

Wealden News

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wealdenconservatives.com

from the



Conservatives

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AN ALTERNATIVE TOO DREADFUL TO CONTEMPLATE



We seem to be hearing a deal on Brexit but, until we see it, we cannot say whether it is one we would have liked to see immediately following the Referendum or not. We will just have to wait and see.

I don't know about you but I do regret

that the concentration on this one issue has led us to overlook the reasons why we are Conservatives and why at the moment it is even more important that we remain strong and united. All families have disagreements but when faced with outside attacks they form a united front against it and that is what we must do now.

A number of you have written to me saying that if there was an election at present you could not vote Conservative. In Wealden that might not matter too much but in many parts of the country it would. Never in my lifetime has there been a starker difference, not just between the policies of our Party and the Labour Party, but between their philosophies and their ways of doing business. In the Blair years I doubt if many of us were very concerned about his Government doing long-term damage to our economy and to the very basis of our country but those years are not these.

Now we have a Labour Party led by a Marxist. He believes that the State should control every aspect of our lives. He does not believe in competition or personal responsibility. He does not support our

armed forces and, in fact, would destroy our ability to defend ourselves. He is a friend of terrorists. He would tax until they squeak those who work hard to improve their position and the future of their children. He doesn't just believe in equality of opportunity, which we all must believe in, but equality of outcome, which is an impossibility. Worse still, his position depends on a Party within a Party i.e. Momentum. Moderate and hard-working Labour MPs are now bullied and threatened by Momentum. Some will undoubtedly find themselves deselected. All in the name of an ideology which has failed in every country where it has been tried. Even worse, it fails the most those whom it claims to want to benefit. A failed economy always hurts the poorest most.

The extent of the threat was seen only recently when one of the Labour Members of Parliament for Brighton was reported as saying that all housing, not simply those houses sold off under the right-to-buy legislation, but your home and mine, should be taken into public ownership. The Labour Party in Brighton has been taken over by Momentum.

Those of you who are dissatisfied with the current Government should ask yourselves the question: would you want, by not voting, or voting Green or Lib Dem, to allow a Labour Government led by Jeremy Corbyn to govern this country?

Please come out and help us because the alternative to a Conservative Council and a Conservative Government is too horrible to contemplate.

Kind regards,
Helen Galley, WCCA Chairman

We always welcome contributions for consideration, and are pleased to publish this specially-composed sonnet from P.W. who was moved to write it having attended the Wednesday of Conference and being inspired by Geoffrey Cox's speech to the Party faithful.

WE'LL NOT BE DRUV

*To my son I bequeath democracy:
Freedom to vote for whom he's ruled by;
Freedom to live under the British law:
Freedom to relish national sovereignty.
Piecemeal Europe has filched our liberty.
Their fantasy of one great Eurostate
Where unelected bureaucrats hold sway,*

*Their ghastly vision, shambles on its way.
A Eurosaurus, bloated with expense,
Distended, dying and in-continent.
Europe's the product of her Nation States
And it was being one made Britain Great.
Let us stand proud and strong as we are able
And never beg Remains from Brussels' table.*

Ever fancied a flutter?

If so why not join the Wealden 200 Club.

We hold two events a year, at which the main draws are made. The annual prizes consist of 12 x £50, 10 x £25 and 2 x £250.

The summer event is held at various places and we are always open to suggestions from members; recent locations have included a fish & chip supper on the Bluebell Railway, Chinese meal at the Wok Inn, and traditional High Tea at Barnsgate Manor Vineyards.

We hold a Christmas party in December when, apart from the cash draws, we have lots of seasonal prizes for those attending.



All of this for an annual membership of £25, which can be paid once a year or half-yearly, or quarterly by standing order. Membership of the 200 Club does not constitute membership of the Conservative Party.

We currently have numbers available, so why not join us for a flutter, help the cause -- and you may well be a winner.

To join please contact the administration office on 01273 937661.

An application form can be downloaded from our website at www.wealdenconservatives.com/200-club



Wealden Conservatives

EURO BLUNDERS

Sir Humphrey Bungles Again ...

A personal perspective of Brexit and all things European

by Dan Hannan MEP

The problem is the backstop. Not the precise terms of the backstop, but the fact of having one at all. Think about it for a moment. We are proposing to enter talks with the EU about our long-term future on the basis of having first agreed that, if those talks fail, we will still make a series of excruciating concessions in order to ensure an outcome that the EU regards as acceptable.

How can any negotiation proceed on that basis? How can we include a backstop that the UK regards as contingent and unlikely, but that the EU sees as an acceptable – indeed, an alluring – permanent settlement? Surely anyone can grasp that, once such a provision were in place, the EU would lose all interest in negotiating any deal – except, perhaps, a deliberately punitive one pour encourager les autres.

I say “surely anyone”, but it seems that British negotiators can’t or won’t see it. If nothing else, the past two years have demonstrated the monumental ineptness of some of our senior civil servants. Back in the 1990s, when the European argument took off properly in Britain, I found Sir Humphrey technically brilliant, if wrong. The scheme he favoured – deeper integration into European structures, including the Euro – was inimical to the national interest, but there was no doubting the skill and tenacity with which he pursued it. Now, though, he seems to be blundering even on the logistical level.

Consider, for example, the assurances that our mandarins kept giving our political leaders that Brussels would accept what Britain was proposing at Salzburg. Almost every casual observer could see that EU leaders were going to say no, as they had to every previous British initiative. But Sir Humphrey, perhaps blinded by his closeness to his European counterparts, or perhaps so invested in his scheme that he could not view it objectively, was blindsided by the rejection.

If it had been a one-off mistake, fair enough. Even our supposedly Rolls Royce diplomatic service might be allowed the occasional engine cough. But the pattern has been repeated so often that it has to be considered a design flaw rather than a

glitch. Again and again, British ministers have been encouraged to make some big new concession in the hope of unlocking a trade deal from the other 27. First it was the acceptance of the EU’s sequencing, then of the money, then a unilateral security guarantee, then Chequers itself, now the Customs Union. Every time, Eurocrats have calmly pocketed the concession and demanded more.

Is it any wonder, given their experience over the past two years, that Brussels’ functionaries are sitting back and waiting for yet vaster British offers? Can we blame them for holding out for another surrender on the backstop, given their experience to date?

The history of the European project is the story of officials presenting their notional bosses with one fait accompli after another. The Treaty of Paris, which launched the entire process of integration in 1951, was an almost perfect symbol for what was to follow. Because the final draft was not ready in time for the signing ceremony at the Quai d’Orsay, the six foreign ministers put their names to a blank sheet of paper and left it to their permanent officials to fill in the text later.

Brexit was, at heart, a democratic revolt, a rejection of the dominance of an unelected and unaccountable caste. The question is whether Britain’s democratic leaders will now assert themselves. It was the sense of a civil service stitch-up that, at least in part, prompted the resignations of David Davis, Steve Baker and Boris Johnson, all of whom felt that the work they had been preparing had been undermined by our officials.

The following weekend, the Prime Minister wrote in the Mail on Sunday that Chequers was a take-it-or-leave-it offer: “Let me be clear. Our Brexit deal is not some long wish-list from which negotiators get to pick and choose. It is a complete plan with a set of outcomes that are non-negotiable”.

So, when the EU rejected it – and rejected it in a calculatedly mocking and sarcastic tone – I assumed that Britain would withdraw the offer and try something else, either a Canada deal or EFTA or a minimalist



accord that would give up on trade and focus on the most basic agreements that all neighbouring states have on such issues as transport, fishing rights and police co-operation.

How extraordinary, then, that we should have rushed forward with yet another offer, this time the most self-harming of all, namely Customs Union membership. A depressing number of Leavers say things like “It wouldn’t respect the Referendum result” or “It would be Brexit in name only”. In fact, it would be far worse, because it would oblige Britain to match all EU trade concessions to third countries, while those third countries had to reciprocate only vis-à-vis the EU 27, not Britain. Our home market, in other words – the fifth largest economy in the world – would become a bargaining chip for EU trade negotiators to use wholly for the benefit of the 27 remaining states.

How can anyone, Remain or Leave, countenance such a deal? It must surely be clear that it would represent, from the EU’s point of view, the ideal outcome, better even than a humiliated Britain begging for re-admission without its rebate. Why on earth would Brussels want to replace it with a different arrangement? It wouldn’t matter whether the backstop came with a break clause or a time limit. The EU would simply never agree to put a permanent deal in the place of one so favourable, so we’d be back where we are today.

Better, surely, to take the initiative now. The proposed exit terms represent a deal worse than either staying or leaving. We need to drop our sunk costs stubbornness and try something different. I argued (before, during and after the Referendum), for a Swiss-type deal based on EFTA. But, frankly, any outcome – no deal, Norway, Canada, even the risk of a second Referendum – would be better than what is currently on the table. This is our last chance to pull out of the nosedive.

