

# THE MO

BREXIT SPECIAL EDITION



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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**H**ello and welcome to **The MO: Brexit Edition**, a special one off look at Brexit ahead of Britain's expected departure from the EU at some point this summer.

So, where did it begin? On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016, David Cameron resigned as Prime Minister. The British people had just voted to leave the European Union and no one really knew what the next step for the country was. Now, just under three years on later we are arguably no closer to finding out what a "Brexit Britain" will look like; yet on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, we were due to leave the EU for better or worse, for richer or poorer and with a deal or not. This special issue of The MO takes a look back at the last few months of Brexit.

In December, I sent over seventy e-mails to various politicians asking them to spend some time discussing the issues. Over the last few months, we have been lucky enough to interview a number of MPs and MEPs. In the current political climate in parliament and Europe we were very grateful to have any response and would like to thank everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to talk to us.

Whilst putting this issue together Ben and I tried to stay as unbiased as possible. Brexit is a sensitive and contentious subject that often brings out strong emotions from people on both sides of the arguments. We have spoken to both Leavers and Remainers in a bid to present a fair and balanced account of the final months of Brexit. Some of the opinions may be unpopular, some may not be shared and some may not be ours, but Britain is a democracy and opinions are valued.

True, many people are scared of what Brexit means. Many are jubilant at the prospect of an independent Britain. For the most part, however, people are just fed up of the arguing and disagreements, and one way or another people want a resolution.

Hopefully, in this issue we are able to answer some of your questions, provide some context behind the referendum as well as offering some input from the people who understand Brexit best (apparently).



Now, we fully appreciate that there are going to be some people who whole heartedly agree with some of the views expressed. Equally, there will be some opinions that create outrage. However, at this juncture we must reiterate that the views expressed are not ours, nor our Editor in Chief, Ms Redfern and certainly not those of our school.

We hope you enjoy!

Best Wishes, Ross Andrews (Editor)

# BREXIT: HOW DID WE GET HERE?

**BY BEN MACKENZIE**

**S**o, what actually *is* Brexit? Well, to put it simply, it's the process of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union - but let's not do that. To understand Brexit, you need to understand the long history behind it and the key figures on both sides of the debate over the years.

The long story of Brexit began effectively as soon as we joined the European Community (or EC) back in 1973. Even at that point, there were people who were concerned that Britain's membership of the EC was unfavourable, and by 1975 the Labour Party held the first national referendum to decide whether Britain should remain in the EC. The result was clear - 67.2% of Britons wanted to remain in the EC, with 32.8% voting to leave. However, this drew up divisions within the Labour Party, with many Labour left-wingers like future leader Michael Foot and Tony Benn voting to leave.

By the 1983 election, Michael Foot had become leader of the Labour Party and ran on a platform of leaving the EC without a referendum. However, after a massive loss of 52 seats to Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party, he resigned and the Labour policy switched to being pro-remaining in the EC. In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty was signed, which turned the EC into the European Union, or EU. This immediately caused a split in the Conservative Party, with many disagreeing with this decision and forming a new splinter group devoted to anti-European Union activism. This group named itself the United Kingdom Independence Party, or UKIP.

This group included Nigel Farage, a commodities broker in the City of London who had been a Conservative since his school days, but broke from the party after the signing of the treaty. UKIP campaigned on a pro-referendum platform for many

years, and after Farage was elected leader in 2006, he carefully cultivated an image as a "man of the people", a man who smoked, drank, and spoke seemingly unscripted. It was during Farage's second term as leader of UKIP, that the party reached new heights, becoming a mainstream party, winning more votes than any other in the 2014 EU Parliament elections and finally winning an MP in a 2014 by-election.

Meanwhile, in the Conservative Party, anti-EU sentiment was brewing. The party leadership were concerned that they were losing ground to UKIP, and decided that they needed to take action in their policy which could gain them voters in the 2015 election. In 2013, Conservative Party leader David Cameron announced that, if they won the election, they would hold a referendum on EU membership by the end of 2017. After the Conservatives won a healthy victory, Cameron travelled over to Brussels in early 2016 to renegotiate Britain's place in the European Union. When he returned, he announced that the referendum would take place on the 23rd June, and with this, the campaign effectively began.

UKIP were the only party in Great Britain to support leaving the EU, with the Conservatives remaining neutral and the others all supporting remain. In Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party, the People Before Profit Alliance and the Traditional Unionist Voice parties were all in favour of leaving. The official voices of the campaign were designated on the 13th of April, with Britain Stronger in Europe heading the Remain campaign and Vote Leave heading the Leave campaign. During the campaign, the polls were relatively evenly split between Leave and Remain, although after the shooting of pro-remain Labour MP, Jo Cox, (a week before the vote) the polls all seemed to shift towards a remain vote.

On referendum night, counting began at 10pm.

Many thought that Remain would quite handily win the referendum, and after Gibraltar announced that they had voted to remain, Nigel Farage gave a speech in which he announced that he believed that Britain had voted to remain in the EU as a whole.

However, as the night drew on the results had become clear- by around 3:30am, half of constituencies in the UK had declared their votes, and it was visible that there was a gap to the tune of nearly 500,000 votes between Leave and Remain. By 4am, Nigel Farage had declared the result a victory and the 23rd of June Britain's "independence day". Forty minutes later, the BBC had also declared that they believed Leave had won. The official result was declared at 7:20am, and by 8:25 David Cameron had announced his plans to quit, stating that he would step down by October.

Six days after Cameron's resignation, the Conservative procedure for a leadership election began. This involves two ballots of MPs, who chose between five candidates - Home Secretary Theresa May, Justice Secretary Michael Gove, Work and Pensions Secretary Stephen Crabb, former Defence Secretary Liam Fox, and Minister of State for Energy Andrea Leadsom. In a shocking announcement, Boris Johnson, seen as a frontrunner for the leadership, announced that he had chosen not to run following what was seen by some as a betrayal by Michael Gove, who was a former backer of Johnson for the job. In the first ballot, Fox was eliminated after getting only 16 out of 329 votes - David Cameron being the only abstention. He endorsed May for the election. Shortly after this, Crabb withdrew due to a sex scandal and also endorsed May. In the second ballot, Michael Gove was knocked out with 46 out of 329 votes. The vote went to a ballot of the members of the Conservative Party, the first time party members would get a chance to vote for a new Prime Minister. However, this vote was cancelled after Andrea Leadsom resigned in the "best interests of the country", and Theresa May became the

Conservative party leader. Cameron properly resigned two days later, making Theresa May Prime Minister. In her first speech, she vowed to "forge a new, bold, positive role for ourselves in the world" after Britain left the EU, and to "make Britain a country that works, not for the privileged few, but for every one of us".

May proceeded to invoke Article 50 - the part of the EU treaty which regards leaving the Union - in March 2017. Within Article 50, it is stated that a country will leave exactly two years from the day that this is invoked, which would be on the 29th of March 2019. Following this invocation, May sent her Brexit minister David Davis to Brussels to begin negotiations on the 19th of June. Following the first few days of negotiations, it was confirmed that no EU citizen residing in the UK would be forced to leave after the 29th. Negotiations continued until July 2018, when Theresa May unveiled her plan for leaving the EU. Dubbed the 'Chequers Plan', it was immediately controversial, with Davis's resignation following, as well as that of the Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson. This plan was then rejected by the EU in September 2018, in November May drafted a new withdrawal agreement, which again was immediately controversial and led to the resignation of Davis's replacement Dominic Raab alongside two other Government ministers and six other Government undersecretaries. This deal was roundly rejected by Parliament in January, with May losing by 230 votes. Following this, May announced that she would hold another "meaningful vote" by the 12th of March 2019, that day has been and gone... and how further forward are we? Well, who knows. All I know is that day by day we seem no nearer a resolution.



# DECEMBER RECAP

BY ROSS ANDREWS



- In November, Theresa May finally agrees a deal with the EU.
- Discontent amongst MP's and a crushing defeat over the terms of her deal looming in the upcoming Commons vote leads to May postponing the "Meaningful Vote" until the 15th January. The decision seen by many as an example of weak leadership with a number of Tory's signing letters of No Confidence in the Prime Minister. 70 were needed to trigger a no confidence vote.
- Dominic Raab resigns as Brexit Secretary after being unable to back May's deal . Michael Gove the rejects the role of Brexit secretary as the fairly unknown Stephen Barclay takes the position.
- On December 12th, 70 letters of no confidence are reached and May faced a vote of amongst Tory MP's on her leadership. May survives the vote but over 100 MP's have no confidence in her.

# JOHN FLACK MEP

BY ROSS ANDREWS

**O**n the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018, I had the chance to ask Conservative MEP for the East of England, John Flack, a number of questions in a phone call. John Flack has served as a Member of the European Parliament since 2017 representing the East of England (which St Albans falls under). He is an ardent Leave campaigner and supported of the Eurosceptic pressure group, Leave Means Leave.

Brexit aside, Flack is a relentless campaigner for animal rights and animal welfare. He has co-hosted roundtable events on fur labelling problems in the EU as well as being a member of the European Parliament's Animal Welfare Intergroup.

**RA: Firstly, which issue was the most important to you in the decision to leave the European Union and why?**

JF: Well, it was the jargon. Taking back control, because the EU as it is currently set up, really ever since Lisbon and before that with Maastricht. It changed from being primarily a custom union to what bureaucrats love to call 'The Project' - which is the creation of the 'United States of Europe'. Although if that is what the good people of France and Germany and Spain want, which frankly I doubt, it is something that I am absolutely certain that the majority of people in the UK and I mean the majority of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England do not. Unfortunately, that message doesn't get through to the general public very clearly, it gets confused with people talking about jobs and trade, cheap flights and cheap mobile phone calls when it basically comes down to "do we want to continue 1000 years as an independent country or do we want to be a state?"

**RA: If you had known that leaving the EU would have been this catastrophic, would you still have voted and campaigned to Leave?**

JF: *Laughs*. From my earlier answer, I guess you would think that I don't think leaving will be 'catastrophic'. I

think that the negotiations could have been handled in a very different way and I think we are ~~we are~~ in nowhere near as good a place as we could have been some two and a half years after the British people decided to leave. But yes, I have absolutely no doubt that I made the right decision to both vote and campaign strongly for Leave and although I don't believe there will be a second referendum, if by some travesty there is, I will work even harder to get the message out to the British people that we need to take back control and retain our sovereignty as an individual, independent state.

**RA: On your website, there is a section on your role in the Fisheries Committee. We have already seen clashes between British and French fisherman fishing for Scallops on the English Channel. How can you ensure the protection of British fishing jobs once we have left the EU in March 2019?**

JF: What I would like to see, is obviously the re-establishing of our national waters; then it will be up to us to grant treaties to the French and the Irish to allow them limited access to our waters, but that would be on the basis of a separate treaty.

**RA: The EU have said that this is the deal, we either accept it or not, there are no renegotiations. So, what do you propose we do when parliament most likely votes to reject May's Brexit and do you accept that a no deal is now the most probable outcome?**

JF: I have quite some respect for the Prime Minister's negotiating skills. I don't think it is necessarily a done deal that it will be voted down on the 11<sup>th</sup> December, though I agree with you that it is likely. I think that she should get some more concessions from Brussels, or those fresh concessions might be enough to satisfy many of my colleagues in Westminster who have a vote on it. I don't know, but frankly I am one who would take a much simpler view. You see, the British people didn't vote to renegotiate our relationship with Europe.

They voted to leave, not to renegotiate. So, what we should have done was simply leave, giving six months or twelve months' notice. We should have spent those twelve months making really good plans and putting the physical infrastructure in place to leave; then once we had left we should have negotiated a trade treaty with the EU. We still have that option to do that but if we leave without "a deal", in what I call a "Clean Brexit" then, we can then start to negotiate proper deals with our EU friends and neighbours.

**RA: So, I'm under the impression that you would never back a referendum on Theresa May's deal and stand strongly by "Leave means Leave"?**

JF: Absolutely. In Europe, you will be aware, ~~that~~ there seems to be a tradition in the EU, that when the 'little people', like us, vote the wrong way they are forced to keep voting until, quote "they get it right". It happened in France, it happened in Ireland. Well the British people are made of a bit more resilient stuff than that. I think it would be a huge challenge to democracy in the UK if in such a short period of time we had another referendum. All the literature that was put out at the time of the last one made it very, very clear that this was a once in a generation decision, that Westminster would invoke the will of the people, so the only people who are calling for a second referendum are the Remainers who lost the last one.

**RA: The Bank of England CEO, Mark Carney, recently warned of the risk to financial stability after Brexit. How can leaving the EU be justified when it could mean the UK takes an economic hit of 9.3%?**

JF: *Laughs.* Do you think anyone actually believes anything Mark Carney says anymore? It is an absolute, complete joke. I don't know whether we are on 'Project Fear' mark 4 or mark 5 or 6, there is an establishment plot to try and scare the British people. They tried it last time in the run up to the referendum. The British people saw through it. They won't be fooled again.

*Short pause.* I believe Mark Carney has destroyed any credibility he has in his position and the sooner he is replaced the better.

**RA: Do you think Theresa May's job is tenable if parliament votes to reject her deal on December 11<sup>th</sup> and if so who do you think should be the next Conservative Party leader?**

JF: There isn't a vacancy and as I said earlier, I'm someone who's got huge personal regard for Theresa May. ~~and~~ She has been negotiating in a really difficult position because there are so many people trying to prevent her from striking a good deal. ~~that~~ I feel very sorry for her in many ways that she has been sent back to the British people with one hand tied behind her back. I think if Westminster sends a good, strong message to the EU bureaucrats by voting down this first attempt at a "suckers deal", because make no mistake it is a "suckers deal", then Theresa should go back and negotiate a "Winners deal".

**RA: So, you back Mrs May do the job?**

JF: Absolutely!

**RA: Do you think the Conservatives can win the next general election, whenever that may be, considering how the current government has negotiated Brexit and how the Tory party has reacted to the negotiations?**

JF: Well the next election is likely to be quite some time off yet; another three and a half years and I believe we will be in a very strong position to win that based not only benefits of Brexit that will be evident to all by that time, but also with our strong record on a whole range of other issues. In common with many of my MEP colleagues, we go out on doorsteps and meet 'real people' and the message we get time and time again is "Brexit. Just get on with it", "Now let's talk about schools, let's talk about the NHS, let's talk about what we're doing about plastics in our oceans or animal welfare or any one of a dozen and one other things that are real issues and I think the Conservative party has got pretty good news to tell on all those points.

**RA: Should the general public trust a Tory government after Brexit?**

JF: Absolutely! Well do you want a Conservative government that backs Britain, backs enterprise, believes in a low tax enterprise economy or do you want a Marxist government on offer with the likes of Mr Corbyn and his fellow travellers. I mean, you are, dare I say, too young I would guess, to remember the horrors of previous socialist governments. All they do is tax and spend; although of course they will offer everything to everybody and quote, "the rich will pay". Well of course if you've not actually experienced the horrors in practice, you'd be tempted to vote for it; but, believe you me, if Britain again suffered under the likes of Mr Corbyn and

his cabinet, who are by far the most left wing bunch, they are not traditional Labour by any means, it would absolutely devastating for the country.

**RA: So, is Mr Corbyn's proposed government, idealistic rather than realistic in your views?**

JF: *Laughs.* That's a very good question. It's certainly not realistic, whether they are so blinded by their own Marxist rhetoric that they think they are realists, I genuinely don't know. They've got some very smart people and I can't believe that smart people like Kier Starmer and Hilary Benn, really believe their own rhetoric but you'd have to ask them.

**RA: To go back to Brexit, I am from St Albans as are many of our readers. St Albans voted to Remain in the EU with 62.7%. How can Britain post Brexit best begin to heal the wounds and disillusionment in constituencies that voted overwhelmingly to Remain and what options should be in place for Scotland and Northern Ireland that also voted to Remain?**

JF: We are the United Kingdom. It wouldn't be possible for Scotland or Wales to have a different deal to the rest of the United Kingdom. If Scotland in due course, feel so strongly about it then let them have a referendum on independence and let them see what it's like to be a small, marginalised state in the EU as they apply to re-join, but I have no doubt that in 2 or 3 years' time, with Brexit behind us and the benefits of leaving clear to all—be it in St Albans, Cambridge or wherever else in my constituency, it will feel further healed because they will realise that we were right and Brexit was right. I'm sure

that feeling will spread to Wales and Scotland as well.

**RA: Do you feel that the way in which the EU referendum was handled may have had racial undertones and do you think that the possible racial and xenophobia is the reason we are still so divided today?**

JF: Different motivations and different people will give different reasons to vote. You must remember that 17.4 million people went out and voted to leave. That is more people voting for something than anything else in our nation's history. Its millions and millions more than even voted for Tony Blair in his big landslide election of 1997 or voted for Margaret Thatcher in 1983 - her post Falkland's election win, where she ended up with over a 100 majority in the House. 17.4 million people, more than have ever voted before. What were the individual motivations of such a large number of people? I don't know. I'm sure many people have been writing thesis on it; I wouldn't dream to second guess the motivations that motivated so many people.

**RA: Finally, Nigel Farage has been criticised for saying he will keep his tax payer funded EU pension. Are you going to keep your EU pension or do you believe that this is potentially hypocritical and even immoral for MEP's who campaigned to Leave?**

JF: I will be having a tiny amount. It will be on public record what my pension is. It's all wrapped up. The leave payment. The infamous 39 million. On-going obligations to MEP's and EU staff.



# A VERY BRITISH NO CONFIDENCE VOTE

BY BEN MACKENZIE



**O**n the 11th of December 2018, it was rumoured that the PM would face a confidence vote from her own MPs.

To call a confidence vote in the Conservative Party is a process which begins with the submission of letters by MPs to the 1922 Committee, the parliamentary group for backbench MPs in the Tory party. Once the chairman of the committee receives letters from 15% of the party - 48 MPs, the process of a confidence vote began. On the evening of the 11th, it was confirmed that May would face a confidence vote. May quickly cancelled a meeting with the Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and headed back to Westminster to convince her MPs that she was worth voting for. MPs that submitted letters include Jacob Rees-Mogg (head of the European Research Group), Mark Francois (deputy-head of the European Research Group), Ben Bradley (interviewed elsewhere in this magazine) and Zac Goldsmith (former London Mayoral candidate)

But what is a vote of confidence, anyway? In short, it means that a certain number of MPs in a party no longer have confidence in their leader, and thus have decided to call a vote to see whether the other MPs in the party agree. If May lost the vote, there would have been a

leadership election within the Tory party, voted on by the MPs first and then by the party membership. It's happened before - the government of James Callaghan in 1979 was dissolved after he lost a vote of confidence, and Jeremy Corbyn lost one in 2016 (however, after a legal battle he was allowed to run in the following leadership election, winning a handy majority against the other candidate, Owen Smith.)

At 9pm on the 12th of December, the votes were cast, and the result was announced. May had survived, with 200 of her MPs voting for her and 117 voting against. Reaction from within the party was mixed - Jacob Rees-Mogg and Dominic Raab both called for her resignation regardless, with Owen Paterson calling for her to change her policy on Brexit.

Rees-Mogg stated that it was a "terrible result for the Prime Minister" and stated that she shouldn't go on after losing the support of such a large proportion of her MPs. However, May was safe, and will not be able to face another leadership challenge from her own party until December 2019.

# LEAVE

# REMAIN

BY BEN MACKENZIE

**T**here were many reasons why people voted to leave in 2016, from anti-establishment sentiment to immigration. Equally, there were many reasons why nearly half the country voted to remain. Here is a brief summary of some of the key reasons people voted for Leave and Remain in the 2016 European Union Referendum:

## THE CASE FOR LEAVE

### Immigration:

According to a poll,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of Leave voters voted the way they did out of a desire for the UK to “regain control of immigration”. Areas with very little immigration were most likely to vote Leave - this is because higher levels of immigration nationwide have a more visible effect in areas where there weren't as many immigrants in the past.

### Anti-EU sentiment:

From the moment Britain joined the EU, there were feelings of anti-EU sentiment in the country. People felt that the EU was dangerous for Britain to be in - that the idea of a parliament made up mainly of people not elected by the British public would be undemocratic. Thus, many Leave voters felt that leaving the EU was justified due to their fears of power and control.

### Perceived Elitism:

Many Leave voters felt that the Remain campaign was run by what they perceived to be the “metropolitan liberal elite”, and thus voted against it as a way of getting one over on who they felt were the establishment. Many Leave voters were working class and non-University educated, which meant that there was a feeling that there was elitism from the Remain campaign telling them what to do.

## THE CASE FOR REMAIN

### Economy:

An economic downturn as a result of Brexit has been predicted by experts since the referendum campaign began, with the Treasury predicting that the UK's GDP (gross domestic product) would fall by 6% after Brexit.

### Employment:

1 in 10 people who work in Britain are employed because of EU trade - this equates to 2.5 million jobs. Estimates from the Remain campaign stated that unemployment would hit 820,000 due to Brexit.

### Free Trade:

The trade agreements that the UK have with the EU mean that every business in the country has trading rights with the entirety of the EU. These trading rights account for around half of the UK's export.

### Rights:

Certain rights are enshrined in EU law. For instance, equal pay for men and women and bans on discrimination based on sexual orientation and age. While these rights will not disappear overnight after we leave the EU, they could be placed in a slightly more precarious position.



# NOAM CHOMSKY

BY BEN MACKENZIE



**N**oam Chomsky is an acclaimed American linguist, historian and political activist. For much of his life, he has been outspoken about his political views, which haven't changed much, if at all, from when he first gained them. Chomsky identifies with the libertarian socialist movement, and believes that these are ideals that he thinks best meet human needs: "liberty, community, and freedom of association". In 2016, he came out against Brexit, stating that although he felt "unenthusiastic about either" the EU or Brexit, he thought that Brexit would be "the worse choice" and "it would probably turn Britain—or maybe England, if Scotland pulls out—into even more of a dependency on the U.S."

Chomsky, who is now 90 years old, is still strongly active in both academia and political activism. As a part of this, he replies to any emails sent to him in good faith (these are vetted by his wife and sent on to him). So, I posed him a few questions, which he answered briefly and succinctly. Since he discussed the issues from the position of someone already well-versed in the subject, I have added some explanatory notes, in *italics*.

BM: What are your feelings on the deal negotiated by Theresa May with the European Union?

NC: It seems to be no worse than others that can be imagined under the existing conditions.

BM: What will Britain's position in the world be post-Brexit?

NC: In economic terms, the OECD (*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*) and others have estimated that Britain's GDP (*Gross Domestic Product*) would decline by about 5%. But that depends very much on what kinds of economic policies a post-Brexit Britain would follow. Thus economist Dean Baker, using IMF (*International Monetary Fund*) figures, estimates that Cameron's austerity policies (*the policies of mass financial cuts that David Cameron's government instituted between 2010 and 2015*), which were not laws of nature, cost Britain about three times that much.

In global politics, it's likely that Britain will become even more subordinate to the US than it is now -- again, not laws of nature.

BM: What are your feelings on the European Union, and Britain's current place within it?

NC: The EU has positive achievements and significant flaws. The most sensible approach, in my opinion, would be to adopt and advance the achievements and to remedy the flaws, along the lines outlined, for example, by Yanis Varoufakis's (*Former Greek Economy Minister from January-July 2015*) DiEM25 (*A movement that argues that "the model of national parties forming fragile alliances in the European Parliament is obsolete and that a pan-European movement is necessary to confront the great economic, political and social crisis that Europe is going through"*) initiative. Britain could contribute to those ends within the EU, and I think benefit from such participation.

# DAVID CAMERON: THE MAKING OF A PRIME MINISTER.

BY ROSS ANDREWS



**D**avid Cameron had seemingly been destined for the top of British politics from a young age. When he became leader of the Conservative party in 2005 many saw him as the man to bring the Tories into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Over a decade on, Cameron is now seen as one of the biggest failures of any post war Prime Minister. Cameron's past is fairly well documented; however, we took a look at the events that led David Cameron from Eton to embarrassment.

David William Donald Cameron was born in Marylebone, London on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1963 to Ian Cameron, a stockbroker, and mother Fleur, the daughter of Sir William Mount, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet. Cameron grew up in Peasemore, Berkshire and was the second of four children. He attended two independent schools, first Heatherdown School, which both Prince Edward and Andrew attended before him, where Cameron excelled academically entering the schools top class two years early. Famously, at thirteen he joined Eton like his father and brother before him. He again excelled academically but six weeks before his O-Levels, he was caught smoking cannabis. He was not expelled, because he had not sold it but was banned from leaving the school

premises. You can't help but wonder how different it could have been had he been expelled from Eton. However, he left Eton with 12 O-Levels and then 3 A-Levels in Politics, Economics and History. He then passed the entrance exam to the University of Oxford.

Having left Eton in 1984, Cameron took a gap year where he worked as a researcher for his godfather, Tim Rathbone, the then Conservative MP for Lewes. Cameron regularly attended debates in the House of Commons and it is likely it was here where he developed his drive and ambition to pursue a political career. He then spent three months in Hong Kong, working for British conglomerate, Jardine Matheson. On his way back from Hong Kong, he visited the Soviet Union where he claims he was approached by two Russian men. On returning home, he asked one of his professors about the incident and was told it was "definitely an attempt" by the KGB to recruit him. Pretty hard to picture David Cameron as a KGB agent, isn't it?

Cameron began studying philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford in 1985. His professor has described him as one of the *most able students* he has ever taught with "moderate, sensible Conservative political views". While at Oxford, Cameron was a member of the Bullingdon Club, which had a reputation for boisterous behaviour such as smashing up restaurants and a heavy drinking culture. However, more on Cameron's student behaviour later.

His early days in politics were spent as a researcher in the Conservative Research Department. His performance in this role led him to be seconded to Downing Street to work on briefing Prime Minister, John Major ahead of Prime Ministers questions. He has been credited with John Major's sharper performances in PMQ's. He also worked as a special adviser to the Chancellor and Home Secretary but by 1994, he was looking for parliamentary seat to contest. He was reported to have missed out on selection for Ashford in 1994 due to missing a selection meeting due to delayed trains. He was approved as the

Conservative candidate for Stafford following boundary changes to Bill Cash's Stafford and Stone constituency. Cameron had a fairly good chance of winning the seat; however, as the campaign wore on and his Labour opponent, David Kidney, labelled him as a "right-wing Tory" and defeat looked likely. Come election night, like many Conservatives, Cameron lost as Labour won the 1997 General Election by an historic landslide.

Cameron was highly respected within the Conservative party and Commons alike; he'd served as a member of the Commons Home Affairs Committee, a prestigious role for a newly elected MP. Cameron. He'd become an expert in PR and had worked hard in the first couple of years in Parliament to build a public profile. He was outspoken on controversial issues and was critical of then Conservative leader, Iain Duncan-Smith, often rebelling against the party whip. He was not alone. A number of abstentions and rebellious votes helped destabilise Duncan-Smith's brief leadership. When Michael Howard took over the leadership, Cameron was promoted to shadow Education Secretary.

In 2005, the Conservatives lost a third election in a row and Michael Howard resigned as leader. Cameron had a number of close allies within the party: Michael Gove, Nick Boles, Nick Herbert and most notably George Osborne, who he was particularly close with. Then, in September 2005, Cameron announced he would run for leadership of the party. Amongst his close allies, a number of other high profile Conservative members backed his bid including Boris Johnson and former Conservative leader, William Hague. In the first ballot, Cameron came second with 56 votes, slightly more than had been expected; his nearest opponent, David Davis, got 62, far less than had been predicted. In the next round, which was open to the entire party membership, Cameron defeated Davis as he won 134,446 votes to Davis underwhelming 64,398. Cameron was announced leader on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2005.

Cameron was a young leader and likened to the incumbent Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in style. Many critics targeted him for his attempts to be stylish. However, after Blair's resignation in 2007 and Gordon Brown's stint as PM, the Conservatives, under Cameron, had the best chance of winning an election in nearly 15 years.

Cameron's biggest challenge a leader of the opposition

came in 2009 with the tragic death of his eldest son. Ivan had been born with a rare combination of cerebral palsy and severe form of epilepsy called Ohtahara syndrome. Ivan required round the clock care and was cared for by a specialist hospital. On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2009 Ivan died, he was aged just six. The tragedy left Cameron contemplating whether he could go on as leader. Yet, continue he did.

Come the 2010 election, it was too close to call between Labour and the Conservatives. The Conservatives edged it but it wasn't enough to make a majority. After days of turmoil where the Liberal Democrats held the key to victory, Nick Clegg agreed to a coalition government with David Cameron's Conservative party. Gordon Brown resigned as PM, ending 13 years of Labour rule. Cameron became Prime Minister on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010, at 43 years old he became the youngest Prime Minister since Lord Liverpool in 1812. Clegg was appointed his deputy and George Osborne became Chancellor.

Cameron's first term as Prime Minister was spent trying to reduce the deficit following the financial crash in 2008. The economy was much stronger under the Tory government but he was criticised for appearing elitist and implementing an age of austerity. The debate around the EU continued to divide the Conservative party, as it had for generations before. The rise in Euroscepticism in parties such as UKIP added pressure to Cameron to stop division from within the party. He promised if he won the 2015 general election, he would hold a referendum on Britain's membership in the EU.

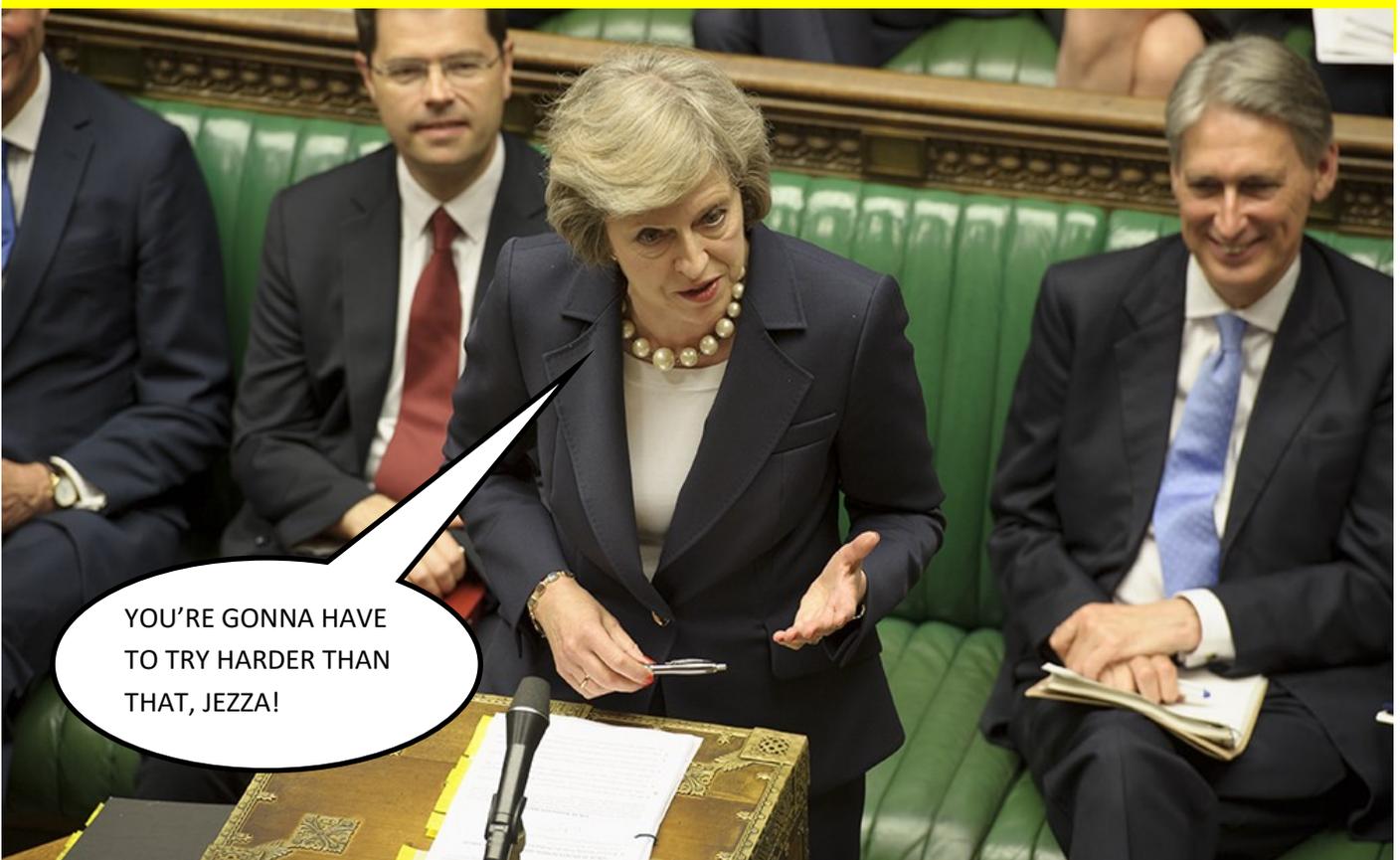
Cameron won the 2015 general election, beating Ed Miliband's Labour party and winning a majority of 11 seats. The election had expected to result in a hung parliament but Cameron delivered a decisive and convincing victory for the Tories. Later in 2015, Cameron faced public embarrassment and scandal after a book by Lord Ashcroft was published. "Call Me Dave" was an unauthorised, tell-all biography about David Cameron which featured an unnamed anecdote which would reach the headlines of all newspapers. It refers to Cameron's days in the previously mentioned Bullingdon Club whilst at Oxford. The story suggested that Cameron had used cannabis, cocaine and other drugs while at university. However, the story the captured the imagination of the country most was the ALLEGED (and I put this in capitals to emphasise that this is in no way fact) "Piggate".

("Piggate" is allegedly referring to an initiation Cameron had to do to become a member of the Bullingdon Club.) Lord Ashcroft alleged that Cameron's initiation challenge was to put a certain body part in a dead pig's mouth. This scandal became a national joke as news broadcasters skirted around the details of Cameron's alleged behaviour. It is suggested that Lord Ashcroft included this in the book as revenge for Cameron not giving him a role in the cabinet following his 2010 victory.

Following his victory in the 2015 election, all talk turned to when a referendum on the European Union would be held. Cameron announced later that year that the referendum would take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016. Battle lines were drawn though many at the time

expected Britain to convincingly remain in the EU. After a hard fought and divisive campaign that had split people on all sides of the political spectrum, Britain voted to leave the European Union with a 52% majority vote. Cameron had campaigned to remain in the EU though he wanted a reformed European Union. Following the result of the referendum, David Cameron resigned the office after six years outside of 10 Downing Street. Disgraced and seen by many on the side of remain as an embarrassment for calling a needless referendum, Cameron's political legacy will always be seen as a failure for losing the EU. Cameron had been groomed to become Prime Minister since he was at school, now with his political career in tatters and the nation divided, it is likely that Cameron will be regarded as one of the biggest failures to hold the office.

# JANUARY RECAP



- May's deal is resoundingly rejected by parliament on January 15th.
- With negotiations stagnant over the Irish Backstop and the government in disarray following December's no confidence vote and Commons losses, Jeremy Corbyn table a motion of no confidence in the government.
- Rebel Tory and DUP MP's threatened to reject May's deal in the no confidence vote in an attempt to overthrow her premiership and government.
- May wins the vote of no confidence by 19 votes at 325 to 306 votes.

# 5 QUESTIONS WITH... ALEX MAYER MEP

BY ROSS ANDREWS



**A**lex Mayer has served as an MEP for the East of England since November 2016. Like most Labour members, she is an ardent remainer. Following Richard Howitt's

resignation, she took his seat in the European parliament and she is a member of Labour's national policy forum.

RA: Why did you think it was important to remain part of the EU?

AM: Leaving the EU endangers our economic and national security. It is very hard to disentangle ourselves from decades of multilateral cooperation on issues ranging from security to data sharing, from trade to environmental and food standards. It also sends the wrong message, that we do not want leaders in Europe, that we are happy to retreat from the stage and let others lead.

RA: Does a second referendum go against democracy and make 17.4 million peoples votes count for nothing?

AM: No. Allowing people to express an opinion at the ballot box is more democracy, not less. Also, more information has come to light and no one can reasonably say they knew how complicated these negotiations would be or that they knew all the details about the single market and the Custom's Union. It is

right that voters have a chance to ratify this deal or decide they'd rather remain in the EU.

RA: Can Labour realistically win the next election and if so, why does Corbyn not motion no confidence in the government?

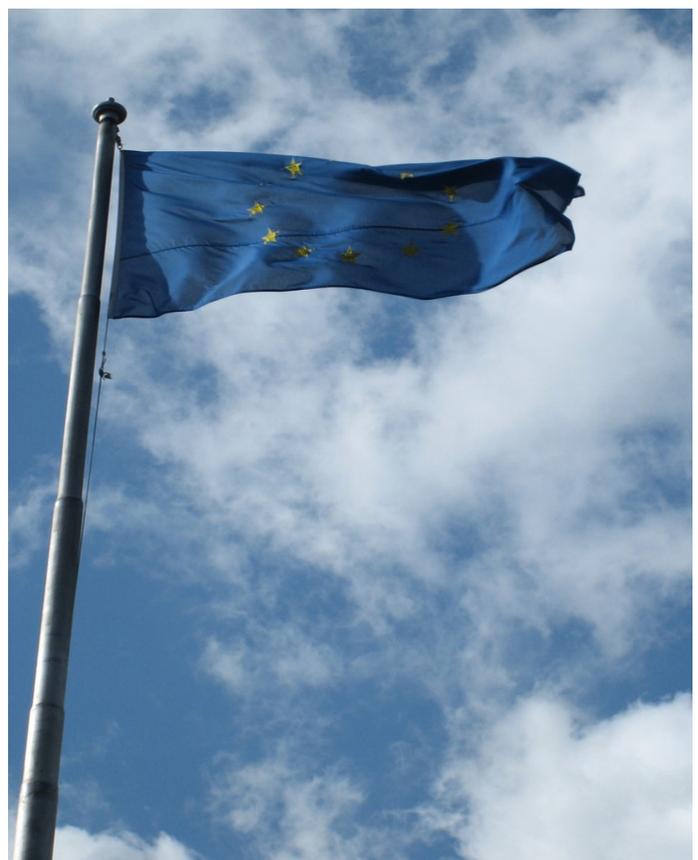
AM: Yes, and it follows that once the government is defeated on its key legislation that there should be a vote of no confidence. That's what the front bench will do in the coming weeks.

RA: Are we heading for a no deal Brexit?

AM: Yes, as in we need to take action to stop it as it is currently the default outcome. I think Yvette Cooper's amendment this week has made it less likely but the government should rule it out completely.

RA: What do you intend to do once we have left the EU?

AM: For now I am fully focussed on representing the East of England in the European Parliament and any future considerations will be made after my term expires.



# WHAT DOES BEN BRADSHAW MP HAVE TO SAY?

**BY ROSS ANDREWS**

**B**en Bradshaw has been the Labour MP for Exeter since the historic 1997 election. 1997 saw Labour win a landslide under Tony Blair's New Labour movement. From 2009-2010 Bradshaw served as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in Gordon Brown's cabinet. Before a career in politics, he was a BBC Radio Reporter. Bradshaw is in a civil partnership with his long term partner, Neal Dalglish. He was one of the first MP's to do so and the first ever cabinet minister to be in a civil partnership. In January, I posed some questions to him in a phone call.

RA: Why did you believe it was right to remain in the EU?

BB: Oh, where should I start? I think for a number of reasons; mainly in Britain and Europe we have had the good fortune to experience the longest period of peace and prosperity in the aftermath of the second World War. I think a reason for that is the economic structures set up after the second World War to ensure that conflict never happens again. I think our membership has hugely benefited the UK; if you look at our relative growth before we joined the common market in 1975, we were among the worst performers in Europe, but since we've joined we've been among the best.

RA: What do you think has been the biggest failure of the Brexit negotiations?

BB: I think the biggest mistake that Theresa May has made is to assume that the referendum result, which after all was pretty close, was a mandate for the hardest Brexit possible: outside the customs union; outside the single market and at a time when she didn't have a parliamentary majority. I always thought there was a chance this whole thing could unravel once the very sensible British public were confronted with this reality of Brexit rather than the fantasy version of the campaign. I was much more confident of that once Theresa May threw away her majority by calling an unnecessary general election in 2017 as has transpired. But the fundamental reason, as I say, her making that fatal choice of something she didn't have a majority for and in the interest of internal conservative party management not

the interests of the country.

RA: Why do you believe there should be a peoples vote?

BB: Because we're rapidly running out of alternatives. We have roughly two months to go until 'Brexitday'.

Theresa May's deal has been resoundingly rejected by parliament on both sides of the argument and I can't see a parliamentary majority for any Brexit deal at this late stage; we don't have time. I think there's a practical argument for putting the question back to the people, I also think there's a principle to putting it back to the people because the Brexit that has emerged under Theresa May is very different to what people saw three years ago so I think it would make sense for the government to make sure that it has the consent of the British people...democratically.

RA: If there were a second referendum, should remain be on the ballot?

BB: Yes, remain must be on the ballot and parliament would ensure that it was. I mean, it would be unthinkable considering all of the recent opinion polls show a clear lead for staying in the EU and a much bigger lead when that is compared to Theresa May's deal or a No deal. It would have to have remain on the ballot paper, of course, but all those details would be confirmed by our sovereign parliament if a decision is taken to have another referendum.

RA: What do you think today (23rd January), is the most likely outcome come the 29th March?



BB: I don't think we'll leave on the 29th of March. I think the most likely outcome is an extension of Article 50. There would have been an extension of Article 50 even in the unlikely event that Theresa May's deal or a variant of it is approved by parliament; there isn't enough time to carry out all the necessary legislation needed to ensure we leave the EU. I think the one thing that everyone, except maybe the Prime Minister—though I'm sure she accepts this privately—agrees on is there will have to be an extension of Article 50. I think after that we're either going to have a Norway style Brexit, which is probably the least damaging, or another referendum.

RA: Do you think Theresa May should have resigned at any point throughout these Brexit negotiations?

BB: Well, I think she should have resigned when she suffered the biggest defeat in parliamentary history when her deal was rejected by 270 votes, but we're

not living in normal times and there is no constitutional requirement for her to do so. From the constraint of the fixed term parliament act it is much harder for an opposition party to force a general election.

RA: Finally, do you think there will be a general election within this calendar year?

BB: I think that it is quite likely there will be a general election some point in the next 12 months though I expect that to follow the referendum. I do think there will be a general election unless Brexit is resolved one way or another. I do think, if we secure a peoples vote, which I hope we will, I expect the result will be a resounding decision to remain in the European Union, I think her position will be untenable any way because the party will split and even so the DUP will not support her.



# UKIP: A BRIEF HISTORY



**T**here is little doubt that without UKIP and Nigel Farage, Brexit may never have happened. The anti-EU and often anti-immigration party have been at the forefront of the Brexit debate for a number of years. Ross Andrews explores how many disillusioned voters turned to UKIP making it one of the most significant political movements in recent history, but where did it all start?

**1993– 1997** UKIP was founded by the historian, Alan Sked, as the Anti-Federalist League in 1993. The movement was a Eurosceptic political party set up in protest of the recent Maastricht Treaty signed by the incumbent Conservative government. UKIP contested in the 1994 European parliament elections and finished as the fifth largest party with 1% of the vote. Following the election, UKIP lost a lot of its support to the Referendum Party which was founded by multi-millionaire James Goldsmith. Like UKIP, the Referendum Party was Eurosceptic but it was better funded. In the historic 1997 general election, UKIP fielded 194 candidates but only won 0.3% of the vote. Sked was pressured into resignation by a party fraction consisting of Nigel Farage, David Lott and Michael Holmes. Following, the Referendum Party's James Goldsmith's death, many members joined UKIP.

**2004–** The 2004 European general election saw UKIP's support grow as it secured third place with 2.6 million votes and 12 seats in the European Parliament. Nigel Farage becomes its leader for the first time. Farage's rhetoric was against Conservative leader, David Cameron, who he dubbed a "socialist" whose priorities were "gay marriage, foreign aid and wind farms". Farage cultivated his image as 'man of the people', regularly seen drinking and smoking and appearing to have an authentic, real approach to his speeches. UKIP continued to gain support. In the 2009 European elections following David Cameron's stance towards the EU and the Treaty of Lisbon, Farage resigned and Malcom Pearson became leader, emphasising the parties focus on immigration and Islamism in the UK. Nigel Farage survives a plane crash on Election Day

whilst campaigning for the party. Pearson resigned as leader, despite some growth in the election and Farage was re-elected leader.

**2014-2015-** UKIP began to grow in momentum, come the 2014 European Elections, UKIP won 27.5% of votes and earned 24 MEPs. They were also successful in the 2014 Local Elections but did not take control of any council. UKIP won its first MP, Douglas Carswell, in the 2014 Clacton by-election. Mark Reckless joined him as a UKIP MP following the Rochester and Strood by-election. In the 2015 general election, UKIP won 3.8 million votes but only won one seat—despite becoming the third most popular party. Farage failed to win a seat in parliament and subsequently resigned. He was reinstated three days later when the NEC rejected his resignation letter.

**2016-present–** Ahead of the 2016 EU referendum, UKIP did not team up with the Vote Leave campaign alongside Labour and Conservative leavers; rather they joined the Leave EU movement. Farage was a key figure and when Britain decided to leave the EU by a 51.89% majority he declared the result "our independence day". After the referendum, Farage resigned... again. Diane James succeeded him as leader but resigned just 18 days later. Paul Nuttall became leader. In March 2017, Douglas Carswell left UKIP to sit as an independent MP. Mark Reckless also resigned. Having lost all 145 of the council seats they were defending, Henry Bolton was elected leader. In a scandal hit leadership where it was revealed that Bolton had left his wife for Jo Marney, a model who was thirty years younger than him. Marney was then suspended by UKIP following leaked SMS messages containing racist comments about Prince Harry's then fiancée, Meghan Markle. Despite calls to stand down and a no confidence vote against him, Bolton refused to stand down. A number of resignations led to Bolton being removed from office in April 2018. Gerard Batten became leader as membership continues to dwindle as even Nigel Farage left the party, sighting it as "too Islamophobic".

# STUART AGNEW MEP: THE OUTSPOKEN MEMBER OF UKIP



**S**tuart Agnew has been with UKIP since the start. Having been a long term Eurosceptic, Agnew has run in five general elections for a parliamentary seat (2001, 2005, 2010 and 2015), but did not win any. He has held

his seat in the European Parliament since 2009. In 2017, he was Anne Marie Waters running mate in the UKIP leadership elections.

In interviewing a UKIP member, especially someone as outspoken and controversial as Mr Agnew, I feel it is appropriate to make a few things clear first. Many of you will not agree with what Mr Agnew has to say. His opinions on immigration and Islam, much like many UKIP members, are undoubtedly controversial and may verge on extreme depending on what your own views are. For what is primarily a school magazine, some of what he says in the following interview may come across as offensive. What is important to consider is that in a democracy, he has as much right to express his views as anyone else and they do not reflect the views of anyone working on this particular issue of the MO. Nether the less, I think that whether you agree or not, it makes for interesting reading in what is by far the most shocking interview we did whilst putting this issue together .

RA: Why did you believe it was right to leave the EU?

SA: I became interested in this in the early 90's, I used to read the Sunday telegraph and there was a particular columnist called Chris Booker who had a column called,

“This Europe”. He would describe the latest rules and regulations coming out and how it worked and I started getting worried that the rules and regulations weren't coming from our politicians; they were coming from elsewhere and that got me interested. I joined the party without really expecting to do anything but got sucked into it being an early member, I stood high on the list as an MEP candidate. That's really what happened. During the 2000's when immigration became a big issue, when the Eastern European countries joined and that became very obvious in my part of the world, causing problems without a doubt with too many people arriving speaking different languages and it was creating tension, shortage of housing, it was obviously a problem.

RA: I'm obviously a sixth form student from St Albans, which is fairly diverse. Why do you think immigration is such an issue in terms of leaving the EU? A lot of people will argue that immigrants from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, etc. do the jobs that people from the UK don't really want to do? Why is that such a big issue?

SA: You could basically split immigrants into three sorts, people who come here to work hard, they're the sort of people we want, those who come here to use our benefits system once they've learned how that works and they're completely and fully entitled to it and then there is the sort of people who come here to commit crimes. The problem is we don't have any control over it, we only want the first category, we don't want the other two but with free movement in the EU and the fact we're a big, free destination, not many people want to go to Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, etc, but most countries want to come here and with a few million arriving over a fairly short time, it was obviously a big logistical problem.

RA: Do you believe that the referendum, from both Leave and Remain, could have been fought better having been campaigned in a very divisive and often from the outside looking in, quite an aggressive way?

SA: Yes, I agree, it started off on the wrong foot when the government sent everyone a leaflet costing something like £9million that we felt on our side was very unfair and then there was that bus with that rather misleading message on the side, then we had the project fear... I thought we were going to lose the referendum and that was almost confirmed when the MP was murdered, Jo Cox, she was obviously a remainer and she was murdered by a leaver so I thought that's it, things like that change events, the first world war started with a random murder and I thought just like that it's over. The last three or four days of the campaign were taken up by it so I was quite astonished that we won actually, I just didn't expect that.

RA: Do you think that post referendum, UKIP is a quote, "spent force"? You have achieved what you set out to do as a party, what's next to achieve?

SA: We very nearly folded in March or April. Gerard Batten, who was one of the founder members, said he'd pick the pieces up but he made it quite clear that he wanted to tackle another problem, when UKIP started it was considered mad and extreme to challenge the EU because it was thought no one wanted to leave the European Union, well we've got another issue in this country and that's how women are being treated. There are two categories of women being treated very badly: 1) The female born into a very hard line Islamic family and she is told from a young age that she is less important than men, her education is neglected, she is expected to wear a burka, those things between them make her unemployable. She's then married to someone she's never met and comes from another country and her job is clearly just to produce babies and the number of people being born like that just keeps increasing and it's politically incorrect to criticise it; yet, I feel that shouldn't be happening in our country, we should get better integration and they shouldn't be allowed to treat women in that way. There's a sort of hands off attitude. The other category is the young white girl from a dysfunctional family who plays truant, runs away, meets someone who gives her nice treats and presents then finds herself in a room above a takeaway- and I am talking from one of our members experience here- being just gang raped by men. That was going on in quite a large scale across the country yet anyone who complains about it was told to shut up basically and the authorities cover it up. Eventually, it came out, but we know it's still going on and it has to be stopped, we

can't allow it to happen. I don't want to see women in this country sliding back into the Middle Ages but unfortunately, as each year goes by, there are more and more women in this country who are treated as second class citizens. That is one problem, the other, which is very close to my heart, is the complete scam about man made climate change. I do feel very strongly about this, I've been following it for over 30 years, you need three things to take this on, the first is to be well briefed and well informed, the second is you have to have the type of personality to shout down sneering journalists and the last thing is to have belief and I have the latter and I am fully prepared to stand up and fight it.

RA: What you just said about Gerard Batten actually leads very nicely onto my next question and that is could UKIP be considered to be going in a very radical direction, I mean, Nigel Farage has just left the party because he considers it to be Islamophobic and now Tommy Robinson is an adviser, is this actually acceptable in a free country?

SA: People ask me about Tommy Robinson, is it acceptable in a free country, yes of course it is because it isn't against the law for a political party to have him as an adviser, I'd far rather stick with him than any of those politicians and civil servants and senior policemen who covered up these gang rapes. He is a rough diamond and he's learning the hard way that if he wants to make change in this country you need to do it through the ballot box.

Continued on page 22.



He's learning that, he's a very interesting individual. Nobody is obliged to be a member of UKIP, you can be what you want, well Robinson, for a time was a member of British Nationalist Party (BNP) and that means he can't join UKIP. There's going to be a one member, one vote ballot on this because it is very important, sometime in the Spring, but meanwhile he advises Gerard Batten on Islamic issues and prisons, because he's been in prison and as far as I understand the last time he went to prison he was told in a very sneering way that he was going to have a Muslim cook, he lost three stone, he just wasn't prepared to eat the food and he was put in a cell where he could be jeered at, it's not a happy situation. For all his faults, I feel that man, Robinson, is trying to put a right an enduring wrong in parts of our society and so I'm prepared to risk my reputation backing him, it's a simple as that. The reason I can do that is for two reasons, I'm 69, when I'm finished being an MEP I will retire, I'm not trying to find other work where people will say "ooh, you associated with Tommy Robinson, we can't employ you", so there's no restraint on me like that, the second reason is it's very difficult for people to call either Gerard Batten or myself far right extremists. Gerard is married to a woman of different colour and race to him and I'm partly Jewish.

RA: OK, so I'm just going to finish with, if there were a second referendum, which at this point is quite unlikely, what would your immediate reaction be?

SA: Well, the only acceptable questions on that ballot paper are Theresa May's deal or the WTO deal, in my opinion, any other option is a deception of the British public. The first referendum, do we leave the European Union, we decided we would. A second referendum can only be on how we leave the EU, not a re-run the first one; what's been happening across Europe since shows that it is not good. Denmark had a referendum on the Maastricht treaty. Voted against and were told to vote again. France and the Netherlands voted against the EU Constitution. The EU reacted to this by re-writing the Constitution as a Treaty. By changing the terminology in this way the French and Dutch Governments were not obliged to put it to the people and just went ahead and signed it.

The French and the Dutch vote against the constitution and they're told it's a treaty so the government can just pass it anyway, Ireland voted on the Nice Treaty, were told to vote again. They then threw money at Ireland and Ireland voted for the treaty. The Lisbon Treaty comes along, Ireland says no, instead of offering them something, they instead beat them until they vote for it a second time. This keeps happening. Now, the British say they want to leave the EU and immediately we're told to vote again. If you put a question out to the public, you must respect their answer.



# 5 QUESTIONS WITH...BEN BRADLEY MP

BY ROSS ANDREWS



**B**en Bradley is 29 years old from Ripley in Derbyshire, so perhaps not the first person to come to mind when you think about a Conservative MP. In a short parliamentary career so far, Bradley won in

**Mansfield to overturn a 5,000 vote majority in the previous election for the Labour Party. Seen as one of the rising stars within the Conservative party, Bradley was appointed as vice chair for youth at the CCHQ following Theresa May's 2018 cabinet reshuffle though he resigned only seven months into the job. In January 2019, I sent Ben Bradley 5 questions about Brexit and he was kind enough to reply; however, considering how quickly British politics is changing perhaps Bradley's views would be different if we spoke to him today.**

RA: What was the biggest factor in your decision to campaign to Remain in the EU?

BB: I voted remain and didn't really get involved in the EU referendum campaigns, both of which I found totally uninspiring. I ended up feeling it was better the devil you know. That said, a number of things have changed- A) the country voted to leave and I am a democrat, we should deliver that. B) during the referendum, the way forward and what Brexit meant was not clear, whereas now I think the options are very clear indeed and the opportunities much more obvious. C) the attitude of EU officials throughout the negotiations and various events during that time have convinced me that the EU is not a club we should be a part of.

RA: Did you vote in confidence of Theresa May and if not, who do you want to lead the party in the future?

BB: I did not have confidence in the PM because I felt she has misunderstood what the Brexit vote meant and both over-complicated and under prepared throughout the process. I felt that she has made very clear that the

existing deal would not change on her watch and that therefore the only way to change it was to have a new leader. I have no one favourite as to who should be, but see a number of candidates who share my view on what Brexit should look like. That said, she won the vote, the issue of leadership is therefore put to bed and it's not on my agenda to continue that discussion.

RA: Is a no deal the most likely option now and is this as big a disaster as the new and media reports?

BB: I think that a no deal is the likely option as it is the legal reality, if nothing else changes we leave on March 29<sup>th</sup> regardless. If the PM is firm therefore and does not bow to pressure from campaigners over EEA/Second Ref, which she has said are bad ideas, then a managed transition to WTO is the only option. I also believe that in the absence of her being able to achieve a good deal, it's the only option that isn't electoral suicide for the Conservative Party.

RA: In your constituency, Mansfield, what was the biggest concern for your constituents regarding the EU?

BB: The vast majority of the over 4000+ items of correspondence I had during 2018 on Brexit were asking to ensure we leave, Brexit was not 'betrayed' and at the end of the year asking me not to vote for the WA.

RA: Finally, can the Conservatives be trusted to lead in the next election, whenever that may be, considering how chaotic and divided the party has been since the Brexit vote?

BB: The next election won't be fought on Brexit if we leave the EU on WTO in March. In truth both major parties are chaotic and divided because this issue transcends party politics. The Conservative splits get more focus and rightly so, because we're in government and have to deliver it. I think that the polls clearly show people do not want a Corbyn government. The idea any opposition would not be miles ahead when faced with the level of government division you have described- which gives me confidence that we can move on, get back to domestic business, elect a new leader and do well in the general election- as long as we do not break the trust of my electorate by not delivering Brexit.

# INSIDE WESTMINSTER: LORD PETER LILLEY

BY ROSS ANDREWS



**P**eter Lilley has had a political career that has seen him serve in both Margaret Thatcher and John Major's cabinet. He has been the shadow chancellor of the exchequer and the deputy leader of the Conservatives as well as running for the leadership in 1997. It is fair to say Peter Lilley has been successful in his parliamentary career but in St Albans he is best remembered for being our MP from 1983-1997. He was St Albans MP for thirteen years until boundary changes in 1997 led him to become the MP for the newly formed constituency, Hitchin and Harpenden. He retired as an MP in 2017 following 34 years in parliament and was immediately made a life peer in the House of Lords. He has been a vocal Eurosceptic and campaigner for the Leave means Leave organisation. On the 17th December, myself and Ben Mackenzie headed to Westminster to interview Lord Lilley. Meeting him at the peers entrance to parliament we interviewed him in a small room in a corridor just down from the House of Commons. Here's what he had to say:

RA: You campaigned to leave the EU, what was the most important factor in your decision to leave the European Union?

PL: The failure of the Prime Minister, David Cameron, to achieve the slightest return of power to the United Kingdom. I had always hoped, as we had lost power, slice by slice, treaty by treaty, that we could in future get some back every time there was a treaty because we have a veto on it. But he didn't get any back. I realised then that we were only going to get back the power to govern ourselves by leaving altogether. At that moment I became a "leaver" rather than just a Eurosceptic.

RA: Do you still believe as strongly as you did at the time of the referendum, that leaving the EU is still the right choice?

PL: Even more so because it became even more apparent that the EU is going to have to go down the path of centralisation, wants to go down the path of centralisation because if not the Euro currency will fail. Because there's never been a currency in the world that hasn't been run by a government who have powers to tax and spend and borrow and regulate. There is no way the British people want to be a part of that. People denied it [that the EU was set on this path of

integration] during the campaign.

RA: You retired from parliament in 2017, do you still think that the government can be trusted to deliver Brexit under Theresa May, who you said you were leaving because you trusted her to do the job?

PL: Well my trust was misplaced and she hasn't done what she promised to do in any respect. She promised that we'd leave the Customs Union and the single market but through the Irish backstop we're signed up to both. She promised that no deal was better than a bad deal but she has managed to negotiate a deal that is actually worse than staying in the EU. So I don't understand how she could have got herself in this mess unless she's clearly been manipulated by people who never wanted to leave and hope they can bully the British people to change their minds.

RA: Is it time for new leadership then?

PL: Well, we had the chance to do that last week and that didn't succeed (of course I didn't have a vote). It showed she has lost the support of much of the back benches. Any normal Prime Minister would have resigned in those circumstances but she's not a normal Prime Minister. She's a limpet and she'll stick on for as long as she can which is not in the country's best interests.

RA: You were the MP for our constituency, St Albans, from 1983-1997 and then Hitchin and Harpenden from 1997 -2017. The Home Counties voted pretty resoundingly to remain in the EU, so what can be done post-Brexit to reunite the disillusioned remain voters.

PL: Well, almost certainly the majority of my constituents voted to remain. Going round, I campaigned a lot, a lot of people who voted remain said, "we don't want to vote Remain but we're scared, we've been told we'll lose our jobs and there will be a recession", which hasn't happened. A third of them voted remain because they didn't want to be associated with what they were told was a racist campaign. I wouldn't want to be associated with a racist campaign and it wasn't a racist campaign. I think that's becoming more and more obvious. I hope, by the unfolding of events, that we will be able to show remain voters that their fears, both in regards to the economy and the distasteful prospect of UKIP are just not going to be running the country.

RA: In St Albans, there is a growing homelessness problem, as there is across the country, the NHS is under strain and many people still live in poverty across the UK, what we saw at Grenfell last year shows there is a massive divide between the classes if you had to put a label on it. Brexit continues to overshadow important social issues, why are these issues so neglected when they have just as much significance on a day to day basis as Brexit does?

PL: Well, it's a shame because we've allowed ourselves to be embroiled in unnecessary negotiations. We could have just left and we could have got on with these important things. When I got elected or rather appointed to the House of Lords, by convention you say what your priorities are. My priorities as soon as Brexit is finished are the housing crisis and the training crisis in Britain. Of course the housing crisis has been aggravated by our membership to the EU. We've allowed two or three extra million into the country. They're very nice people, but they're just like us, they live in houses. So there's three million people who would have had homes who are having to share homes and stay at home longer. Until we get control of our borders we won't be able to solve the housing crisis.

RA: Are you worried about a Jeremy Corbyn government as perhaps it is the next logical step following Brexit as people are fed up with the Tory divide, do you think the Conservatives can win the election and bring back young voters?

PL: I think the prospect of a Jeremy Corbyn government is a more frightening scenario than leaving or remaining in the EU. As it happens, my wife was Jeremy Corbyn's opposite number on Haringey council and Corbyn and I got elected to Parliament in the same year so I know him well. He's an unreconstructed Trotskyite. At best his ideas are student fantasies. At worst they're very dangerous. You may talk about division and backstabbing in the Conservative party, three quarters of Labour MP's voted no confidence in Jeremy Corbyn. But because of the way their leader is chosen, he remains there. So, both parties are in an odd state. They've both got leaders who are weak and unpopular with their MP's and membership. I think we'll have sorted that out long before the election. If we have and Labour haven't, we'll win the next election. If they get rid of Jeremy Corbyn and find someone more reasonable, we'll have a

struggle.

RA: Is Jeremy Corbyn's proposed government idealistic rather than realistic?

PL: No, in an ideal world, people should have as much freedom of choice as possible. He believes in the state controlling everything. He believes in class warfare. When I got into parliament, because I knew him, I said to him when we both got elected in 1983, "Look Jeremy, you've stopped me seeing my wife the last year or two, why don't you do the decent thing and pair with me." - a system by which we cancel out each other's votes and get to see more of our families—and he said, "Well Peter, you know I would if I believed in collaborating with the class enemy -as I don't and your part of it, I shan't pair with anybody". That is a childish and hate filled view of the world. If people don't agree with him they are an enemy. I've got friends who are Labour MP's. We're not enemies. We disagree but often have the same objectives but have a different way of going about things. With him it's a matter of class hatred.

RA: Finally, are we facing a no deal Brexit?

PL: Very probably. I've argued this for the last two years, when I've spoken to business groups. The prospect of leaving without a deal is much higher than the media pretend and you should prepare for it. But it's also no big problem. We trade with America - and they're our single biggest national trading partner - on WTO terms. So we can trade with the EU on WTO terms too. It would be better to have a free trade deal. Once we've left, we probably will be able to agree a free trade deal with the EU, but it's no great problem.



# 5 QUESTIONS WITH...NICKY MORGAN MP

BY ROSS ANDREWS



In December 2018, I sent an email with five questions about Brexit to Nicky Morgan, Conservative MP for Loughborough. Nicky Morgan has had a very successful career

in parliament in quite a short space of time holding a number of positions David Cameron's cabinet. She was the Minister for Women and Equalities between 2014 and 2016 and most notably the Secretary of State for Education at the same time. Currently, Morgan is one of the biggest advocates for Theresa May's draft Withdrawal Agreement and vocally supports her in parliament. She campaigned and voted to Remain in the 2016 EU Referendum and despite her current backing of Theresa May, she supported Michael Gove in the subsequent post-Brexit Conservative leadership election.

**R**A: Firstly, you are one of the few advocates for Theresa May's Brexit deal. Why do you believe she can deliver the best Brexit for us?

**NM:** I think the PM's proposed Withdrawal Agreement respects the referendum result in that the UK will leave

the EU but it mitigates the worst of the economic damage from such a major change in our trading relationship with the EU- the transition period and conformation of the rights for EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU are important too.

**RA:** What for you was the most important issue for remaining in the EU in the referendum?

**NM:** The UK's geopolitical role and the influence we had as members of the EU with our allies around the world.

**RA:** Why do you disagree with a second referendum?

**NM:** I think it sits very uneasily with the parliamentary representative democracy we have. It is for elected MP's to sort Brexit out now.

**RA:** Where do you hope we will become 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019, when the UK is due to leave the EU?

**NM:** I expected that the UK would be leaving the EU but with a close continuing trading relationship agreed and transition period in place. As we now know that deadline has been missed but I do still expect the UK to leave the EU with a deal in place but it is proving harder to get that deal in place.

**RA:** Can Theresa May continue to lead if we end up getting a no deal?

**NM:** The PM is clear she wants a deal so I think she would feel it would be a huge failure of Government policy if we end up in a 'no deal' situation.



# THE BREXIT DICTIONARY

BY ROSS ANDREWS

**B**rexit is complicated and it is sometimes hard to work out what it all means.

**Backstop, No deal, Customs Union?**

These are just a handful of words that I am sure have been googled more in the last few months than ever before, so we put together a small guide to what the key words of Brexit actually mean.

## **WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT—**

Theresa May has agreed a deal with the EU on the terms of the UK's departure. It does not determine the UK-EU future relationship. It does include how much money the UK must pay to the EU as a settlement, details of the transition period, and citizens' rights. It also covers the so-called "backstop", which ensures that no hard border exists between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland after Brexit even if there's no deal on the future relationship in place by the end of the transition period.

## **BACKSTOP PLAN—**

Currently, there are no border posts, physical barriers or checks on people or goods crossing the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The backstop is a measure in the withdrawal agreement designed to ensure that continues after the UK leaves the EU. It comes into effect only if the deal deciding the future relationship between the UK and EU is not agreed by the end of the transition period (31 December 2020). Until the deal on the future relationship is done, the backstop would keep the UK effectively inside the EU's customs union but with Northern Ireland also conforming to some rules of the single market. Critics say a different status for Northern Ireland could threaten the existence of

the United Kingdom and fear that the backstop could become permanent.

**CUSTOMS UNION-** A trade agreement under which two or more countries do not put tariffs (taxes) on goods coming in from other countries in the union. The countries also decide to set the same tariff on goods entering from outside the union. The EU customs union includes EU member states and some small non-EU members and forbids members from negotiating trade agreements separately from the EU. Instead trade agreements are negotiated collectively.

**ARTICLE 50-** Part of an EU treaty that sets out how member countries can leave, with a two-year timetable for leaving. Article 50 was triggered by Prime Minister Theresa May at the end of March 2017 and means the UK will leave the EU at the end of March 2019. The UK is allowed to stop the Article 50 process completely - but if it wants only to extend it, all the other EU countries must agree.

**NO DEAL-** A no-deal Brexit would mean the UK leaving the European Union and cutting ties immediately, with no agreement at all in place. If MPs do not approve Theresa May's deal, and there is no alternative deal or move to delay or stop Brexit, the UK will leave with no deal on 29 March. The UK would follow World Trade Organization rules to trade with the EU and other countries, while trying to negotiate free-trade deals.

# BAMBOS CHARALAMBOUS

BY ROSS ANDREWS



**B**ambos Charalambous, born Charalambos Charalambous, is the Labour MP for Enfield Southgate. He was elected in the 2017 snap election and was one of Labour's 30 gains as Theresa May lost her majority. He is only the second MP of Cypriot heritage to sit in the House of Commons, the first being Baroness Hussein-Ese. Prior to becoming a Member of Parliament, Charalambous was a solicitor who had sat on the Enfield Council since 1994. On the 17th January, myself and Ben were fortunate enough to sit down with him in the Houses of Parliament for an interview. It was the day after the government had survived a no confidence vote by a meagre 19 votes.

RA: Why did you believe it was right to remain in the EU?

BC: I think we have enormous benefits from the EU. The worlds changed from when we joined it so we're far more global in our outlook with huge opportunities for young people and business' in the EU with our neighbours and also being in the EU has brought peace for such a long time so I think that its for those reasons that it's best to remain.

RA: Obviously, we're off the back of the no confidence vote yesterday, what do you think could have been achieved had the government lost the no confidence vote yesterday?

BC: Well, if they'd lost the no confidence vote yesterday, we'd have been looking at a general election and I think that problem as it stands is the Prime Minister not being able to get her deal through and she also lost the vote on the finance bill last week. She's not able to govern properly and a general election would clear that and it would also allow us, the Labour party, to implement our agenda.

RA: What do you believe has been the biggest failure of the government in Brexit negotiations?

BC: I think the....Prime Minister not knowing what she wants and there are definitely red lines that were not going to get through parliament so it's been a very bad negotiating position, probably the worst negotiations that we've had and I think that she could have been more inclusive, that might have benefitted her, so yeah, that's where I think the problems been.

RA: Why do you believe there should be a people's vote?

BC: I think if parliament can't decide, the only other

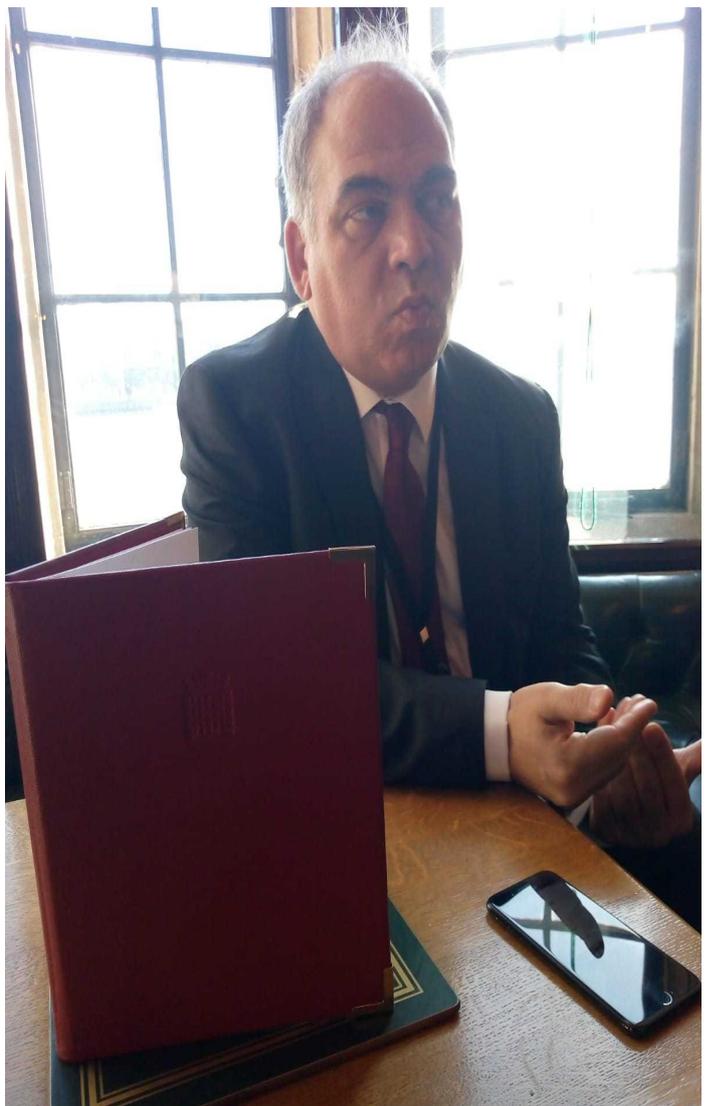
option is to put it back to the people. Once you rule out all other options that is the only option we can look at. If we can't have a general election and parliament can't agree on a deal, the your running out of options, if you put it to the people we have an option.

RA: But does this compromise the biggest democratic vote in recent history?

BC: Not at all, we would still be leaving, it would just be on the terms of the deal, for some people who think that May's deal would actually be worse than remaining, and then they'd still have that option. Much of the information we have no we didn't have previously.

RA: Finally, a Jeremy Corbyn government, do you think this is realistic in the current political landscape?

BC: Yes, I was one of the gains elected under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, so I think it is entirely possible, yes. I think the general election went very well and I think Jeremy Corbyn will be the next Prime Minister.



# JACOB REES-MOGG: REVISITED

BY ROSS ANDREWS

In September 2017, we did an article of Jacob Rees-Mogg. Only a couple of years ago, Rees-Mogg was not the household name he is today but in 2017 he had made headlines for his stance on gay marriage and abortion. For the most part, the MO has been, in recent years, liberal and unapologetically left-wing, which is to be expected of

a magazine written by young people. The article about Rees-Mogg was pretty scathing and over the last couple of years with his political profile growing and his rhetoric on Brexit dividing the country as well as his own party, in this special edition of the MO, it only felt fair to reevaluate than man who we previously dubbed, "The Victorian 'Where's Wally'".

## 'Where's Moggy?'

Jacob Rees-Mogg. He's the Tory backbencher who has become a surprise candidate to lead the Conservatives in the near future. He looks like the Victorian 'Where's Wally' and sounds like he's from 1850 but it's his controversial opinions on homosexuality and abortion that are grabbing the headlines rather than his Mary Poppins themed fashion.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, at first look, could be summed up in two words. Typical Tory. Everything about him screams Conservative, from his Eton education, his stance on fox hunting and of course his incredibly posh accent. You wouldn't be blamed for thinking his whole get up was some sort of practical joke, everything about the man is cartoonish and almost dramatized to make him as stereotypically posh as possible. It is very easy to make fun of his look but his extreme views are less funny. In a recent interview on 'Good Morning Britain', Piers Morgan, quite possibly the most irritating person in the world, asked the 19<sup>th</sup> Century caricature that is Jacob Rees-Mogg, what his views on gay marriage and abortion were. To the shock of the nation and amazingly Piers Morgan, who managed to stay speechless for about ten seconds or so (a personal best), Rees-Mogg replied "I take the teachings of the Catholic church seriously." This a blatant statement from a man tipped to become Prime Minister someday that he opposes gay marriage and abortion. So much for this being the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where everyone is free to live life as they want without any judgement or condemnation.

The rise of the Mogg has been fairly quiet and undocumented up until now. Apart from a brief interview on the iconic and ever sophisticated comedy hit, "Ali G in da house", his career as a Tory backbencher has come without many controversies. To be honest he's been considered a bit of a joke for years within the Tory party. It's been a strange rise within the Conservative's for the Mogg and it is a real surprise for those who do not take in the state of current politics. My opinion is "Moggmentum" is down to one key factor. Fear. The rise of Trump and the far right in America was both bazaar and frightening. The fact an oversized oompalooma can get to the White House has created such an overwhelming sense of fear worldwide, that everyone seems to need their own radically different radical. France nearly elected Le Pen, Austria had a very dramatic rise from the far right and Channel 4 stole Bake Off. The world is going slightly mad and with madness maybe Mogg isn't as bad as it could be. Don't get me wrong, he's fairly evil but compared to Trump, Rees-Mogg is just a slightly backward wet blanket. If I could sum him up in one sentence I would say...He's right, tight and full of .....whoops ran out of space.

The article from 2017- which is above- is perhaps one of the most liberally biased articles you are likely to read. The way in which Mogg is written about is definitely not a fair and balanced approach to writing about a politician who they disagree with. So let's dissect it.

**LGBT Rights and Abortion:** The reason this article was written was because of Jacob Rees-Mogg's appearance on good morning Britain where he states that he is opposed to gay marriage and abortion because he

*“takes the teachings of the Catholic church seriously.”*

The article disregards this statement by sarcastically stating, *“So much for this being the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, where everyone is free to live life as they want without any judgement.”* The majority of you he also stated that although he is opposed to it he would never enforce those beliefs over anyone. reading this will probably agree with that statement and I do to, everyone should be free to live the life they choose. However, that statement didn't take what Jacob Rees-Mogg said into account. He opposes gay marriage and abortion because of his faith and

**Brexit:** In keeping with the theme of this issue, Jacob Rees-Mogg has been the “pantomime villain” of Brexit. He has been openly critical of the Prime Minister and seemingly in favour of a no deal Brexit. In the liberal satirical television show, *The Last Leg*, he was voted “Dick of the Year 2018” for his part in the chaos, especially the no confidence vote in Theresa May. Rees-Mogg has been a Eurosceptic for a number of years. He has been publically supportive of UKIP and Nigel Farage stating he thought Farage would make a better Deputy Prime Minister than Nick Clegg.

Rees-Mogg was one of the leading figures in the referendum for the leave campaign. Appearing in a number of debates, he described the European Union as a “threat to British democracy” and to “the sovereignty of parliament”, citing various countries' rejection of the European Constitution which was later implemented via the Treaty of Lisbon. Rees-Mogg's relationship with reactionary and ultra-nationalist groups has led for him to be dubbed by critics as a “modern day bigot” and “fascistic”.

**Verdict:** There is no doubt that Jacob Rees-Mogg is one of the most divisive figures in British politics. He has been applauded by some for his authentic appearance and rhetoric but some finding his appalling and backwards. His views on social issues such as LGBT rights and abortion may upset some of you, however, it is perhaps commendable in this day and age for someone to be proud of their faith and follow its teachings, but ultimately, whatever your opinion is, it is perhaps unfair to judge someone based on their religious beliefs whether you agree with them or not. Brexit, on the other hand, has made Rees-Mogg the contentious and divisive figure

he is. Many would see his ardent stance against Theresa May as a ploy for power, whether that be as Prime Minister or a senior role in a fellow Brexiteer's cabinet, if May were to be ousted. It seems that little has changed since we first covered Rees-Mogg in September 2017. He remains divisive, powerful and we are still yet to see whether he will ever serve in the cabinet or higher. Whatever happens next in the Brexit saga, be sure that Jacob Rees-Mogg won't be far behind.



# VINCE CABLE: A LIBERAL VIEW?

BY ROSS ANDREWS

## WHO IS VINCE CABLE?

Sir Vince Cable is a man who has reached the very top of politics without making much noise. A softly spoken Yorkshireman, Cable became an MP in 1997, for Twickenham. There, he rose up through the ranks of the Liberal Democrats and was instrumental in arguably their biggest success in recent history. The 2010 general election was unique for a number of reasons and when neither Labour or the Conservatives winning enough seats to form a majority government, the Liberal Democrats held all the cards and would decide the election. Forming a collation with the Conservatives, David Cameron became Prime Minister with Nick Clegg now his deputy. Cable, who had served as the deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats for four years at this point, found himself in Cameron's cabinet serving a Secretary for Business, Innovations and skills. He held this position for five years until the 2015 general election where he faced the biggest set back of his political career. Losing his seat in Twickenham which he had held for eighteen years, the Conservatives won a small majority whilst the Liberal Democrats slumped to a heavy defeat. Out of a job, the next two years would of course be a defining and shocking period in politics with battle lines drawn over Cameron's promise of a referendum on Britain's EU membership. We all know what happened next. With Britain voting to leave the European Union, David Cameron resigned as Prime Minister and Theresa May took over. In 2017, with the uncertainty of Brexit negotiations hanging over the UK, May called a snap election. Cable ran in Twickenham to try and win back the seat he had held for the best part of two decades. With the Liberal Democrats emerging as the anti-Brexit party, Cable won back his seat and the party, now under Tim Farron, made small gains. Despite Theresa May losing the Conservatives majority and Labour rejuvenated under Jeremy Corbyn, Farron resigned the leadership of the Liberal Democrats. Shortly after, Vince Cable, now aged 73, became leader of the party he had served for so many years. He announced he intended to resign once Brexit had been resolved once and for all.



**O**n an cold, wet Monday in February, my ever reliable photographer, Ben Mackenzie, and I got on the train bound for Westminster. We were on our way to interview Sir Vince Cable, leader of the Liberal Democrats. Cable is perhaps the most significant politician we interviewed whilst putting this issue together so when we walked into his office at Portcullis House, I definitely felt an apprehension that I had not felt when talking to any of the other politicians who had met with us. We only had a short meeting, since Cable had to be back to his desk once we had stopped recording; however, he made us welcome and spoke openly on his feelings on Brexit and the state of British politics, making his views very clear.

We were due to meet Vince Cable at Portcullis House which is to put in simple terms, the school cafeteria for MP's. Portcullis House is an odd place to say the least. For such an impressive, modern interior, a large dome shaped roof which allows the light shine into a large, open hall that has two isles of trees running through the centre amongst dozens of round tables that are typical of a standard coffee shop, the exterior is dull and not as obvious as such an important place perhaps should

be. It also doesn't have the same grandeur and exclusiveness as the Houses of Parliament opposite. This doesn't feel like a place where some of the most important people in the country work, this is a place where they socialise and drink coffee with the incessant Brexit debate seemingly far away. Once, through the security checks, we waited to be shown to Mr Cable's office. We were met a short while later by Sandra, Mr Cable's secretary, who was a great help in securing our meeting with him. She led us through the hall towards Cable's office. It was only ten or so paces to the lift but in that short distance Ed Miliband, the former leader of the Labour party, walked straight past us so casually it was easy to forget this man could have been the Prime Minister back in 2015.

Into the lift and suddenly the casualness of the hall is long behind us. This is now a place of work, deafeningly silent compared to the buzz of the ground floor on which we had entered. Sandra led us down a corridor and into a small office with an adjacent door. She knocked and then opened the door. Vince Cable was sat at a large desk reading through some papers. Glasses peached precariously on the end of his nose he circled and underlined various sections of the paper.

Nervously, we waited at the door not quite sure what to do or say. "The boys from the school magazine are here to see you" Sandra politely told Mr Cable, cautiously so not to interrupt him whilst he finished his work. Cable turned to greet us as we entered, a firm handshake and a half smile as we introduced ourselves. "Take a seat", he gestured to a bench that looked as if it had been taken straight from the House of Commons. We sat down. "May I have a look at your questions?" he asked with an outstretched arm as he came to sit with us. Placing my list of questions out on the small, round coffee table in front of him, he sat forward in his chair rest his elbows on his knees. Cable appeared quite a softly spoken man but there was an obvious and formidable presence that made me very wary of speaking out of place. Cable was my last interview, I had done several at this point and all had been in the exact same format of myself asking the questions and them answering them. As Cable browsed through the questions, I could tell this wasn't going to be like the other interviews.

Maybe it was a lack of experience but unlike the other interviews I had allowed myself to get nervous and as Cable looked up from my questions, I realised he was now in control of the interview. "Why do I believe it is important to remain in the EU?", Cable read out my first question completely catching me off guard, "Well, I think it's massively important to the country economically, politically, in terms of our standing in the world, and in upholding a whole lot of standards particularly on environment that we approach collectively and because there are a lot of problems in the world that can't be solved by countries acting in isolation. You know, how do we deal with Russia? How do we deal with climate change? How do you deal with big multinational companies that won't pay their taxes? These are much better dealt with by the European Union as a block rather than the UK in isolation." I could tell that Cable wanted this interview to be over as quickly as possible and not because the questions were challenging but because he simply didn't have the time for us. He proceeded to speed through our questions with minimal input from me.

The Liberal Democrats, have in recent years become the anti-Brexit party which I put to Cable in my next question. "Well, I think people will remember, if we do leave, that we were the party that fought against Brexit. If things go badly wrong, they'll give us the credit for that." Cable leaned back in his chair at this point, confident almost proud of the notion of his party being the face of anti-Brexit Britain. "But in a future looking way, the point is that our relationships in the future, after the two-year transition, haven't yet been decided, so we desperately need a pro-European party that will argue for the closest possible relationship with the EU."

It is fair to say that across the country, there is growing

frustration at the petty jab's politicians make towards other parties rather than focussing on the national interest. With the leader of a significant party sat in front of me it felt necessary to bring this up. Cable agreed, "Well I think that you're right", he began, "in that there's a lot of silly party point scoring. I think ultimately the problem lies with the fact that this whole Brexit exercise was treated as a problem for the Conservative party. We didn't need to have the referendum, David Cameron thought it would be a way of pacifying his own party and of course it's not done that, it's instead done a terrible lot of harm to the country and they're still fighting that the position Theresa May has gone back to Brussels with is unrealistic but it's designed to paper over the cracks in the Tory party." Is it now possible that Brexit won't happen at all? "Well it is possible it may not happen, the government may find it has no alternative but to take the deal to the country and ask for a vote on whether they want it or whether they want to stay in the European Union. As far as we can see, the majority of people in this country would like a referendum and now, probably a majority are in favour of remaining, so I don't see why we should be punished for arguing that." He paused before continuing to say, "and indeed people are fed up with the fact that there are so many social issues views being neglected. I feel the same way actually, there is a whole lot of things I want us to get on with; education, housing, social care amongst other things, but they're all being relegated because of Brexit." Do you feel sorry for the Prime Minister? "Well I used to but I think that her sheer stubbornness and lack of flexibility is actually causing serious problems, but I did have some sympathy with her."

Ever since he became leader, Cable has seemingly been planning to step down, I asked him whether the notion of running a campaign in the next election (whenever that may be), tempted him, especially with such anti-establishment feeling amongst the electorate. As Cable read this question, he looked a little fed up at having to answer yet another question on his future, "I said I would in the reasonably near future once we got past Brexit and the local elections and if there isn't an early election but I am continuing to run in Twickenham" Not quite satisfied in the roundabout way Cable was answering my question, I took my opportunity to interject, "but does it appeal to you to run in a general election?" "Well if there's an early election, I would, yes, it does appeal to me. I think we have good prospects but if it's 2022, that's quite a long time off yet."

# SANDY WALKINGTON

BY ROSS ANDREWS

**S**andy Walkington is a name you may know. The Liberal Democrat candidate in general elections for many years, under Walkington, the Lib Dems closed the gap on the Conservatives in St Albans becoming the only viable party to challenge the incumbent Anne Main. Currently, Walkington is a councillor for Sopwell and Verulam. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, I sat down with Mr Walkington at the Liberal Democrats St Albans offices to ask him about Brexit.

RA: Firstly, why did you believe it was important for the UK to Remain in the European Union?

SW: Well, I've always been a passionate European. I consider myself as European. I remember my grandmother wouldn't have a German in the house because her only brother was killed in the First World War, the Battle of the Somme. Her first fiancée was also killed in the First World War, my grandfather was the second person to ask her to marry him and then somehow he survived the whole war. He fought from start to finish in the First World War and their oldest son was killed in the Second World War flying a Halifax Bomber built in Radlett. So, I'm the first male generation of my family, in a hundred years I guess, who didn't have to worry about seeing my guts spill out on a French field. That is the prime reason for the EU, to overcome nationalism, to overcome those absurd tendencies in Europe throughout history to go war and the people who suffer are the young men and now it will also be the young women who end up serving in the armed forces. So that's the main reason.

RA: Did you see any positives in leaving the EU?

SW: I just don't see any. We're in a world of big battalions and if I could take a football analogy, you could have David Beckham at his best and the poorest performing team in the second division and if you put them up against one another, the poorest performing team in the second division would still beat David Beckham because on the whole, teams win. We're part of a team. We're up against huge economies, basically the USA and China, increasingly it will be India.

RA: What was your immediate feeling when the result of the referendum came in?

SW: I was gutted but I wasn't surprised. I had expected, as a politician I do a lot of door knocking- and I could sense that there was this extraordinary antagonism towards the EU. It fed by our print media, which is almost entirely owned by foreigners and tax dodgers and tax exiles. I mean we don't

really have any British newspapers which are British owned— apart from the Guardian really, even the Independent is owned by the Russians; we have terrible print media but even the BBC is craven as well. The BBC kept making the debate about Europhobes, people that hate Europe, and Eurosceptics, people who are doubtful about Europe. There's been some fascinating research on this, there was nobody who was pro-Europe being featured in the media, apart from on a very low level. You had Europhobes, people who hate Europe, or people like (David) Cameron and (George) Osborne who were reluctant pro-Europeans. Nobody was really saying the really positive European case; the BBC has a lot to be blamed for. Equally, no women were covered. In the first ever referendum I voted in, the first vote I ever cast as a young voter was in a referendum about whether we should join the EU or not. That was in 1975 and I voted to join. In that campaign Mrs Thatcher was prominent and she was pro-EU, in fact she still would be today. Shirley Williams was prominent, she was pro-EU, Barbra Castle was prominent and she was actually anti-EU. The highest placed women in terms of media coverage, was a woman called Priti Patel - she came in at 16. So, there were 15 blokes all taking lumps out of each other, the top 6 all went to public school; I mean what has that got to do with the ordinary lives of voters?

RA: Do you think MP's should or will back Theresa May's deal, this being the 5<sup>th</sup> December and the vote taking place on the 11<sup>th</sup> December, what do you believe should be the next course of action if they do or don't?

SW: Well at the moment, it looks like they won. I was listening to the interview with Theresa May on the BBC this morning, and by the way, quite coincidentally, I am on the BBC later today! I expect whatever I tell you this morning will have changed by this afternoon, but all the evidence is that she will not get her deal through and that she will lose big time. The coalition are against her, equally, it doesn't know what it wants to do. We are in a complete political shambles because the coalition against her doesn't agree what the next step is. That is why I believe and have always believed that the only answer is to put the question back to the people. In the end something has got to cut through and if you have another referendum where we know what the deal might be; we know what damage might be; we've cut through a lot of lies that were told initially, if people still vote to leave then they'll have done so with their eyes open and there can be no argument. I think this is the only way to get out of this mess.

RA: Do you sympathise with the Prime Minister? Have parliamentary divisions held her back from getting a better deal?

SW: I'm not sure we could have got a better deal, if you are leaving the EU, this is about as good as it gets. My son, as it happens, is a civil servant and works in a role on Brexit and he says, "Honestly Dad, this about as good as it gets." If you are trying to make sure not too many people lose their jobs, trying to make sure businesses still invest in this country then the deal she's negotiated is probably as good as it is going to get. I'm not sure I have that much sympathy with her, she kind of sat on the fence in the referendum campaign. She was a remainer but she made sure that she kept her nose clean because she thought she might just sneak in as leader of the country. When she did become Prime Minister, then she went ahead and did some absurd things like making Boris Johnson foreign secretary, which is one of the most damaging decisions any politician has made in recent times because he was just like a wrecking ball and then she goes and triggers Article 50, this two year programme, without really having a plan with her cabinet, so I'm not sure I have a great deal of sympathy with her at all. In the end people who try to ride the tiger get eaten by the tiger.

RA: You have said that your philosophy as a Liberal Democrat can be summed up in four words; Freedom, Fairness, Green and International. Surely a second referendum go against your philosophy of Freedom and Fairness considering the referendum was both a free and fair democratic vote?

SW: Well it's an interesting question actually because there's increasing evidence that the leave campaign committed crimes and cheated in terms of what they did. Their spending was wrong and in fact there is a piece today about some academic research that shows how last minute Facebook adverts—using money they shouldn't have spent because they were over already, actually played a key role in tipping certain people over the top to vote a different way. I think there is a very, very serious question, as well as Trump's election in the States, that in fact illegal methods were done to get across the winning line. The second thing is, how can democracy be undermined by more democracy? I mean it's a weird argument, you have general elections, you have other general elections. The country in the world which is most governed by referendum is Switzerland, very interesting article I read by a Swiss journalist recently and he said; "Of course we ask the questions again, sometimes we

ask them three times because we know we have to get it right". There is this sort of strange rhetoric that says, even people who wanted to remain, "Oh well, we've made our bed, we must lie in it.". I don't know about you, but if I get into bed, lie on it and the catches fire, I don't just say, "I've made my bed, I best lie in it". I get out and jump out of the window.

RA: Finally, where do you think we'll be come 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 when we are due to leave?

SW: Well, I am hoping, that we will have negotiated an extension of the article 50 time period because we won't be able to hold a referendum between now and then, it requires primary legislation, so we would have to negotiate an extension to the article 50 time period. The general feeling is the EU would grant us that, not to mess around, not so we could continue arguing and squabbling in parliament, but if it was about another proper referendum, I think they would almost certainly give us that extra time. Then I hope we will be in the middle of a sane and sensible and I hope not too wild and furious debate about the pros and cons at the end of which we come to a reasonable end of which there can be no complaints. Otherwise we face falling off the cliff where we will all be stock piling food and they will be turning the motorway down to Dover into the world's biggest lorry park and the NHS will be worrying about the lack of medicines and radio isotopes.



# FEBRUARY RECAP

BY BEN MACKENZIE



- Theresa May defeated when Parliament votes against a motion supporting the government’s approach towards negotiating with the EU.
- A party split appears when members of Labour and the Conservatives form the Independent Group.
- Theresa May promised a vote for this date, which was later delayed to the 12th of March. Instead, a motion was voted for which stated that “this House notes the Prime Minister’s statement on Leaving the European Union of 26 February 2019; and further notes that discussions between the UK and the EU are ongoing.” Two amendments were also voted on - one which sought an agreement between the UK and EU to commit to the protection of citizens rights, and one which wanted Theresa May to specify a timeframe for the next meaningful vote.

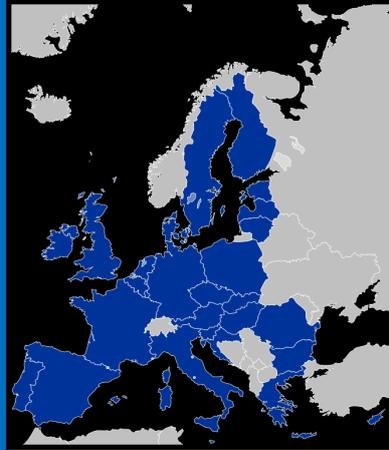
# WHAT IS THE EU?

BY ROSS ANDREWS

## WHAT IS THE EU?

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 28 member states in Europe. The European Economic Community or the EEC was founded in 1951 to keep peace in a war torn Europe by creating an allied free trade agreement. It began with six nations; Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany, known as the Inner Six. It wasn't until 1993 that the EU and European Citizenship were established when the Maastricht Treaty was agreed on. No nation has formally left the European Union before making the United Kingdom's decision to leave unprecedented.

## WHO IS IN THE EU?



There are 28 members of the European Union. It makes up 7.3% of the globe's entire population. Croatia is the most recent country to join entering the EU in 2013. The original Inner Six were the first to join in 1951.

**MEMBERS OF THE EU:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

## WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE EU?



### JEAN –CLAUDE JUNKER:

Jean-Claude Juncker is the President of the European Commission, the executive branch of the EU. He has held this role since 2014 having previously been the Prime Minister of Luxembourg



### DONALD TUSK-

Donald Tusk is the President of the European Council. Having served as Prime Minister of Poland, Tusk he resigned the role to take on his job at the EU. He was the longest serving post-communism PM of Poland.

## WHERE IS THE EU?



The European Parliament shares its time between Strasbourg, France and Brussels, Belgium. The official seat of the European Parliament is in Strasbourg. Brussels hosts the European Parliament as well as the European Commission and Council. Some European Parliament staff are also based in Luxembourg.

# ANNE MAIN: IN CONVERSATION

**A**nne Main has been the MP for St Albans since 2005. Having been re-elected to serve our city on four occasions, it is fair to say that under Main, St Albans has re-become the Tory safe seat it was before the rise of New Labour in the late 90's. Main is a Eurosceptic who campaigned hard during the referendum for the Leave campaign. I was able to put a few questions to her over the phone in late January.

RA: Why did you believe it was right to leave the EU?

AM: For me I have always rather been as self-governing country. In my parliamentary role, I have seen a lot of legislation imported into the house with rules I didn't approve of and rules that were constraining on what we wanted to do. So, for example, I wanted to improve the safety of children's costumes, you know, witches and wizards and all that, the flammability of those is very questionable and I wanted to improve the safety of the labelling associated with them to make sure that the labelling identifies that children are wearing them so that safety is improved. When I tried to investigate this, you come up against a whole load of bureaucracy that say's you 're not allowed to do this, not allowed to label something like this because it's not EU approved. I think it's ridiculous, animal slaughter laws, the tobacco regulations, the list goes on. We're effectively buying legislation that we don't agree with and we as a country should be allowed to adopt higher standards on environmental protection than the EU and we are stifled by them. Similarly, we're not allowed to do our own trade with countries outside the EU. I'm very relaxed on our immigration policy, I think we should control as an when we need, but I oppose to a two tier immigration system where our friends from the EU can enter freely but the commonwealth can't. If you want to put it down to one word, Control.

RA: Yesterday (15th January) was the vote on Theresa May's Brexit deal, why did you feel it was necessary to vote against it?

AM: I went to talk directly with the Prime Minister, before doing this to explain why I would be going against the whip. My reasons for doing this I shall explain now, one of the reasons is why should we agree to a deal that ultimately leaves us in a backstop, that has Northern Ireland, part of the United Kingdom, treated differently to the rest of the UK. This is totally unacceptable. On top of that, when I asked

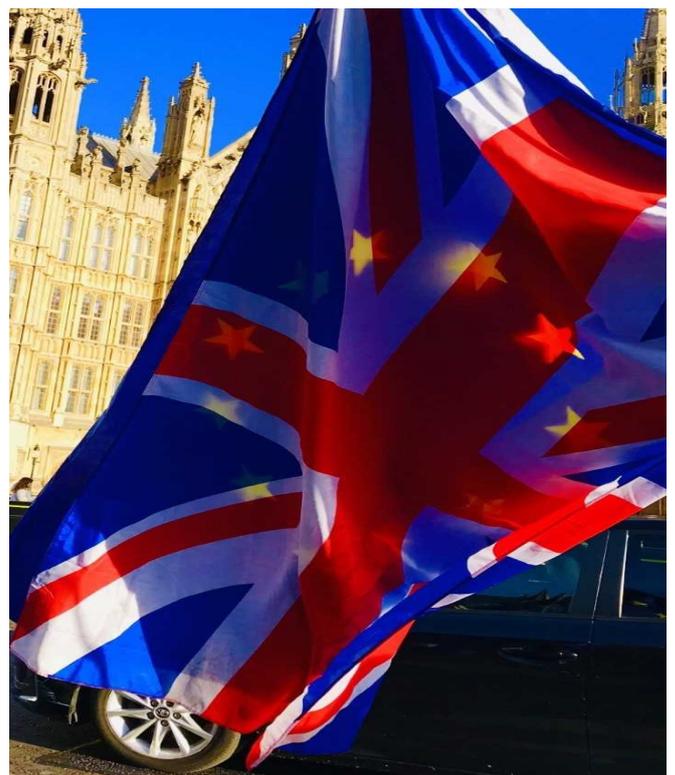
the Attorney General when he was giving his advice to the House, I asked him, "can he give me the legality of the backstop, how would we exit the backstop, ". The moment we have the legality, we have the ability to walk away from the European Union. If we have the backstop, we're in a position where 27 different countries must let us out of it. Now, to me, this is the sort of situation where we can walk away, which is what we should have done before Article 50. We'd be left in a position where we had left but still been under control, that is why I couldn't agree.

RA: You voted against the government yesterday, today, will you be voting for the government?

AM: Absolutely.

RA: Do you think the current government is fit to renegotiate the deal?

AM: Don't forget, Theresa May took over as Prime Minister just after we had voted to leave, she was a remainer, but she knew she had to deliver Brexit. But she has also served the government in some of it's most important issues such as lowering the unemployment rate to the lowest in 40 years and a higher level of investment in this country, that are all things to be proud of. Now, unfortunately for our Prime Minister



whilst we had a general election of which we lost terribly our majority, the general election is fought by two parties typically which both had on its manifestos to deliver Brexit. Leaving the EU isn't a party political thing, you've got Leave constituencies with Labour MP's, and everyone voted for a manifesto with delivering leave in it. The people voted leave but in the house far more people voted to remain, so you've got this mismatch of the country voted leave and the houses of parliament declared remain. Now they're back with a parliament that nearly 100% voted to trigger article 50 and deliver on the referendum. So you have a significant number of people who said they'd abide and deliver the referendum who are now have changed their mind so she's now got a problem. I accept that she's got a terribly difficult tightrope to walk on but the reality is if the house overwhelmingly voted to trigger article 50 and leave, and by doing that the default backstop is we leave on WTO rules. That's the default backstop unless somebody comes up with something better but at the moment, what was come up with was agreed to not be better, so now we get plan B and I'm not actually sure what's happening Monday. I'm no more in the know than you are, it's all fast moving, all that I know is the house did not change when we had a general election, but the Prime Minister, I believe has tried in good faith, having a lot of people in her cabinet who have tried to shape it to be a "remain" as possible, has ended up with something that pleases nobody so that's the dilemma we're in. As far as the governments concerned, do I believe a Corbyn government would deliver prosperity to an area such as St Albans with high wealth taxes and opportunity taxes, no I don't, so I'm not voting for the Prime Minister, I'm voting for the government because I believe it has done very good things but unfortunately the noise of Brexit is trying to drown it out .

RA: Who do you feel should lead the Conservative party after May leaves, whenever that may be?

AM: I don't know is the answer and I say that because I don't know who would put themselves forward. The reality is it will probably be someone quite senior in the party though no one saw David Cameron coming. He was quite an unknown to many of us at the time. We have a lot of talented members of parliament and so I can't know when the vacancy will be open, May has said she won't carry us through to the 2022 election, so there is a vacancy opening up and all I can say is it has got to be someone who treads that difficult line of ensuring that we go together as a country. Whatever happens by then,

Brexit will be a settled deal, well I hope so for crying out loud, that's a long way off yet. So whoever's leading by then, it could be someone like Jeremy Hunt , it could be someone, I don't know, lots of people , Dominic Raab for example are amongst people who could set out a compelling argument for why they should be leader .

RA: Finally, do you think we will be out of the EU come March 29th?

AM: I would say, unless the Prime Minister U-turn's and I heard her say this morning she won't, that we'd be out. There are people saying that it's too difficult but that's because most of parliament don't want to leave. Then people saying there should be a people's vote, because that will make people's minds up, well let's look at that, the EU referendum had the highest turn out of any democratic vote in our history. People who had never voted before voted in this once in a generation vote, why would we vote again? Those who voted before are fed up of it and those with a diminished vote if we vote again will equally be fed up of it. If we don't honour that vote and leave, I think the public won't turn out to vote again. We told you what we wanted and you couldn't come up with a way to do it. And you triggered article 50. Article 50 doesn't say leave with a deal, it just says leave and we triggered it, the whole parliament triggered it. So I think we'll be out, but if we're not there's no point in voting. Is this the message I want to give to young people in my constituency, no, there's always going to be some idiot running the country but I'd rather it were my idiot and sometimes we don't agree with who's in charge and there's no perfect solution out there and in the end people base there vote on what makes a difference on them and prosperity for their family.



**BY ROSS ANDREWS**

# THE INDEPENDENT GROUP

BY BEN MACKENZIE

**A**s this issue was being written, an unexpected and quite incredible event occurred. On the morning of the 18th of February, seven Labour MPs hosted a press conference in which they announced their resignation from the party for various reasons. Luciana Berger, who had been at the centre of a furore involving abuse within her constituency Labour party, quit due to her concerns over the party being “institutionally anti-Semitic”, while Chris Leslie was concerned about the “hard left”, and Mike Gapes felt that the party’s leadership was “complicit in facilitating Brexit”. These seven MPs banded together under the name “The Independent Group”, and vowed to do everything in their power to stop Brexit through a second referendum. The next day, another Labour MP, Joan Ryan, had joined then, and the day after that three Conservative MPs - Anna Soubry, Sarah Wollaston and Heidi Allen - also left.

The reactions from the individual parties was mostly one of shock. Jeremy Corbyn stated that he was “disappointed that these MPs have felt unable to continue to

work together for the Labour policies that inspired millions at the last election.”, while Theresa May said she felt “saddened” by the three MPs departure. Liberal Democrat leader Vince Cable stated that his party would “work with them in some form” but not be “subsumed” by them. On the 22nd of February, another Labour MP, Ian Austin, also resigned from the party, but stated that he would not join the Independent Group at this time due to his disagreement with their commitment to another referendum.

However, the Independent Group’s launch has been marred somewhat by gaffes in their first few days. This included Angela Smith referring to minorities as being a “funny tinge”, as well as Joan Ryan being accused of trying to access Labour Party systems to contact voters after her resignation. Despite this, in opinion polls after their formation asking voters whether they would vote for the Independent Group if they formed a party, they came ahead of the Liberal Democrats by an average of 3 points.

## WHO ARE THE INDEPENDENT GROUP?

The Independent Group is a group in Parliament currently comprised at the time of writing of 11 MPs.

**Heidi Allen:** Former Work and Pensions Select Committee member, left the Conservatives over Brexit

**Luciana Berger:** Former Shadow Minister for Mental Health until her resignation in 2016. Left the Labour Party over “institutional antisemitism”

**Ann Coffey:** MP for Stockport. Left the Labour Party over Brexit and anti-semitism.

**Mike Gapes:** Former Labour Party activist and MP for Ilford South. Left the Labour Party over Brexit.

**Chris Leslie:** MP for Nottingham East, former Shadow Chancellor. Left the Labour Party due to the “hard left”.

**Gavin Shaker:** Former Shadow front-bencher and MP for Luton South. Left the Labour Party over Brexit and anti-Semitism.

**Angela Smith:** MP for Penistone and Stocksbridge, left the Labour Party over Brexit and anti-Semitism.

**Chuka Umunna:** Prominent anti-Brexit campaigner and MP for Streatham. Left the Labour Party in protest over Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership.

**Joan Ryan:** Prominent critic of Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Enfield North. Left the Labour Party over anti-Semitism.

**Anna Soubry:** High-profile anti-Brexit campaigner, leader of the People’s Vote movement. MP for Broxtowe. Left the Conservatives over Brexit.

**Sarah Wollaston:** MP for Totnes, left the Conservatives over Brexit.

# 5 QUESTIONS WITH... DOMINIC GRIEVE MP

BY ROSS ANDREWS



**D**ominic Grieve has had a successful parliamentary career since his election in 1997. Serving as the Conservative MP for Beaconsfield he was the General Attorney for England and Wales and Advocate for Northern Ireland under David Cameron,

attending cabinet meetings. Grieve has been one of the biggest critics of Brexit and is often considered a liberal Conservative because of this stance. In February this year, he threatened to leave the Conservatives if no deal was reached following the resignations of a number of Conservative and Labour MP's. I was able to ask him a few questions over the phone in the midst of the resignations.

RA: Why did you think it was important to remain in the EU?

DG: Because I think the EU, despite the fact it has problems, has delivered an environment for free trade and the single market, goods and services, etc, which is of unequable economic value for the country. It also provides a forum for cooperation between countries sharing democratic values which enhances our security and well-being.

RA: What do you think has been the government's biggest failures in negotiations?

DG: I'm not sure the government has had a big failure in negotiations. The government took a view at the outset that it was going to have a series of red lines about leaving the single market and leaving the customs union and it took that decision because it thought it was the only way of honouring what the public were asking for in the referendum. Now, there's no doubt that by doing that, the government has quite clearly restricted the scope for

crafting a close future relationship with the EU and that may have been a mistake but I can understand why the Prime Minister did it even though in my view, she was restricting the scope to find a satisfactory deal. Had she done it, she probably would have agreed the best possible deal available, but what has happened is the deal she has obtained is greatly disliked by people regarded as hard Brexiteers because it doesn't in any way lead to their vision of what Brexit should look like and deliver, whereas for someone like me it delivers a frankly second rate future for our country which I don't think in anyway as good as staying in the EU.

RA: You have been in the news this week saying you may quit the Conservative party if we do get a no deal, what is your thinking behind that and do you think you could be in your last days as a Conservative MP?

DG: I very much hope I'm not in my last days as a Conservative MP but what I said was that the government has not ruled out no deal, equally I do have confidence the Prime Minister wants to achieve a deal, but what I was making clear was if a moment came where the government officially declared that in the failure of not reaching a deal they would go for a no deal, I would not be able to support the government in that.

RA: So, would you join the Independent Group?

DG: I think that's a separate question, the Independent Group is exactly what it says, it's an independent group of MP's who are cooperating together, it's not a political party. Where I would go if I had to leave the Conservative Party as a result of the government deciding to adopt for a no deal Brexit as a policy is another matter, I'd have to cross that bridge when I came to it.

RA: And my final question for you is where do you think we will become the 29<sup>th</sup> of March?

DG: I think the most likely outcome is we'll have to get an extension of Article 50. Unless the government intends to crash us out of the EU with a no deal, the government is going to have to extend Article 50 to give us more time both for our national conversation and for negotiating with the European Union.

# MARCH RECAP

BY BEN MACKENZIE



DEAL OR NO DEAL?  
WHAT WILL IT BE  
THERESA?



ERM...CAN I  
PHONE A  
FRIEND?

12th March: Second meaningful vote - MPs return to Parliament to vote again on May's Brexit deal, which did not succeed in the previous vote. If May loses this vote, Britain will either face an extension to Article 50, meaning that we don't leave the EU on the 29th of March, or leaving the EU with no deal - something which is considered by many to be the worst-case scenario. MPs have been promised a vote, if May's deal doesn't pass, on whether the UK will be able to leave with no deal.

29th March: Leaving day - on this day, unless there is an extension to Article 50, the UK will leave the EU at 11pm.

# THERESA MAY: WHAT WENT WRONG?

BY ROSS ANDREWS

**T**heresa May, when all said and done, was the obvious candidate to replace David Cameron as Prime Minister. The daughter of a vicar, she had risen up through the ranks and served as Home Secretary for six years when she became PM. A career of ambition and success had led her to the top job, but it was never going to be easy. As she stood proudly outside Number 10 on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016, only the second woman to ever become PM, could she have ever foreseen how difficult her job was going to be as the Brexit Prime Minister?

May won the leadership election by default. As opponent after opponent dropped out in the turbulent weeks after the referendum and David Cameron's resignation, it was becoming more and more likely that May would be the new PM. Her biggest rival was Andrea Leadsom, a fairly unknown Leave campaigner who had become the champion of leave voters once Gove dropped out. Leadsom's momentum was short lived however, as ill-judged comments about Theresa May not being able to govern as she wasn't a mother landed her in hot water putting the brakes on her campaign and leaving May as the last woman standing. May became Prime Minister only a couple of weeks after Brexit. No one knew what Brexit would look like, let alone how May would negotiate with the EU. It seemed like the impossible job from day one.

Her first year as Prime Minister was primarily about the early meetings between Britain and the EU. Back home, the party was divided over what Brexit should look like and despite having won the leadership election, May felt she needed to consolidate power so that she could proceed with her vision of Brexit without rebellion. May was also way ahead in opinion polls and saw this as a chance to win a massive majority and crush Jeremy Corbyn's Labour. She called a general election in March 2017 for the 8<sup>th</sup> June that year despite saying she would not until 2020 when the next election was scheduled. In a campaign where May failed to excite the electorate by not appearing in TV debates, Corbyn ran a campaign that

excited first time young voters and a silently closing the gap. Come election night, few could have predicted how damning the outcome would be. May lost the Conservatives majority as Labour made significant gains. The gamble hadn't paid off, May's government was in tatters. Holding onto her job, despite a small number of calls to step down, the Conservatives went into a supply in confidence with the DUP, to make a majority in parliament. Despite this, May's premiership was weak and put her at a great disadvantage leading into negotiations with the EU.

In 2017, the Westminster attack, Manchester bombing and London Bridge attacks shed light on the growing issue of radicalisation and terrorism in the UK. May came out defiant after Westminster, saddened after Manchester and angry after London Bridge, the third terrorist attack in as many months. The Grenfell Tower fire created even more unrest at home as May faced the fourth tragedy of the year. These catastrophes were a distraction from the ongoing Brexit negotiations.

By 2018, after nearly two years of negotiations, it was going well. There was a stand off between Britain and the EU over the Irish border, which has remained the key issue stopping a deal from being made. After much back and forth, a deal was agreed but it was immediately met with discontent and resentment by many within the party and Commons alike. Here, May faced a crushing defeat in a Commons vote on the terms of the deal which Brexiteers complained kept Britain too close to the European Union, while others complained about the backstop. Dominic Raab resigned a Brexit Secretary as growing pressure rose on whether May could continue to lead the party, let alone the country. On the 12th December, a vote of no confidence is called after Sir Graham Brady, received 70 letters of no confidence in the Prime Minister. After a month of scrutiny and pressure, May was clinging onto her job once again. May survived the confidence vote but it was not without her promising she would not be the leader going into the 2022 general election (the next scheduled election).

With 200 Tory MP's backing her while 117 had no confidence in her, May was in a race against the time as the clock ticked towards a no deal Brexit.

Now, in March with a no deal Brexit looming with just weeks to go, the question that has been and will continued to be asked is, "What went wrong for May?" Many critics will say that May's premiership has been an uncategorical failure in leadership. It is true that May has faced strong, almost militant like, opposition from Brexiteers such as Jacob Rees-Mogg and Boris Johnson. The media often give the impression that May is running on borrowed time as her chaotic cabinet has substantial resignations and her government has lost more votes than any other government has in parliament.

On the other hand, it is easy to feel sorry for May as although she put herself in this position by running for the Conservative leadership her already mammoth task

of coordinating an amicable exit from the EU has been thwarted at every turn by her opposition, seemingly unwilling to compromise. Despite all the evident problems her government has faced, both self-inflicted and orchestrated by their adversaries, May is surprisingly popular amongst the general public. May has consistently had a higher approval rating than Jeremy Corbyn whilst Prime Minister, although she was behind in those polls for several months post general election. Polls have also shown that the general public think she is more in touch with ordinary people than her predecessor, David Cameron. It is hard to predict how history will judge Theresa May, but she will ultimately be remembered as the "Brexit Prime Minister". One thing is for sure, whatever happens in the next few weeks will most likely define her political legacy and the future of the United Kingdom for generations to come.



# WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

BY ROSS ANDREWS



**J**ust as this issue was set to go to print, Theresa May's Brexit deal was voted down in parliament, again. Now, we sit on the brink of the unknown, again, teetering on the precipice of uncertainty... again. I had wanted to say that by the time this issue is out, we will know whether a no deal is definitely off the table or how long the extension to Article 50 will last. Due to the fast paced nature of Brexit it was nearly impossible to keep up to date with everything—resignations, negotiations, votes, more votes... more votes and then conversations with Corbyn. With the knowledge that whatever I write now could be out of date tomorrow, let's try and sum up what might happen next.

Brexit is perhaps now more complicated than it ever was, or were we just deluding ourselves that leaving Europe was going to be easy-peasy. The ties we have to Europe seem to stretch far deeper than any leave campaigner thought... and yet, this was never voiced by the remain camp—when did anybody ever call upon Benvolio's words during the Montague and Capulet feud, "part fools, you know know not what you do". That line seems to have surprising resonance here!

Over the last few months, the end seemed in sight but we could quickly be back to square one. Will Brexit ever be settled? Yes. When? That's the question on everyone is desperately waiting to hear. The nation is fed up, as is Europe; it is fair to say that no one on either will come out of this mess looking good. There's been too much in-

fighting, too much nonsense and certainly not enough vision to unite a party, let alone a country. For now, we watch and wait to see if our MPs will ever make their minds' up.

Ultimately, according to the legal procedure we will most likely have left on the 12th April, but that is still up for debate. Chances are Brexit is extended till the 30th June with Theresa May hoping to take us out of the EU with a deal that has been passed during May. As it stands, discussions between May and Corbyn have resulted in a stalemate and... now it's just all very, very tedious.

The nation is suffering from Brexit fatigue. No matter what side you are on there is a general sense of 'enough now'. It's hard to say when this will all end but the fact there seems to be no second referendum makes me think this is going to be sooner rather than later. Something has got to give... eventually. When this issue comes out many things could have happened and at the same time nothing at all. May might still be Prime Minister but then again she might not. We might have a deal, then again, we might not. We might be in the EU, or not. For me, the best way to look at Brexit is like Schrödinger's cat. We are still in the EU but we're also out. No one really knows what's happening and maybe that's for the best. The truth is too frustrating to really consider anymore. There will be life after Brexit and whether it's in the EU or most likely out, ones things for sure... it will be a hell of a lot less complicated than this.

