-Mogg has responded to criticism from former taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern over his knowledge of the Irish border. In remarks made on Sunday, Mr Ahern said the Conservative MP had admitted not knowing what the Irish border was. Responding on Twitter, Mr Rees-Mogg, a high-profile supporter of Brexit, said the criticism was "quite funny but regrettably untrue". "Perhaps Ireland had a comedian as its leader before Ukraine," he said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48097790>

Nigel Farage is a phoney. Scrutinise him and he'll crumble

Allow me to sketch you a portrait of a political leader. Even by the lax standards of the powerful, he is England's greatest living hypocrite. He courts popularity by warning that tens of millions from the dole queues of Europe are coming to take British jobs, while employing his German wife as his secretary. He denounces "the political class" for living like princes at the taxpayers' expense while pocketing every taxpayer-funded allowance he can claim for himself, his wife and his colleagues. He says he represents "ordinary people". But he is a public school-educated former banker, whose policies will help him and his kind. He claims he is the voice of "common sense", while allying with every variety of gay-hater, conspiracy crackpot, racist, chauvinist and pillock. The only sense he and his followers have in common is a fear of anyone who is not like them.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/26/nigel-farage-phoney-scrutinise-him-ukip>

Nigel Farage refuses to reveal 'one big donation' to Brexit Party and people are suspicious

Nigel Farage has refused to say who the big donor to the Brexit Party is. On Iain Dale's LBC show, Farage was asked directly who was funding the party and revealed that there was "one big donation" from an unnamed person. But when Dale asked him who that donor was, Farage dodged

the question by claiming it was “not fair” to reveal the name without asking them for permission first.

<https://www.indy100.com/article/nigel-farage-brexit-party-donation-funding-bannon-banks-8891131>

Queen's Speech to be delayed until Brexit delivered, Theresa May says

The Queen’s Speech will be delayed until Brexit is delivered, Theresa May has said – despite no sign of a breakthrough at Westminster to end the stalemate. The prime minister’s spokesperson said a new session of parliament – due to get under way in June – would not begin until the withdrawal agreement had been ratified. “That is part of the current Queen’s Speech cycle and we need to finish that work,” he said, admitting there was “no specific date” for a new session. The determination to deliver Brexit first opens up the prospect of no Queen’s Speech until the autumn at the earliest – even if the prime minister survives that long. Although talks with Labour will restart today, both sides are gloomy about progress after trading accusations that neither is prepared to make any meaningful compromises.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/queens-speech-delay-brexit-extension-theresa-may-parliament-com-mons-a8891006.html>

British streets split by race, Farage tells US audience

Entire streets in Oldham are split along racial lines, Nigel Farage has claimed in a speech in the United States. The leader of the Brexit Party said that blacks lived on one side and whites on the other, with “no assimilation” between the two. He told students at Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania that the town in Greater Manchester was a “divided society in which resentments build and grow”. In 2015 Ukip, the party that Mr Farage then led, failed to unseat Labour at a by-election in Oldham West & Royton. He later claimed that the vote was “bent” and blamed “people who do not speak English”. Mr Farage, 55, told the audience at Lock Haven: “Let me take you to a town called Oldham in the north of England where literally on one side of the street everybody is white and on the other side of the street everybody is black. The twain never actually meet, there is no assimilation. “Whole streets in Oldham are of people who have lived in my country for over 30 years who don’t speak a single word of the English language. These, folks, are divided societies in which resentments build and grow.”

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/british-streets-split-by-race-farage-tells-us-audience-hgqrb60dc>

Over-50s could be forced to pay £300 a year more in national insurance under senior Tory's plan

People over the age of 50 could be forced to pay more than £300 more in national insurance each year in to fund social care, under plans that have been branded a tax on getting old by Labour. Senior Tory MP Damian Green has proposed a major shake-up to funding for care, arguing that it should follow the state pension model where everyone is entitled to basic support but individuals top up the pot through their own savings. The former cabinet minister, who was given the task of drawing up the long-awaited green paper on social care for England when he was in government, suggested a 1 per cent rise in national insurance for the over 50s as a last resort to fill the £2.75bn funding gap in the system.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/social-care-nhs-damian-green-national-insurance-hike-tory-a8890236.html>

Additional sources: ([The Guardian](#))

Theresa May is the first Tory leader in 185 years to face emergency grassroots vote demanding her resignation

Theresa May has become the first Tory leader in 185 years to face an emergency grassroots vote to oust her. The PM is to be hauled in front of a snap meeting all 800 constituency chairmen and senior activists in June, who will decide whether to demand her resignation for failing to deliver Brexit.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8966455/theresa-may-first-tory-leader-185-years-emergency-grassroots-vote-demanding-resignation/>

Remainers have blown the EU elections, and increased the chance of a no-deal Brexit

Like most people who have been an MP, I will never forget the day I was elected to Parliament. For one thing, it was snowing in the Yorkshire Dales that cold February day in 1989, and the bleak landscape seemed to match the political fortunes of the Thatcher administration at the time. More significantly, I was able to win a by-election – the last Tory to do so while the party was in government for a quarter of a century – because my opponents could not agree on a joint candidate. Together, the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Democrats received many thousands more votes than I did, but they were so neatly divided that I beat both of them. This mattered: the SDP disintegrated soon after this event

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/29/remainers-have-blown-eu-elections-increased-chance-no-deal-brexit/>

A bitter turf war is raging on the Brexit Wikipedia page

While Westminster remains mired in endless Brexit deadlock, over on the Brexit Wikipedia page things are even less amicable. Editors are parrying death threats, doxing attempts and accusations of bias, as the crowdsourced epic has become the centre of a relentless tug-of-war over who gets to write the history of the UK as it happens. Originally posted in January 2014, what began life as “Proposed referendum on United Kingdom membership of the European Union” has bloated into a 11,757-word behemoth. But the article’s vast size is the least of its problems. In private, and on discussion pages, editors tell tales of turf wars, sock puppet accounts, and anonymous figures hellbent on stuffing the article with information that supports their point of view. “I was heavily involved with the Brexit page, but gave up more than a year ago because the level of bias on it proved impossible to address and the aggravation of trying to deal with that was not worthwhile,” says EddieHugh, a Wikipedia editor who has made 186 edits on the Brexit page – making them one of its most prolific contributors. Since leaving the page behind, EddieHugh now specialises in editing entries about obscure mid-century jazz musicians.

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/brexit-wikipedia-page-battles>

Robin McAlpine: England's Brexit debate is 'xenophobic'

Robin McAlpine, Director of the Common Weal think tank, says the politics of the Brexit debate in England are “right-wing, xenophobic, anti-European”. He says the more affluent south is feeling “challenged by multi-culturalism” while northern England is challenged by the “weak economics of Britain”. He told BBC Debate Night this has not been happening in Scotland, Wales or Northern-Ireland.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-scotland-48088300/robin-mcalpine-england-s-brexit-debate-is-xenophobic>

'Mood is DARK!' Patel warns Tories will SUFFER at local elections due to Brexit

The mood is dark. The public are frustrated. “They are fed up I think more widely with politics and the way in which Brexit has been handled and in particular the fact that, as many people say to me in my constituency, they expected us to leave effectively on March 29. This has not happened.” Ms Patel’s gloomy depiction of the mood in the country - and especially in Leave constituencies - reflects analysis by pollster and Tory peer Robert Hayward, who predicted the Conservative Party could lose more than 800 seats in the May 2 elections.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1120445/brexit-news-local-elections-2019-theresa-may-brexit-delay-pri-patel-eu-elections-poll>

Fury as Tony Blair claims second Brexit referendum would be 'healing process' for the nation

Speaking to the Institute for Government think-tank, Mr Blair insisted a second EU referendum was the only way to decide Brexit. The ex-PM said: "The truth is there are different varieties of Brexit and

you have to choose one. "And when you choose one it then becomes apparent what your problem is. Because your problem is there is a downside to whatever option you choose. "So when members of Parliament are forced to come to a choice then I think at that point they will say, 'OK, this what I think but I'm not going to take the full responsibility so I'm going to share responsibility with the people', and that allows a referendum to be a healing process."

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8964883/tony-blair-second-brexit-referendum/>

Brexit: 'How delays and uncertainty are hurting colleges'

The Augar review, apprenticeships policy and the spending review are hostages to the Brexit impasse, writes David Hughes

<https://www.tes.com/news/how-brexit-uncertainty-hurting-colleges>

Kezia Dugdale set to leave politics over Labour's Brexit stance

Kezia Dugdale, the former Scottish Labour leader, is expected to quit frontline politics after becoming increasingly disillusioned with the party's stance on Brexit. It is understood that Dugdale, who headed the Scottish party for two years until suddenly resigning in 2017 after months of tension with UK leader Jeremy Corbyn, has found another job outside politics. She is expected to confirm her decision within the coming days, the Sunday Times reported, and to formally quit as an MSP at the end of the current Scottish parliament session in June. Dugdale, a member of Labour's centrist wing, has made little secret of her unhappiness with Labour's stance on EU membership and has demanded Corbyn campaigns for a second vote on any Brexit deal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/28/kezia-dugdale-set-to-leave-politics-over-labour-brexit-stance>

Local elections 2019: Are the Conservatives facing a massacre? | Latest Brexit news and top stories

Anger over Brexit could cause one in five Conservative councillors up for election to lose their seats in next week's local elections, revealing polling data has showed. Analysis presented by Professor Michael Thrasher, from the University of Plymouth, on Sky News' Sophy Ridge on Sunday showed that the Tories could lose as many as 1,100 seats when the vote is held across the country next Thursday, May 3. Prof Thrasher said the fact the Conservatives won so many seats in the 2015 local elections - the last time the seats up for election on Thursday were voted on - means that: "The Conservatives are defending a high position. "There is a lot of stake for them. The baseline is 2015 and since the, you'd expect the Conservatives would lose ground from there."

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/conservatives-local-elections-2019-potential-massacre-1-6020567>

Nigel Farage is fuelled by the betrayal myth. And Brexit is only the start

In this respect, it was always baked into Farage's rhetoric that if the public voted to leave, the elite would seek to thwart their wishes. The truth, again, is quite otherwise. The political class has strained every tendon to find a way of delivering the undeliverable: of extracting the UK from a 46-year relationship without wrecking its prosperity, security and access to the wider world. Brexit has failed because the square-circling task is impossible. We must stay, or accept a grievous cost: that is the choice now. But Farage appeals to a primal social instinct: the sensation that the few are, yet again, cheating the many of their unsullied dream. It is not the dream that is at fault, you understand, but those who sabotage it. Just as Marxists insist true communism has never been tried, so Brexiteers declare that their simple plan has been wrecked by weaklings, quislings and fools.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/29/nigel-farage-betrayal-myth-brexit-elite-people>

Boris Johnson begs voters not to punish Tories over Brexit in local election bloodbath

Boris Johnson has begged voters not to punish the Tories over Brexit in this week's local elections in a last-ditch attempt to prevent a bloodbath. Experts predicted that the PM could lose 800 councillors this week as furious voters desert her for failing to leave the EU.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8960649/boris-johnson-begs-voters-not-to-punish-tories-over-brexit-in-local-ele>

[ction-bloodbath/](#)

Trade Deals/Negotiations

Donald Trump can deliver Britain a post-Brexit trade boost

Although uncertainty about Brexit persists, London remains eager to prioritise a US-UK free trade agreement when it eventually leaves the EU. In October last year, Robert Lighthizer, the US trade representative, notified Congress of the administration's intention to open trade negotiations with Britain. And this year, the UK and the US agreed to continue the "mutual recognition agreement" that ensures their goods meet appropriate regulatory standards in each market. This covers about £12.8bn of trade in sectors ranging from pharmaceuticals to telecoms equipment. Coupled with similar agreements the UK has signed with Australia and New Zealand, the US deal shows Britain is entirely capable of negotiating its own trade pacts. The Brexit negotiations are the outlier, as the UK has followed the US in running into seemingly insurmountable resistance from the EU.

<https://www.ft.com/content/3ed38590-5493-11e9-8b71-f5b0066105fe>