

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

20th May 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

UK government had a \$146bn war chest to fight off a run on the pound after March's Brexit deadline

- [Bank of America analysts revealed that the UK](#) government built up a \$146bn war chest in the fourth quarter of last year, to defend against an anticipated run on the pound when the UK left the EU with a No Deal Brexit on March 29th

World oldest tourist firm in dire straits

- [Thomas Cook issued its 3rd profit warning](#) in less than a year last week, citing Brexit as one of a set of causes. Citigroup analysts said the travel firm's shares were worthless, which saw its shares 30% plunge in value

UK-based Poles call for a revolt against having to apply for settled status

- [More than 7,000 people have signed a petition](#) launched by Damian Wawrzyniak, which calls on the government to change the wording of the recently introduced EU status process from 'application to stay' to just 'register.' Wawrzyniak has worked in Britain for 15 years and has established his own UK restaurants

Theresa May is set to make a 'bold offer' in a final bid to get MP's to back her Brexit deal

- [The WAB \(as it is known\) is expected to include](#) new measures on protecting workers rights, provisions on future customs arrangements with the EU and on Northern Ireland, including the use of technology to avoid the need for border controls with the Republic. It will not seek to reopen the Withdrawal Agreement signed with the EU - which contains the controversial Irish Backstop - after the EU repeatedly made clear it could not be re-negotiated

The Brexit Party's funding must be investigated, says Gordon Brown

- [Former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown](#) will use a speech in Glasgow on Monday to say an investigation into the Brexit Party's finances is urgent and essential. 'Democracy is fatally undermined if unexplained, unreported and thus undeclared and perhaps under the counter and underhand campaign finance - from whom and from where we do not know - is being used to influence the very elections that are at the heart of our democratic system' - he will say, according to pre-released extracts

Lib Dems could shake the foundations of British politics by beating Labour and the Tories - says Vince Cable

- [The confusion and disorientation of the two major parties](#) over Brexit has created conditions where the Lib Dems could outpace both their rivals in a national election for the first time in a century -

Cable told The Independent

The Cabinet Brexit Secretary told Sky that No Deal Brexit preparations will have to be speeded up

- [Stephen Barclay told Sophy Ridge on Sunday](#) that 'Members of Parliament do need to face facts, if the deal were not to go through there are only two alternatives - you either leave with a no deal or you revoke Article 50'

Vote for a pro-EU party, says Labour's Dame Margaret Hodge

- [The Times reported that a leaked tape has emerged](#) on which the 74 year old Barking MP tells people in a meeting that they should vote for a pro-European MEP, rejecting the questioner's effort to get her to specifically endorse all members voting Labour

Tory grandee Michael Heseltine said he's switching to vote Lib Dems for the European Election

- [Former Deputy Tory PM Michael Heseltine](#) said he intends to vote Lib Dem at the European Election as a Brexit protest

Theresa May's 'bold Brexit offer' is just a retread of old ideas, leaked document suggests

- [The Telegraph said 'it contains nothing new](#) on customs arrangements and retains the controversial Northern Irish backstop. Leading Eurosceptics are already saying there is nothing new in it to tempt them to change their mind and support Mrs May's deal

Change UK calls for Article 50 to be revoked and to hold a second referendum

- [Party spokesperson, Chuka Umunna said](#) the country was facing a national emergency, due to the prospect of leaving the EU with No Deal at the end of October. Therefore, he told BBC presenter Andrew Marr, 'we are now at the point where we are going to need to revoke Article 50'

Nicola Sturgeon - there will be a vote on Scottish independence by 2021, even if the UK stays in the EU

- [Nicola Sturgeon confirmed that her timetable](#) for IndyRef2 remained unchanged and that there will be a second vote by 2021

Green Party co-leader Sian Berry 'there has to be a confirmatory vote on a new Brexit deal'

- [Berry was interviewed by Channel 4's Matt Frei](#) and she made it clear that the Green Party believed a confirmatory vote on any Brexit deal was a necessity if there was not to be a second referendum
- [Sir Keir Starmer called for a public vote](#) on any withdrawal agreement bill

As the Brexit talks between Labour and the Tories collapse, Jeremy Corbyn has most to lose

- [The Independent's Andrew Grice says he has](#) seen figures that indicate that Labour is not reaching its natural supporters on social media, alienating remainers and not keeping Labour leavers

on board either - so set for trouble at the ballot box on Thursday

Theresa May is to give MPs 'multiple choice' options over Brexit, asking them to rank their options

- [Mrs May's proposal would use a preferential vote system](#), under which MPs would rank different options in order of preference. Her government is considering holding a series of indicative votes before MPs vote for the fourth and final time on her Brexit deal in the week of June 3rd

Boris Johnson crushes leadership rivals in poll of Tory members

- [Johnson is a clear favourite to be the next PM](#), according to a poll of Tory Party members. YouGov interviewed 858 Tory party members for the poll between May 10th and May 16th
- [EU poll in Scotland reveals Labour](#) and Tories plummeting to joint fourth place

Labour's Clive Lewis MP said Corbyn's position would be 'in peril' if he 'betrays' Labour over a second referendum

- [Clive Lewis told The Independent that if Corbyn](#) failed to fully support a Final Say public vote the party activists who put him in his leadership role could turn against him. Mr Lewis warned Labour was hurting as Remain voters are deserting the party in droves in advance of the European Elections this coming Thursday

Brexit Party fundraiser is 'Posh George,' once jailed in the USA after an FBI money laundering sting

- [George Cottrell served as UKIP's head of fundraising](#) until his arrest by federal agents on charges of extortion, money laundering and fraud in 2016. A source inside the Brexit Party said he was 'reprising his role as one of the Brexit Party's top fundraisers.' His presence has raised eyebrows amongst staff

Nigel Farage is facing an investigation by EU authorities over the lavish gifts (£450,000) from millionaire tycoon

- [A Channel 4 news programme revealed last](#) week that Banks provides him with a chauffeur driven car, rent and bills on a £4.4m Chelsea home, lavish trips to the USA to meet right wing politicians, but none of the gifts were declared on Farage's register of interests with the European Parliament

Leave.EU founder confirms he funded Nigel Farage 'for a year' after referendum

- [Arron Banks is under investigation by the National Crime Agency](#) into his sources of cash for the 2016 Brexit referendum, when he was the highest donor in British electoral history. He is now back in the spotlight again, this time confirming he has given Nigel Farage £450,000 worth of support in the year after the Brexit referendum. Mr Farage said he did not declare it to the European Parliament because 'he was about to leave politics and was seeking a new life in the USA'

Many of the Brexit Party's Twitter followers appear to be bots

- [Engadget cites a detailed report from Internet security](#) experts F-Secure, which noted that 8,800 users, roughly 7% of the party's Twitter base - have been disproportionately retweeting party material producing massive volumes focused on Brexit, in obviously unrealistic quantities.

One account tweeted 823 times in a day. Some are new, while many others are from outside of the UK. The follower surge suggests 'inorganic behaviour' or bots as its better known

Economic Impact

The UK government built a \$146 billion war chest to stop a run on the pound in the case of a 'no-deal' Brexit, Bank of America says

The UK government built a \$146 billion war chest in the fourth quarter to defend against an anticipated run on the pound if Britain left the EU with no deal, according to a foreign exchange reserve analysis by Bank of America. BofA analysts Kamal Sharma and Sebastien Cross called the buildup "unprecedented" among the larger global economies, in a note to clients seen by Business Insider. "In the fourth quarter, UK FX reserves rose \$23 billion to \$146 billion (gross reserves)," they wrote. "In nominal terms, this is a 19% quarter-on-quarter increase in reserves and the largest quarterly increase since our series began in 2000. The scale of this pace of reserve accumulation compared to other G10 economies is unprecedented."

<https://www.businessinsider.com/uk-feared-run-on-the-pound-brexit-built-warchest-bank-of-america-2019-5>

Administrative Fall Out

UK property register 'needed urgently' to stop money laundering

Proposals for the first register of foreign-owned property aimed at preventing "McMafia-style" money laundering should be put in practice urgently and reinforced to plug potential loopholes, the government has been told. Draft legislation contains insufficient verification checks to deter criminals from submitting false information and could allow those exploiting trusts to circumvent controls, MPs and peers have said. More than £90bn is estimated to be laundered illegally through the UK each year, according to the all-party parliamentary committee scrutinising the registration of overseas entities bill. Illicit funds help sustain Britain's inflated property market through the purchase of homes that are frequently left unoccupied, emptying the wealthier parts of London of residents.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/may/20/uk-foreign-property-register-needed-urgently-money-laundering>

Thomas Cook shares 'worthless', says Citigroup

Shares in Thomas Cook have plunged 30% after analysts at a bank said the travel firm's shares were "worthless". Thomas Cook's tour operations and airline are worth £738m, but its debt is around the same "and implies zero equity value", according to Citigroup. Citigroup's damning conclusion comes a day after Thomas Cook issued its third profit warning in less than a year and reported a £1.5bn half-year loss. Its outlook was "significantly weaker than expected," Citigroup said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-48308001>

UK-based Poles call for revolt against having to apply for settled status

A Polish chef who has worked with Mary Berry and Jamie Oliver is leading a revolt by UK-based Poles against the Home Office's requirement that EU citizens apply for settled status as part of Brexit. More than 7,000 people have signed a petition launched this week by Damian Wawrzyniak on the UK government and parliament website to change the wording of the settlement status process from "application" to "registration". At 10,000 signatures, the government must respond. Wawrzyniak, a former chef at Noma in Copenhagen who has worked in Britain for 15 years and established his own UK restaurants, originally backed Brexit on the basis that it would make it easier for restaurants to select British produce. But he has changed his mind and says he will ultimately refuse to apply to live in the country he now calls home.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/may/18/uk-based-poles-call-for-revolt-against-having-to-apply-for-settled-status>

Brexit blamed as United Kingdom comes last at Eurovision with just three points in public vote

It is the first time the UK has come last in the Eurovision Song contest since 2010. Many took to social media to blame Brexit for the hostile reception from the rest of Europe.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/united-kingdom-comes-last-at-eurovision-with-just-three-points-in-public-vote-1-6058564>

Political Shenanigans

The middle ground no longer exists over Brexit. It's all or nothing now

Pressure is building within Labour for the party to take an unambiguous stand on the other side of the barricades and become an anti-Brexit party. That pressure will be increased when the Euros see large numbers of previous Labour voters desert the party for the Lib Dems, Greens and Change UK. If a general election hasn't happened by September, Labour's party conference is highly likely to force its reluctant leadership to make a no-qualifications commitment to a fresh referendum. The middle ground, such as it was, has become scorched earth. The chances of this concluding with no Brexit or a no-deal Brexit are both rising sharply.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/19/the-middle-ground-no-longer-exists-over-brexit-its-all-or-nothing-now>

Farage REFUSES to support Johnson's PM bid if he backs May's deal - 'It's a REAL problem'

Nigel Farage was quizzed on whether the next leader needs to drop support for Theresa May's Brexit deal. He told The Daily Telegraph: "Of course. Absolutely. "If a new Conservative leader said 'we are leaving on WTO terms on Halloween Day' then that would be a great step in the right direction but would they actually stick to it? How could we trust them? That is the problem. "Everyone keeps shouting Boris's name at me - Boris voted for the Withdrawal Agreement despite everything he had written in your newspaper.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1129347/brexit-news-latest-nigel-farage-brexit-party-boris-johnson-theresa-may-no-deal-leave-eu>

Brexit latest: MPs left 'very frustrated' as 'totally unprecedented' deadlock results in no Commons votes for more than a month

MPs from across the House of Commons have expressed their anger at the lack of action in parliament after weeks in which the Brexit deadlock has left the Commons with almost nothing to do. There has not been a significant vote in the Commons since 10 April and on several occasions MPs have been sent home hours earlier than scheduled because there was nothing for them to debate. Attempts to secure agreement for a Brexit deal have monopolised ministers' attention, meaning other legislation has all but dried up.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-deal-latest-labour-tory-compromise-commons-vote-mps-eu-a8913836.html>

Change UK's Chuka Umunna Says UK Must Revoke Article 50 To Avoid No-Deal Brexit

The UK must now revoke Article 50 to fight the threat of a no-deal Brexit, Chuka Umunna has said. "We are now at a point where we are going to need to revoke Article 50," the Change UK spokesman told the BBC's Andrew Marr on Sunday. "At the beginning of these European election campaigns we had time to provide for a People's Vote on what happens on Brexit," he continued, saying a second referendum would take "at least" five to six months. "We now no longer have the time to do that by the 31st of October, when we are due to crash out, so we need to stop the clock now to allow that to happen."

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/uk-revoke-article-50-brexit-chuka-umunna_uk_5ce134a4e4b00735a9189b2a

Brexit news latest: Theresa May set to make 'bold offer' in final bid to get MPs to back her deal

The WAB - which is needed to ratify the deal with Brussels - is expected to include new measures on protecting workers' rights, an issue where agreement with Labour was said to have been close. However, Government sources made clear the package would not just be aimed at Labour MPs but would seek to secure the widest possible support across the Commons. It is expected to include provisions on future customs arrangements with the EU and on Northern Ireland, including the use of technology to avoid the need for border controls with the Republic. It will not, however, seek to re-open the Withdrawal Agreement - which included the controversial Northern Ireland "backstop" - after the EU repeatedly made clear it could not be re-negotiated.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-news-latest-theresa-may-set-to-make-bold-offer-in-final-bid-to-get-mps-to-finally-back-her-a4145671.html>

BBC forced to apologise after Liberal Democrat leader Sir Vince Cable says 'b***s' live on air**

The Beeb was forced to apologise yesterday after Lib Dem chief Vince Cable said "b*****s" live on air. BBC political presenter Andrew Marr stepped in when the veteran uttered the Remain party's 'B*****s to Brexit' campaign slogan. Sir Vince insisted he wasn't embarrassed about it. And he said the word had a "long and distinguished history" going back to the 18th century of meaning 'nonsense'.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9110147/bbc-apologise-lib-dem-vince-cable/>

Brexit: New UK PM will not alter withdrawal deal - Coveney

Ireland's deputy prime minister has ruled out any renegotiation of the Brexit withdrawal deal if Theresa May is replaced as UK prime minister ... Mr Coveney described political events at Westminster as "extraordinary", as he questioned the logic of ...

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48330965>

MPs to debate immunity for Northern Ireland veterans

A petition calling for soldiers who served in Northern Ireland to be immune from prosecution will be debated by MPs amid reports No 10 has vetoed calls for legislation to protect veterans. Several Tory MPs are expected to urge an end to what they say are "abhorrent" proceedings against elderly veterans. The petition says criminal probes into historical incidents should be outlawed "after a certain period of time". Ministers are consulting on how to deal with "legacy" cases fairly. Some victims' groups and politicians in Northern Ireland believe that no-one should be above the law. Six former soldiers are currently facing prosecution over Troubles-era killings, although not all the charges are murder

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48329348>

Brexit party's funding must be investigated, says Gordon Brown

The former Labour prime minister will use a speech in Glasgow on Monday to say an investigation into the Brexit party's finances is urgent and essential. "Nigel Farage says this election is about democracy. Democracy is fatally undermined if unexplained, unreported and thus undeclared and perhaps under the counter and underhand campaign finance - from whom and from where we do not know - is being used to influence the very elections that are at the heart of our democratic system," he will say, according to pre-released extracts. "Now Mr Farage heads a new Brexit party, which is making questionable claims about the true source of its funding at a time when the Electoral Commission has warned of the dangers of multiple, small, anonymous donations being a cover for dirty money." While other parties require personal information from donors, the Brexit party allows donations of less than £500 via just a PayPal account, which critics said leaves the way open to abuse by foreign donors wishing to influence British elections.

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/20/brexit-partys-funding-must-be-investigated-says-gordon-brown?CMP=share_btn_tw

European elections: Lib Dems could 'shake foundations' of British politics by beating Labour and Tories, says Vince Cable

The Liberal Democrats could "shake the foundations" of British politics by finishing ahead of not only the Conservatives but also Labour in this month's European elections, leader Sir Vince Cable has said. Speaking to The Independent, Sir Vince said the "confusion and disorientation" of the two major parties over Brexit had created conditions where the Lib Dems could outpace both their rivals in a national election for the first time in a century. After generations of being told a Liberal Democrat vote is "wasted" because of the domination of the big two parties, it is now "abundantly clear" that voters who back European Union membership should consider voting tactically for them on 23 May, he said. "I think there is a recognition that we are clearly the strongest of the three parties on the Remain side and people who think tactically will get behind us," said the former business secretary.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/european-elections-lib-dems-eu-vince-cable-brexit-poll-labour-tories-a8915686.html>

Cabinet minister insists Theresa May could still get Labour to back Brexit deal after talks collapse

The Government is still in the "territory" of a Brexit deal with "sensible, moderate" Labour MPs despite the collapse of cross-party talks, Cabinet minister Rory Stewart has insisted. There is speculation that the move could include fresh protections for workers' rights or further movement on a customs union, Labour's central demand in the talks. Mr Stewart told the BBC's Andrew Marr show that ministers should keep reaching out to Labour MPs who might be willing to back the Withdrawal Agreement Bill when it comes to a Commons vote in June. "The Labour and Conservative positions are about half an inch apart," he said. And the frontbencher said he did not "believe there's anything that Jeremy Corbyn or we want that's that far apart". He added: "We're in the territory of a deal, and in the territory of a deal where we need to focus is parliament. "And particularly getting Labour votes across. Now, maybe not Jeremy Corbyn's vote, but there are many other moderate, sensible Labour MPs that we should get across."

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/103981/cabinet-minister-insists-theresa-may-could-still-get>

Brexit: Theresa May plans 'bold offer' to get support for deal

Theresa May has said a "new and improved" Brexit deal will be put to MPs when they vote on the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill in early June. Writing in the Sunday Times, Mrs May said the bill will be a "bold offer". Cabinet minister Rory Stewart told the BBC he hoped extra guarantees on workers' rights would enable "sensible" Labour MPs to support the government. But Jeremy Corbyn said Labour would oppose the bill and it was "very difficult" to see it making progress. While he would consider new proposals "very carefully", he said what was being talked about did not appear "fundamentally different" from what was already on the table.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48323522>

Brexit secretary warns no-deal preparations must be sped up

Preparations for a no-deal Brexit should be brought forward "at pace" if MPs do not back the prime minister's deal, the Brexit secretary has warned. The comments are likely to reignite the debate about whether the government should be prepared to take the UK out of the European Union with no-deal if - as expected - MPs fail to back the withdrawal agreement when it returns to the House of Commons in June. Stephen Barclay told Sophy Ridge on Sunday: "Members of Parliament do need to face facts, and if the deal were not to go through then there are only two alternatives - you either

leave with a no-deal or you revoke.

<https://news.sky.com/story/brexit-secretary-warns-no-deal-preparations-must-be-spiced-up-11723620>

Corbyn urges voters to 'come together to oppose far right' ahead of European parliament elections

Jeremy Corbyn sounded a warning at a Labour rally in Merseyside about the rise of the far right. The Labour leader gave a speech from a bandstand at the event in Derby Park, Bootle, on Saturday. He described the danger of the far right and "their simplistic answers which can only breed hatred and division". Candidates for the European elections in the northwest include English Defence League founder Tommy Robinson. Mr Corbyn compared the "propaganda" being put out by the far right during the European election campaign to the rise of the Nazis in Europe in the 1930s.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/corbyn-far-right-european-parliament-elections-2019-tommy-robinson-a8919976.html>

Change UK leader Heidi Allen hints at Lib Dem alliance

Change UK's interim leader has denied speculation that she is defecting to the Liberal Democrats after a bruising week in which the party lost one candidate and sank to the lowest poll numbers since its launch. Heidi Allen, the South Cambridgeshire MP who resigned from the Conservatives in February, said: "It wouldn't look good if I defected from one party and defected to another a few weeks later." She added: "It's not something that I am considering." The pro-Europe MP hinted, however, that Change UK might have to enter an alliance with the Lib Dems after Thursday's European elections. Allen, 44, said: "I hope we'll be able to work more effectively in the future."

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/change-uk-leader-heidi-allen-hints-at-lib-dem-alliance-271f3tbmb?fbclid=IwAR0iGqHXFRnYz3CZVHAypQVYPMzu-85FCNUvRmSQowG6X6JqZ0v1jVpl6wc>

UK's opposition will not back 'fundamentally' unchanged Brexit bill

The leader of Britain's opposition said he would not support Prime Minister Theresa May's new attempt to push through her Brexit bill if it was fundamentally the same as the bill that had been defeated three times before. "We haven't seen whatever the new bill is going to be yet but nothing I've heard leads me to believe it is fundamentally any different from the previous bill that has been put forward so as of now we are not supporting it," Jeremy Corbyn told the BBC's Andrew Marr show on Sunday. May said in the Sunday Times she would present a "new bold offer" to lawmakers with "an improved package of measures" in a final attempt to get the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement Bill through parliament before she leaves office.

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/uks-opposition-not-back-fundamentally-101224459.html>

Vote for a pro-EU party, not mine, says Labour's Dame Margaret Hodge

Jeremy Corbyn's row with Dame Margaret Hodge escalated last night after the MP said party members should vote for pro-EU candidates in the European elections, even if it means not voting for Labour. Hodge has clashed often with the Labour leader on his handling of anti-semitism and his approach to Brexit. At an event last week hosted by Progress, the Blairite think tank, Hodge was asked if she agreed with a panellist who dismissed tactical voting and said all members should vote Labour in the upcoming contest. A leaked tape reveals the 74-year-old Barking MP responded: "No, I don't." She said: "I think taking whatever action you need, within your locality, that gives you the best likelihood of electing somebody who will be a pro-European MEP, I think is the way you should go, I really do."

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/46c51f4e-79a9-11e9-a441-7c210cc4271f>

European elections: Michael Heseltine to vote Lib Dem in Brexit protest

Tory grandee Michael Heseltine has said he will not be supporting the Conservatives in the European election, and will instead vote Liberal Democrat. The former deputy prime minister and lifelong pro-European said the party has become "infected by the virus of extremism" and he cannot endorse its

support for leaving the EU. In an article for The Sunday Times, he said: "The reason for my experiment with the Lib Dems is, of course, the government's position on Brexit.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/european-elections-michael-heseltine-brexit-lib-dems-conservatives-a8920376.html>

'Early election could kill Brexit', says health secretary Matt Hancock

An early general election could mean "killing Brexit altogether", according to health secretary Matt Hancock. The cabinet minister, speaking amid uncertainty surrounding Theresa May's future in Number 10, said such a vote should not be called until Britain has left the EU. Mr Hancock, a Remainer during the 2016 campaign, said the Tories need to "take responsibility for delivering on the referendum result".

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/early-election-could-kill-brexit-says-health-secretary-matt-hancock-a4145431.html>

Theresa May's 'bold Brexit offer' is just a 'retread' of old ideas, leaked document suggests

Theresa May's final attempt to get a Brexit deal through Parliament appears doomed after a leaked document suggested it was nothing more than a "retread" of old ideas. The Prime Minister claims she has a "bold offer" to put to MPs next month, but The Telegraph has learnt that it contains nothing new on customs arrangements and retains the controversial Northern Irish backstop. To stand any chance of winning the vote, Mrs May must persuade Brexiteer Tory MPs who opposed her deal in the previous three votes to change their minds, but leading Eurosceptics said there was "nothing new" to tempt them.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/19/theresa-mays-bold-brexit-offer-just-retread-old-ideas-leaked/>

Tories Turn to Leadership Race as May Puts Up One More Fight

Pessimism is growing over whether May will be able to win over enough MPs. A leaked document seen by the Telegraph suggests her new plan is just a "retread" of old ideas. Any concessions aimed at Labour members of parliament are likely to erode support among those on her own side. In a sign that the differences between the government and opposition Labour Party over Brexit are getting even harder to bridge, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn on Sunday went the furthest yet in his support for a second referendum. May has repeatedly rejected going back to the public again. So May's colleagues are focusing on who will replace her.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-05-19/tories-turn-to-leadership-race-as-may-puts-up-one-more-fight>

Change UK: Revoke Article 50 to hold second Brexit referendum

Britain's EU exit should be stopped to allow time to hold a second referendum, according to Change UK. Party spokesman Chuka Umunna said the country was facing a "national emergency" - the prospect of leaving the EU with no deal at the end of October. "I have come to the view that we are now at the point where we are going to need to revoke Article 50," he told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

<https://news.sky.com/story/change-uk-revoke-article-50-to-hold-second-brexit-referendum-11724131>

Nicola Sturgeon: Independence vote by 2021 even if UK stays in EU

Nicola Sturgeon has signalled that her timetable for a second independence referendum before 2021 will remain if the UK chooses to stay in the EU. The First Minister said she would "not necessarily" abandon her independence plans even if there is a second EU referendum that reverses Brexit, citing the risk of Boris Johnson becoming Prime Minister.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-independence-vote-by-2021-even-if-uk-stays-in-eu-1-4930116>

Nigel Farage claims Leavers are the true democrats - this is why he's wrong

Our democracy is under threat from the Brexit result. The legitimacy of the result is undermined by the unlawful means used to reach it. Maybe voters will want Brexit in greater numbers, but they should be asked in a second referendum. But it must be clear that its point is not to give the public a second chance to fix its mistake, but to give the winning campaign side another opportunity to win by the rules rather than by breaking them. The sooner both sides in the Brexit debate see that a second vote is in their interests whether pro-Leave or pro-Remain, we have our best hope for breaking the current gridlock in parliament – and we stand up for the democracy we hold so dear. Failing to back a second vote is to say democracy only matters when you like the result and that would betray our British values altogether.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/nigel-farage-the-brexit-party-leave-electoral-commission-darren-grimes-a8920086.html>

Guy Verhofstadt: 'If you want to see what nationalists have done, come to Britain'

I asked him the obvious question of how he thought Brexit would go in the coming months, whether he felt he would ever escape from it. “Like you, all we can do is watch,” he says. “The withdrawal agreement is there. We are ready to sign it. My view is that in any other country, after such an existential decision as the referendum, there would have immediately been a cross-party commission. But you seem to prefer always the usual two-party fight. Like many of you, we are just asking, when, if ever, are they going to put country before party?” He believes this week’s elections are a good place to start.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/19/guy-verhofstadt-brexit-interview-nationalists-london-european-elections>

Bame voters, Farage is counting on your apathy to win - don't give him the satisfaction

Among Bame Labour voters, there are some who think they ought to sit this election out, because they believe that unleashing another abhorrent political party in Europe will never really affect them. But it's imperative that we don't sit this out. Use your vote to ensure the socialists and democrats can form the largest party in the European parliament, to ensure we deliver hard-working Labour MEPs that will actually make us proud (for however long it is we have left in Europe). Make sure you vote – just try not to embolden the far-right in Europe, by accident.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-bame-labour-nigel-farage-party-european-parliament-a8919981.html>

Nigel Farage: McDonald's asked not to sell milkshakes during rally

Police asked a McDonald's in Edinburgh not to sell ice cream or milkshakes during a rally run by Nigel Farage. As hundreds of Brexit Party supporters joined a rally led by Mr Farage at Edinburgh's Corn Exchange, the nearby branch of the fast food chain avoided selling the products - to prevent a repeat of recent dairy-based attacks. The branch on Chesser Avenue also had to increase its door security between 6pm and 10pm.

<https://news.sky.com/story/nigel-farage-mcdonalds-asked-not-to-sell-milkshakes-during-rally-11723088>

Green co-leader Sian Berry: 'There has to be confirmatory vote' on new Brexit deal

19 May 2019 Green co-leader Sian Berry: 'There has to be confirmatory vote' on new Brexit deal
Matt Frei Europe Editor and Presenter Share Tweet Send Email We spoke to Sian Berry, the co-leader of the Green Party, and began by asking her if the Greens would support Theresa May's withdrawal agreement if there was a second referendum.

<https://www.channel4.com/news/green-co-leader-sian-berry-there-has-to-be-confirmatory-vote-on-new-brexit-deal>

Theresa May promises 'bold offer' in last-ditch bid to win support for Brexit deal

The Prime Minister said she would "not be simply asking MPs to think again" about the same deal they have rejected three times when the Withdrawal Agreement Bill comes up for a vote next month. The pledge comes in spite of Labour pulling the plug on long-running talks with the Government aimed at thrashing out changes to the Brexit deal.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/103971/theresa-may-promises-bold-offer-last-ditch-bid-win>

Theresa May plans to put 'bold' new Brexit offer before Commons

The Prime Minister has promised a “bold offer” to MPs in a final bid to get her Brexit deal through parliament, but we’re yet to hear the detail of what that could possibly entail. Lib Dem leader Vince Cable says if it means she’s now going to offer the country a confirmatory referendum on her deal, his MPs would back it. One cabinet minister said today he’d like to shut all 650 MPs in a room until a deal was hammered out.

<https://www.channel4.com/news/theresa-may-plans-to-put-bold-new-brexit-offer-before-commons>

Brexit: May faces calls to quit as collapse of Labour talks kills off EU withdrawal plan

Theresa May is facing growing clamour from within her own party to quit immediately as prime minister, after the collapse of Brexit talks with Labour sounded the death knell for her EU withdrawal plans. With Tories trailing in fifth place on a humiliating 9 per cent in one poll for next week’s European parliament elections, furious backbenchers predicted certain defeat when the Withdrawal Agreement Bill comes before the Commons in June. Brexiteers said there was no prospect of Ms May averting a “significant” rebellion by tacking towards them on totemic issues like the Irish backstop and free trade. “There’s nothing she can say,” said one former minister. “No one trusts her any more.”

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-latest-may-quit-corbyn-labour-talks-collapse-european-elections-withdrawal-agreement-a8919261.html>

Could the European elections redefine British politics?

Here in the UK, Brexit dominates the campaign that was never supposed to happen for Thursday’s European elections. Six weeks of talks between Labour and the government to find a deal on the Withdrawal Agreement have ended without consummation. With both sides blaming the other. The latest polling has the Tories in fourth, even fifth place and both big parties have been campaigning as if in a witness protection programme for an election about as welcome to them as root canal surgery.

<https://www.channel4.com/news/could-the-european-elections-redefine-british-politics>

Brexit: 'Don't betray Gibraltar' urges Vince Cable as the Rock fears a Spanish crackdown

Sir Vince Cable may have little time left as Lib Dem leader but he is determined to make the most of it. So just a week before crucial European Parliament elections the energetic 76-year-old jetted to Gibraltar to deliver a stark message to Theresa May - “don’t betray” the Rock. Sir Vince, who visited the Gibraltar on Friday for the first time, said Brits living there are “totally committed to being in the UK family - we have a duty to them”. Locals told the Mirror they felt “forgotten” amid the squabbling of politicians in Westminster. Gibraltar, which voted 96% to remain in the EU, fears Spain seizing on our chaos to resurrect claims on the peninsula.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-dont-betray-gibraltar-urges-16164145>

Brexit: Withdrawal Agreement Bill 'should include public vote'

The government should add a public vote to the Brexit legislation which MPs will vote on next month, the shadow Brexit secretary has told the BBC. Sir Keir Starmer said including another referendum in the Withdrawal Agreement Bill would “break the impasse”. Talks between Labour and the government to find a compromise Brexit deal broke down on Friday without agreement. Theresa May has said she would consider putting different Brexit options to MPs to see which ones “command a majority”. Labour’s preferred plan is for changes to the government’s Brexit deal or an election, but if neither of those are possible, it will support the option of a public vote.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48319757>

Bagehot The return of Mr Brexit, Nigel Farage

He has never held a seat in the House of Commons, let alone a seat around the cabinet table. Yet Nigel Farage is one of the most important British politicians of the past few decades. History will have little to say about many members of Theresa May's under-achieving government. But it will have a great deal to say, whether good or bad, about this former commodities trader turned champion of the populist revolution. Mr Farage has changed the course of British history once and may be about to change it again. He persuaded David Cameron to call a referendum on membership of the eu, by turning the obscure uk Independence Party into a powerful electoral machine that hoovered up discontented Tory voters. Now he is trying to force Mrs May to "deliver on" that referendum by demanding that Britain leave with no deal. His brand-new Brexit Party is likely to win more votes than any other in next week's European election and send an electric shock through the political establishment.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/05/18/the-return-of-mr-brexit-nigel-farage>

As his Brexit talks with Theresa May finally collapse, Jeremy Corbyn has the most to lose

Labour isn't working. The famous Tory poster, which helped Margaret Thatcher win power 40 years ago this month, could be applied equally to Labour's campaign for next Thursday's European parliament elections. The party is losing support to two rivals that Jeremy Corbyn thought he had seen off - the Liberal Democrats and Greens. Their crystal clear anti-Brexit pitch contrasts with Corbyn's fuzzy approach, which is alienating Remainers without keeping Labour Leavers on board. Figures I have seen show how Labour's campaign is not reaching its natural supporters on social media, a far cry from its huge success in this area when Corbyn deprived the Conservatives of their overall majority at the 2017 general election

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-theresa-may-jeremy-corbyn-labour-party-european-elections-a8918406.html>

Bombshell Brexit leak reveals Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn discussed plan to leave EU on July 31 and avoid second referendum

A bombshell leaked document today reveals Theresa May's plan to block a second referendum and stage "preferential votes" in the Commons designed to allow Britain to leave the EU on July 31. The leaked memo, shown to the Evening Standard, was sent to Labour on Wednesday, a day after the Prime Minister and Jeremy Corbyn met for private talks. The revelation came as a surprise on the day Mr Corbyn pulled the plug on cross-party talks with the Government, saying that they had "gone as far as they can".

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/bombshell-brexit-leak-reveals-theresa-may-and-jeremy-corbyn-discussed-plan-to-leave-eu-on-july-31-a4144686.html>

Theresa May to give MPs 'multiple choice' option over Brexit asking them to rank options for exit

Theresa May is said to be mulling giving MPs a multiple choice vote on the kind of future relationship the UK should have with the EU in order to get her Brexit deal through Parliament next month. The proposal would use a preferential vote system under which MPs would rank different options in order of preference. The government is considering holding the series of 'indicative votes' before MPs vote for the fourth and final time on her Brexit deal in the week beginning June 3.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7043091/Theresa-MPs-multiple-choice-option-Brexit-asking-rank-options-exit.html>

I'm standing to be an MEP because only our party can unite the country behind a new referendum

I've put myself forward as a candidate for Labour in Yorkshire and the Humber because I want Europe and Britain to provide opportunity for all working people, whatever their background. My

introduction to political activism was in the struggle against climate change, and I am proud that Labour under Jeremy Corbyn has become the party of radical economic change built on a Green New Deal. On Brexit, I have spent the last two and a half years campaigning for a public vote and to stay in the EU. It's clear now that the Brexit the nation was sold is a fantasy. Labour's talks with the government have been going round in circles, so it is right that we have pulled the plug. We now need to make sure the people get to decide what happens next.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-european-elections-2019-parliament-labour-party-referendum-eu-a8918146.html>

Scotland won't be independent within EU, says Farage

Nigel Farage has called on "genuine Scottish nationalists" to vote for his Brexit party in next week's EU elections, as he described Nicola Sturgeon's campaign for an independent Scotland within Europe as "the most dishonest political discourse anywhere in the world". As anti-racist protesters chanted outside the venue, Farage told cheering supporters at a rally in Edinburgh: "If you're genuinely a nationalist lend your vote to the Brexit party, let's get out of the EU and then have an honest debate about independence."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/17/nigel-farage-attacks-snps-claims-about-post-brexit-scotland>

Remain voters are left with no choice but to ignore Labour next week

Change UK's launch may have been hamfisted, but the Lib Dems and Greens still offer viable alternatives

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/17/remain-voters-ignore-labour-change-uk-lib-dems-greens?CMP=share_btn_tw

Remaining in EU a must, say Labour MPs

Labour's leading Scottish candidate in the European elections and more than half of the party's MPs north of the border have said that staying in the EU is "non-negotiable" in a direct challenge to their leadership. David Martin, Britain's longest-serving MEP, hit out at Jeremy Corbyn and Richard Leonard's stance on Brexit as he called on the public to elect MEPs "who believe in a better future leading and not leaving the EU". In an open letter to voters, signed by four of the seven Scottish Labour MPs, Mr Martin said it was in the country's best interest to continue to play an integral role at the heart of the EU.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/remaining-in-eu-a-must-say-labour-mps-pf8zxr7k>

Brexit: Does collapse of Labour talks spell end for Theresa May's hopes?

A leaked memo from the government side, not agreed by Labour or the cabinet, contained a wheeze that could have been attractive to both leaderships. Even before the Withdrawal Agreement Bill makes its appearance, the memo suggested there could be a "free vote" in Parliament on another referendum. This is rather different from what the shadow Brexit secretary, Sir Keir Starmer, was suggesting - that there ought to be a "confirmatory" vote, as part of a package, on any agreed deal. The leaders of both the main parties aren't keen on another public vote, to say the least. So a stand-alone Commons vote on the issue, divorced from the deal, would be more likely to go down to defeat - as it has on previous occasions.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48307713>

I've always backed Labour. But on Thursday, I will vote Green for the first time

I left Labour a couple of years ago, feeling disappointed by its direction, and yet hamstrung by loyalty to it, which seemed problematic for a journalist. As I have watched Labour tear itself apart over Brexit, failing to fully commit to a course of action as the clock has run down, I have stayed mostly quiet, in the naive hope that there was some sort of long-term strategy at play. I no longer trusted Corbyn, but I believed in and trusted many of Labour's other excellent politicians. Unfortunately, they seem to have little say, and the party appears torn between what it sees as its

white working-class voter base and its middle class “ultra-remainer” supporters.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/17/labour-vote-green-first-time-european-elections-future-brexit>

REVEALED: Why Boris wants Brexit deal VOTED THROUGH before May goes

Boris Johnson has thrown his hat in the ring to replace Theresa May as Prime Minister but there are fears that a failure to pass the Brexit deal could lead to a general election.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1128557/Brexit-news-boris-johnson-theresa-may-general-election>

Better to leave the EU than make a hero of Farage

Remainers should see that letting Brexit happen may be smarter in the long run than allowing a grievance to fester

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/better-to-leave-the-eu-than-make-a-hero-of-farage-z3bb2cxlz>

Nicola Sturgeon: Real chance for Scotland to remain in EU

There is now a “real chance” to keep Scotland in the EU, with the future of the country at stake ahead of the European elections, according to Nicola Sturgeon. The First Minister will speak in Glasgow on Friday to launch the SNP’s European manifesto and will indicate that a vote for the party would send a message to Prime Minister Theresa May to stop Brexit and to stop ignoring Scotland.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-real-chance-for-scotland-to-remain-in-eu-1-4929060>

Vote SNP even if you’re against independence, Sturgeon urges Scots

Nicola Sturgeon has urged voters across Scotland to support the SNP in next week’s EU elections “whether you’re for or against independence”, to send a convincing message about the country’s opposition to Brexit. While opponents have accused her of using the Brexit deadlock as an excuse to campaign for independence, Sturgeon stepped up her appeals to pro-European voters to discount Labour. Launching her party’s EU manifesto on Friday, she dismissed as “pointless” Jeremy Corbyn’s talks with Theresa May, and accused him of wanting to overturn the referendum result in Scotland, where a majority voted to remain. Speaking to an audience of candidates and activists hours before the Brexit party leader, Nigel Farage, was due to hold a rally in Edinburgh, Sturgeon said: “We have senior Tories now openly calling for an electoral pact with Nigel Farage ... it is a deadly serious possibility and for Scotland it would be a nightmare.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/may/17/boris-johnson-pm-horrify-scots-nicola-sturgeon>

The Guardian view on the EU elections: a chance to reshape our politics

Brexit or no Brexit, Britain will remain a European nation, subject to the same regional pressures as before. Member of the EU or not, Britain will have to respond to issues like climate crisis and security threats in cooperation with these neighbours and allies. And, unless the “ourselves alone” Brexit extremists take over in Britain – which they must not be permitted to do – our businesses, our industries, our scientists, our research and development teams and our individual citizens will remain intimately networked with theirs.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/17/the-guardian-view-on-the-eu-elections-a-chance-to-reshape-our-politics>

Boris Johnson crushes leadership rivals in poll of Tory members

Boris Johnson is the clear favourite to be the next prime minister, according to a poll of members of the Conservative Party. The former foreign secretary was the first choice to replace Theresa May for 39 per cent of those polled. The second-most popular, Dominic Raab, attracted 13 per cent, with support for all other contenders in single figures. In a head-to-head vote, Mr Johnson would beat Mr Raab by 59 points to 41, and every other contender by a bigger margin, according to the YouGov poll for The Times in which 858 Tory party members were interviewed between May 10 and 16.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/boris-johnson-crushes-leadership-rivals-in-poll-of-tory-members-6x5fcrx3>

May and Corbyn blame each other as Brexit talks collapse

The government and Labour have sought to blame each other after cross-party talks to find a compromise Brexit plan collapsed, leaving any remaining hopes of an imminent solution to the impasse in tatters. While both sides insisted the discussions had taken place in good faith, Theresa May said a sticking point had been Labour splits over a second referendum. Labour in turn said the government had been unwilling to compromise and that May's imminent departure from Downing Street meant there was no guarantee any promises would be kept by a successor such as Boris Johnson. Nick Boles, the former Conservative MP who helped spearhead efforts to prevent a no-deal Brexit in March, said he now feared such a departure was almost inevitable when the EU27's latest deadline of 31 October is reached.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/17/brexit-talks-tories-labour-likely-to-collapse-theresa-may-jeremy-corbyn>

Revealed: The Government's planned Brexit deal with Labour

The document shows the government wants to hold these indicative votes next week, before the EU parliamentary elections and the short recess. "We would make an emergency business statement on Monday; votes would take place on Wednesday," the paper says. It adds: "Whilst neither the Government nor the Opposition can commit to be bound by all of these votes, the purpose of holding them is to test the will of the House and, as far as possible, reflect that in the WAB to maximise the chances of it securing Royal Assent. To that end, the Government and the Opposition will consider not just the result of each vote but the level of support for it". In other words, the cabinet wants to bind Labour's leadership into a rolling process of assessing what compromises are necessary to secure passage of its Brexit legislation.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-05-17/revealed-the-governments-planned-brexit-deal-with-labour/>

Political Setbacks

Ukip Candidate Carl Benjamin Has Fourth Milkshake Thrown At Him This Month

Far-right UKIP candidate Carl Benjamin has had a fourth milkshake thrown at him during a campaign stop, following three previous attempts to douse him in the liquid.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/carl-benjamin-has-fourth-milkshake-thrown-over-him-this-month_uk_5ce17ad8e4b09e0578060b8f

EU poll reveals Labour and Tories plummeting to fourth place

The Conservatives and Labour are languishing in joint-fourth place in Scotland, according to a new European election poll. Just one in five Scottish voters said they will back Labour or the Tories in the upcoming election, with Ruth Davidson's party set to lose their one Member of the European Parliament.

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17650156.eu-poll-reveals-labour-and-tories-plummeting-to-fourth-place/?ref=twtr>
[ec](#)

Brexit: Corbyn's position 'in peril' if he 'betrays' Labour over second referendum, shadow minister says

Jeremy Corbyn will plunge his own position into jeopardy if he "betrays" Labour supporters by refusing to push for a further Brexit referendum, a shadow minister has said, in an outspoken interview. Clive Lewis warned Mr Corbyn's leadership would be "in peril" if he failed to fully support a Final Say public vote because the activists who "put you in that position" could turn against him. "You can only drive a wedge so far between yourself and the people who put you in that position before your opponents start looking at their options," the shadow Treasury minister told The Independent. Mr Lewis warned Labour was "haemorrhaging" support from Remain voters and attacked senior party figures happy to finish second in next week's European elections "as long as we beat the Tories"

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-referendum-jeremy-corbyn-labour-leader-second-referendum-latest-clive-lewis-a8919096.html>

Property, Finance, Hedge Funds Lobbying, Media ----- A Guide to the Brexit Party's ELITE MEP Candidates

Out of these 20 profiled candidates, 18 are company directors, 8 are bankers, 5 work in derivatives and hedge funds, ranking them among a metropolitan and business elite which the Brexit Party rhetoric repeatedly condemns. Many of these candidates are involved with hedge funds or derivatives, sectors of the financial industry were the ones who profited from the Brexit turmoil, by betting on Sterling's collapse and downturns in British firms. These organisations are known to oppose EU attempts to regulate the hedge fund industry.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/05/19/property-finance-hedge-funds-lobbying-media-a-guide-to-the-brexit-partys-elite-mep-candidates/>

Brexit Party fundraiser is 'Posh George', once jailed in US after money-laundering sting

A disgraced former aide to Nigel Farage who was jailed in America for offering to launder money for drug lords is a fundraiser for the Brexit Party, it can be revealed. George Cottrell, a 25-year-old aristocrat known as "Posh George", served as Ukip's head of fundraising until his arrest by federal agents on charges of extortion, money laundering and fraud in 2016. Since his release from a federal prison in Arizona after agreeing a plea deal, he has avoided appearing with Farage. However, a senior source in the Brexit Party said he had reprised his role as one of his top fundraisers. According to one insider, Cottrell, who is dating the I'm a Celebrity TV star Georgia Toffolo, has been liaising with senior party officials and handling wealthy donors. The insider said: "He knows people. We're not going to not use him, are we?" His presence is said to have raised eyebrows among staff.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brexit-party-fundraiser-is-posh-george-once-jailed-in-us-after-money-laundering-sting-gzcdcj23l>

Jeremy Corbyn on 'the option' of another Brexit referendum

Jeremy Corbyn he wants to Leave the EU & Single Market and he would like to replace "Free Movement" with an arrangement that secures "a great deal of movement". In short, this will replace an established right of everyone in the UK with nothing more than a negotiated privilege.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p079nyk8>

@tnewtondunn Jeremy Corbyn unable to tell #Marr, despite being asked 6 times, if he wants to leave the EU (or if it doesn't want to), or if he supports a second referendum (or doesn't).

Jeremy Corbyn unable to tell #Marr, despite being asked 6 times, if he wants to leave the EU (or if it doesn't want to), or if he supports a second referendum (or doesn't).

<https://twitter.com/tnewtondunn/status/1130045752464560130>

Nigel Farage facing investigation by EU authorities over lavish gifts from millionaire tycoon

Nigel Farage is facing an investigation by European parliament authorities over claims that he failed to declare nearly half a million pounds in gifts from an insurance tycoon under investigation by the National Crime Agency. It was claimed this week that the Brexit Party leader has been given as much as £450,000 in kind by Arron Banks, including a chauffeur-driven car, rent and bills on a £4.4m Chelsea home, and lavish trips to the United States to meet with right-wing politicians. But none of the gifts, detailed in invoices seen by Channel 4 News, were declared on Mr Farage's register of interests with the European parliament, which is designed to prevent MEPs from keeping their conflicts of interests secret.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-arron-banks-eu-authorities-investigation-gifts-tycoon-a8918946.html>

Tory party will split if Boris Johnson becomes leader and pursues no-deal Brexit, warn MPs

Electing Boris Johnson leader on a no-deal Brexit ticket would risk a permanent split in the Conservative Party, a former minister has warned. The former foreign secretary has established himself as firm favourite to succeed Theresa May as prime minister in a contest many in Westminster expect to be triggered within weeks. It comes as the prime minister prepares to deliver a speech on Brexit this week, in what a government source billed as a "bold offer" to MPs in a last-ditch attempt to build support for her beleaguered Brexit bill in the Commons.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tory-party-split-boris-johnson-leadership-brexit-no-deal-theresa-may-a8919366.html>

Many of the Brexit Party's Twitter followers appear to be bots

The no-deal EU withdrawal party is only a few months old, but researchers talking to BuzzFeed News found that many of its Twitter accounts are networks of bots and other inauthentic users. The exact amount isn't clear, but F-Secure's Andy Patel noted that over 8,800 users -- roughly 7 percent of the party's Twitter base -- were both recently recreated and disproportionately responsible for retweeting party material. Some of these accounts have been producing massive volumes of tweets focused on Brexit, and clearly in unrealistic amounts. One tweeted 823 times in the space of a day. Some are new, while others are from outside the UK. Regardless of behavior, the surge of new followers for the party suggested "inorganic" behavior.

<https://www.engadget.com/2019/05/19/brexit-party-twitter-bots/>

Tories in for a Brexit party trouncing, while Remainders abandon Labour

More voters now say they would back the Brexit party at the next general election than the Conservatives, according to the latest Opinium poll for the Observer. Nigel Farage's party increased its support by three points to 24% of the vote, leapfrogging the Tories and trailing Labour by just five points. The Conservatives claimed 22% of the vote, the same figure they recorded in last week's poll. The Brexit party also maintained its 14-point lead when voters were asked who they would back in next week's European elections, maintaining 34% of the vote. Labour secured 20%, with the Liberal Democrats up to 15% support. The Tories were on 12%, up one point on a week ago.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/18/opinium-poll-conservatives-trounced-by-brexit-party-remainers-abandon-labour>

Alastair Campbell: Labour need 'clarity and leadership' on Brexit 'instead of Jeremy Corbyn trying to face both ways'

Alastair Campbell: Labour need 'clarity and leadership' on Brexit 'instead of Jeremy Corbyn trying to face both ways' - there's a public head of steam in favour of a second referendum to sort out the current political mess and Corbyn is not capitalising on it

<https://www.channel4.com/news/alastair-campbell-labour-need-clarity-and-leadership-on-brexit-rather-than-jeremy-corbyn-trying-to-face-both-ways>

Jo Maugham: Brexit Party donations should be investigated by Electoral Commission

If a donor is not "permissible" - or if you don't know who the donor is - you can't accept the donation. Permissible donors - very broadly - are individuals on the electoral register or others carrying on business in the United Kingdom. But there's a loophole. The law also says you can "disregard" a donation so long as it is not for more than £500. These points are important because of what we know about how the Brexit Party has set out to raise money. You can see here that the maximum amount the Brexit Party's website invites you to donate is £500. And although the website seems to contemplate you might donate more than £500, neither I nor a colleague could work out how to donate more than £500 by PayPal (the main tool they use to collect donations) using the link.

<https://scramnews.com/jolyon-maugham-brexit-party-donations-investigated-electoral-commission/>

Researchers Say Many Of The Brexit Party's Twitter Followers Aren't Behaving Like Genuine Voters

Nigel Farage's Brexit Party is attracting big crowds, thousands of small donors, healthy support in opinion polls — and a legion of Twitter followers sharing its campaign messages at a breathless rate. "100,000 Twitter followers!" the party tweeted after its launch last month, celebrating another indication of its surging grassroots support. Its following has since grown to 134,000. Accounts with handles like AthenaLeave, jeanett49751382, and SimoneblackBBC, many using the Brexit Party logo as their profile pictures, have been pumping out supportive messages, amplifying Farage's push for a no-deal Brexit and adding to the sense of momentum that quickly established it as a major force in British politics. But the behaviour of many of the party's Twitter followers doesn't appear consistent with that of real voters, according to two separate researchers who analysed related activity on the platform at the request of BuzzFeed News. One account, set up in March, has sent more than 23,000 tweets in its first three months on the platform, nearly all of them about Brexit. Another account sent 823 tweets on the topic in a single day, mostly retweets and many just seconds apart. Another blasted out a string of 69 hard-Brexit tweets before dawn on a Monday morning. "This isn't how we'd expect normal people with diverse interests to behave," says Professor Kalina Bontcheva at the University of Sheffield, one of the researchers who examined the data. Another thing that stood out to the researchers was the disproportionately high number of new accounts following the Brexit Party. According to Andy Patel, a researcher at F-Secure, a cybersecurity company based in Finland, more than 8,800 of its followers — about 7% at the time of the analysis — were created in the first and second quarter of 2019. These accounts are disproportionately represented among the most active retweeters of Brexit Party content, Patel says.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexspence/nigel-farages-brexit-party-twitter-following>

Rachel Johnson has sinking feeling at Change UK

Change UK has a bad name, a confused leadership structure and should have made a pact with other Remain parties, one of its leading candidates in the European elections next week has said. Rachel Johnson, 53, who is top of the new party's list in southwest England, criticised the party's strategy in an interview with The Times. "Change UK is a terrible name," she said. "They want to focus-group everything and they have a leadership team of about 11 people. "If I were running it we would have one leader and a different name and we would have done a deal with all the other Remain parties. Then we would be able to give the Brexit Party a fight."

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/f75f69ac-78ed-11e9-a793-a173e7c642f8>

Brexit party SURGE: Conservative MPs 'FEAR' rise of Nigel Farage warns former May aide

In a damning indictment of the Tory party, Chris Wilkins has insisted the Brexit Party's rise has struck "fear" in Tory MPs. Speaking on BBC Newsnight, Mr Wilkins, who served as an aide to Mrs May between 2016-17, referenced the Brexit Party's rise in the polls as major threat to the Tories. Such has been the fear among MPs in the party that Mr Wilkins also claimed Boris Johnson is seen as the only leader who can take on Farage.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1128770/Brexit-news-latest-brexit-party-nigel-farage-Theresa-may-conservative-party-BBC-Newsnight>

May launches Tory EU election campaign and appears to fluff her lines over Brexit

Theresa May today launched the Tory EU election campaign in a near-empty room by blasting Nigel Farage before she appeared to fluff her lines when promising to leave the EU. In an extraordinary moment Mrs May began to say the Conservatives 'will' deliver Brexit - but stumbled and stopped herself - and then said 'can' instead - as her despairing MEP candidates watched on. It came Tory support ahead of the EU elections collapsed into single figures today as a YouGov poll predicted the party would get just nine per cent of the votes on Thursday - 26 points behind the Brexit Party. Taking aim at Mr Farage she said: 'Nigel Farage can't deliver Brexit: every few years he pops up, he

shouts from the sidelines, he doesn't work constructively in the national interest'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7041151/May-launches-Tory-EU-election-campaign-appears-fluff-lines-Brexit.html>

ITV News Exclusive: Dossier exposes more than 100 accusations of Islamophobia and racism from Conservative Party members

TV News has been passed a dossier of more than 100 alleged cases of Islamophobic or racist content posted online by people claiming to be Conservative Party members. Nineteen of the 110 cases passed to ITV News are fresh allegations, not yet in the public domain. The list is the first comprehensive dossier of allegations made so far.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-05-17/dossier-exposes-more-than-100-cases-of-islamophobia-and-racism-from-people-claiming-to-be-conservative-party-members/>

The Londoner: Donkeys make an ass out of Farage

Guerrilla anti-Brexit outfit Led by Donkeys has restarted its viral poster campaign, which shames politicians by sharing their past statements on giant billboards. This time, Led by Donkeys has Nigel Farage and his Brexit Party firmly in the crosshairs over the party's "failure to publish a manifesto". The group is plastering quotations from Farage and his fellow candidates across the land. This, the group claims, can stand in for a policy platform, alongside a spoof website the group has also created. "Until they publish a manifesto we have to assume the party's policies are the policies, beliefs and statements made by the leaders of the party," Led by Donkeys told The Londoner.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-londoner-donkeys-make-an-ass-out-of-farage-a4144856.html>

Glum faces, a speech to an empty room and a hurried exit as Theresa May's campaign turns into a wake

As photographs go, it told a thousand words about the beleaguered state of a premiership on the brink. If Theresa May had hoped her unannounced appearance in Bristol would be a pleasant surprise for Tory MEP candidates, then they had a funny way of showing it. With the Brexit Party riding high in the polls and Mrs May under growing pressure to set a timetable for her departure, the glum look on the candidates' faces appeared to suggest that they would rather the Prime Minister was anywhere else but in their constituency on Friday. Six days out from the European Parliament elections and the scene was more akin to a wake than a political rally as Mrs May scarcely managed a smile herself

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/17/glum-faces-speech-empty-room-hurried-exit-theresa-mays-campaign/>

Nigel Farage: 'I Do Not Want To Be Prime Minister'

Nigel Farage has insisted he does not want to be prime minister despite his Brexit Party storming ahead of the Conservatives in opinion polls. Farage's new party looks on course to win next week's European elections, with a YouGov/Times poll on Friday putting it 26 points ahead of the Tories. Some pollsters have even suggested the Brexit Party could garner more votes than the Tories in a general election, sparking speculation that Farage could one day be PM. But the ex-Ukip leader told HuffPost UK he would rather be an "agent for change", and rebuffed calls from some Tories for an electoral pact to deliver Brexit.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nigel-farage-i-do-not-want-to-be-prime-minister_uk_5cde9f17e4b09e0578020c67

Leave.EU founder confirms he funded Nigel Farage in year after referendum

Nigel Farage received £450,000 from the founder of pro-Brexit group Leave.EU in the year after the Brexit referendum. Items paid for by Arron Banks included Mr Farage's London home, his car and trips to the US to meet Donald Trump. A spokesman for Mr Banks confirmed the amount and what it had been used for, saying it was an "honour to help". Asked about the funding following an

investigation by Channel 4 News, Mr Farage - who now leads the Brexit party - said it was a private matter. Speaking at the launch of the Brexit party campaign in Scotland, Mr Farage said he did not declare it to the European Parliament because he was about to leave politics and had been seeking a new life in the US.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48315552>

“Never Seen Anything like it”: The Funding of the Brexit Party Needs Urgent Investigation

On 12 April, the day of the launch of his new Brexit Party, leader Nigel Farage revealed the party had received over £750,000 in donations under £500 before it had even launched. Nine days later he claimed nearly 16,000 people had signed up to become £25 registered supporters on the day of the launch, and another 60,000 in the following period. That's an additional £1.9 million in political funding and £2.7m in just two weeks. This week Turlough Conway reported on the major security lapses on all these PayPal functions, leaving them open to multiple contributions from single individuals, and the possible fragmentation of impermissible donations from overseas companies or individuals that would not be registered because they did not pass the £500 threshold. The PayPal account was moved to the US in March. The lack of verification also left the system vulnerable to automated payments and the danger of 'micro-laundering'. New research has revealed that a staggering 40% of the Brexit Party site's outgoing traffic in April was to the PayPal link. With 50% of all the Brexit Party site's incoming traffic coming from PayPal as well, this is an unprecedented conversion rate. A good conversion rate on website traffic is normally 5%.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/05/16/never-seen-anything-like-it-the-funding-of-the-brexit-party-needs-urgent-investigation/>