

On behalf of North Herefordshire Conservative Association & MP, Bill Wiggin, may I wish all our members and patrons a happy & prosperous New Year.

The North Herefordshire Conservative Association Annual Dinner.

A black tie dinner with guest of honour Jacob Rees-Mogg.

When; Friday 1st March 2019. **Time** - 7.00pm; **Where** – Pudleston Court. Nr Leominster. **Tickets** £65 each.

To **purchase tickets** and for further details please contact 01568-612565 or e-mail office@nhca.org.uk

100 Club.

January draw; 1st. prize of £50..Zigi Davenport; 2nd. prize Mrs Jane Halliday. Congratulations to both of you.

Christmas. Drones at Gatwick, almost summer temperatures in the Orkneys, daffodils out and no sign of snow – whatever happened to the traditional Christmas. How good then to see the traditional Boxing Day meets out in force and so well attended locally. Despite the efforts of Blair (of less than blessed memory) and his cronies to end hunting, the tradition, thankfully, continues. Thrilling to see the huge turnout of huntsmen, hounds and hunt supporters in Ludlow and Ledbury, with smaller crowds in Leominster and Kington – and indeed the RWH in our village on New Year's Day. Typically the ever-biased TV-media gave more prominence to violent “sabs” in Newport whilst the National Trust is accused of putting packs and farmers at the mercy of saboteurs. *The Countryside Alliance* accused this increasingly weird organisation that..... “by pandering to the pressure of a few anti-hunt campaigners the National Trust has exposed hunts to the intimidation and harassment from balaclava-clad animal rights activists”. Inevitably, Labour Party “intellectuals and comrades” who despise the countryside, those of us that live there - and tradition, in equal measure, now want to ban trail hunting.

Shadows over EU – but sunshine here. Dear me.... “despite” Brexit, and surely disappointing the BBC (of which more later), as Euro-Zone economic growth sinks to a 4-year low – UK data remains up-beat. Why is the sun going down on those “sun-lit” Euro-Zone uplands where economists note increasing evidence of slowing economic growth across the whole Euro-zone. The ECB has cut growth forecasts stoking fears the “E-Z economy is losing momentum”. In France, as the *gilets jaunes* have humbled Macron, the size of the private sector shrank for the first time in 30 months. In Germany the struggling car industry has hit the skids – literally; November trade stats show production down 22% - **YES DOWN 22%** - exports down 22% and domestic registrations 10% lower; easy to blame the VW-promoted emissions “scandal” but problems look deeper. Remember, the UK is the largest single market for German-made cars – and Germany runs a £50bn trade surplus with usthey really do desperately need free access to the UK market. Germany runs a similar surplus with the US making it uniquely exposed to any US imposition of tariffs on imports – especially on cars.

Interestingly the *IW Institute* of Cologne estimates the manufacturing-intense regions in Germany face the highest Brexit exposure in “Europe”, with roughly 5% of GDP directly or indirectly dependent on U.K. trade,” adding that in the event of a loss of frictionless trade, in a worst-case Germany could see a 57% plunge in current export levels to Britain. More broadly, the *IW Institute* calculates that a “no deal” Brexit could mean that exports to the UK from the residual 27 EU members could fall by a mighty 50%. The *IW Institute* adds that on WTO terms – the net impact of WTO tariffs would benefit the UK to the tune of ~£5bn but Belgium – currently (and traditionally) yet again without a government - would take the biggest economic “hit”. And note Ireland's government has told the European Commission it *will demand* emergency aid if Britain leaves the EU without “a deal”. Ireland's agriculture minister, said Irish farmers fear losing out by millions but no formal request has been made to the EU..... yet. External estimates suggest that if Irish Republic beef exports to the UK had to compete with suppliers from all over the world the Irish industry could not survive. That should concentrate intransigent EU minds.

And all that is before (principally) Germany raids its tax-payers' pockets to stump up some £15bn to make good the shortfall in EU contributions – post-Brexit. Good-bye – you'll miss us.....

- Far from being frit – as Margaret Thatcher said - **foreign firms are pouring cash into UKplc**. Savvy tech giants Apple, Google & Amazon have bet billions on post-Brexit Britain. More firms have set up HQs in London than any other EU capital & Britain has been voted the best country in the world to do business.
- **UK manufacturing – further gains**. Manufacturing sector activity in the **UK** economy **extended** its upbeat momentum during December to a 6-months “high” according to the *Markit* survey; needless to say the

project-fear doomsters were “predicting” reduced activity. New order and new export order inflows strengthened. Stocks of purchases and finished goods rose sharply.

- **UK Services Sector activity rebounded** more than expected in December and further into positive territory, *Markit Economics* reported, due to modest rises in business activity and new work.
- **UK factory orders up again** – and expectations more positive – helped by a more competitive currency – despite signs of a global slow-down in economic growth particularly in China and the Euro-Zone. The CBI notes”the UK manufacturing sector enters the Christmas period with a small upswing, with output growth gathering further pace. The firming in export orders is particularly welcome”.
- **Government borrowing in November the lowest for 14 years** – due to robust tax receipts and lower interest payments on public debt.
- **Inflation stays lower at just 2.2%** - again driven by falls in petrol prices (the wholesale price has seen the biggest fall in 3 years) and a variety of recreational services, principally games, toys and hobbies; forecasts for 2019 hover around the 2% level – and could fall below the Bank of England 2% target, some economists predict. Inflation would have been lower still if a tax increase on tobacco had not kicked in. **Core inflation fell to 1.8%.**
- **Unemployment...at 4.1%** and forecast to fall to 3.7% by the end of 2019. Women’s unemployment just 4% and a multi-generational low.
- **Redundancies at the lowest level since 1995.** Redundancy levels are running at about 30% of the rate of the dying days of the Gordie Brown regime of 2009. Number of unfilled vacancies at a multi-year high.
- **Wages rising at 3.3%** - the highest growth rate for a decade and growth in real disposable incomes.
- **Home ownership amongst young families up** – for the first time in 30 years – equivalent to an extra 190,000 young families owning a home this Christmas. The drivers – low house price growth, easier mortgage conditions and a myriad of help schemes introduced by the Conservatives.

Corbyn comes 4th. Not the leadership challenge from Marxist McDonnell – yet – but a medal winner nonetheless....and in which contest did this champion excel. A fourth place in the **Simon Wiesenthal Centre’s list of the world’s most anti-semitic incidents.** Why - for hosting an event comparing Israel to the Nazis and wreath laying for members of the Black September terrorist group. Surely no-one sane believes this man is fit to be Prime Minister.

Sadly anti-semitism stretched deep into the Labour party according to the Wiesenthal Centre concluding (we quote): “Allegations of anti-semitism on the part of key members and officials of the UK’s Labour Party have piled up in recent years, injecting the world’s oldest hatred into the mainstream of society. Party leader Jeremy Corbyn stands directly responsible”. No further comment necessary...but...as Tory party chairman Brandon Lewis said appearing on the list “was an utterly shocking indictment of just how bad anti-Jewish racism has become in the Labour Party”. The Metropolitan Police is reported to be investigating allegations of anti-semitism in the Labour Party - assessing on-line material as “there may have been a crime committed”.

- The rot goes deeper and wider; take **Corbynista soul-mate Fiona Onasanya MP for Peterborough – convicted of perverting the course of justice** and awaiting an Old Bailey sentence- almost certainly custodial – found to have “lied persistently and deliberately to the police”. A solicitor – surely to be disbarred....an MP – wholly unfit for office. Delusional perhaps, comparing herself to Jesus and Moses..... Come on Fiona – show some honour, some integrity – and some dignity - and quit the Commons. She has asked for people to pray for her – pray for a short sharp exit from Peterborough and Parliament perhaps.
- At least **fellow Labour MP and defrocked shadow international development secretary Kate Osamor MP** resigned from Corbyn’s front bench, accused of misleading the public over her son’s drug conviction (for possession of £2,500 of ecstasy, cocaine, ketamine and cannabis): her son, is a former Harringey Labour councillor who Kate employs at tax-payers expense at a cost of a reported £43,000 per year in her parliamentary office; would it be too simple to suggest the tax-payer was funding this drug haul? Ms Osamor seemingly forgot that she had written to the judge to plead for a short sentence when she later said the sentence was the first she knew about this episode. Memory loss is a terrible affliction. The problem for those in public life means one “mistake” opens the investigatory flood gates: Yea – the *Daily Mail* was quick to point that despite a combined family income of £121,000 – they lived in a subsidised council house in Harringey where there is a housing waiting list of ~10,000. On a “deserving” scale of 1 to 10 Ms. Osamor fails to score. With a family income 4x the average London wage the Labour MP should react to the obvious need in the borough, move out fast to make way for a more disadvantaged family.

That these individuals should become Labour MPs **questions Corbyn’s judgement. (Question....is Jeremy Corbyn a stupid man?** as they may say in new Parliamentary vernacular). At best it smacks of little due diligence. Take the example of the “failed homeless veteran struggling to find somewhere to sleep”. Corbyn majored on this story – posting a video for his 1.9m twitter followers – only to discover the “veteran” was a convicted sex offender who tried to rape an 87 year old woman. Even Corbyn must have been red faced as the video was zapped. It is telling that **80% of big industry bosses say a Corbyn government would harm their business** more than any aspect of Brexit. **One company chairman is quoted** ”a Corbyn government will be anti-aspiration, anti-business, wealth destructive and result in contracting spending leading to

no growth". The French are already using the Corbyn threat to lure British businesses to Paris, indeed *The Times* reports British businessmen are telling the French "they dread Corbyn".

At least Labour is promising to repeal begging laws..... perhaps anticipating we might all be turned into supplicants under a red in tooth and claw government of the Corbyn Comrades.

The BBC pleads poverty... as it "considers" the over-75's licence exemption but defends pay rises of up to 30% for some of its highest paid execs (the Beeb now pays 102 managers over £150,000 annually) whilst slashing programming budgets. James Purnell – the ex Labour Culture Secretary is paid £315,000 – up £20,000. As one MP said "...licence payers will be completely mystified by these levels of pay..." But not just pay... EastEnders set £27m (45%) over budget....a "*financial mishap*" recorded by the *National Audit Office* which noted "...the BBC had insufficient expertise to identify critical construction issues". *The Times* reports the Beeb "splashes out on staff shuttle buses for a 14-minute tube journey" – noting the bus takes twice as long as the tube. Additionally, it is reported, Auntie paid £700m into "service companies" set up by presenters and others – using a loophole that avoids it paying National Insurance; the NAO reveals there are 100 open investigations into abuse of this loophole.

The endemic BBC problem of institutionalised news bias against any conservative viewpoint is highlighted in **The Noble Liar** – a new book by ex-BBC staffer Robin Aitkin who concludes "...whether through carelessness or hubris the BBC has given up any pretence of impartiality preferring instead to promulgate its philosophically asinine world view with an authoritarianism which demands you will tolerate what I say must be tolerated - and condemn what I say must be condemned – and if you do not you will be branded a racist, misogynist, Islamophobic and be shamed off the public stage". But not just the news ...comedy, but only leftie comics, discussion programmes with only "liberals", cringing tokenism etc. The BBC's head of comedy said – it could no longer make shows like Monty Python – featuring "six Oxbridge white blokes". Surely discrimination. As Tim Dawson wrote in *Conservative Home* "the BBC has seldom been more political. From its Christmas block-buster drama to its woefully under-performing comedy output, to its obsession with diversity quotas – the corporation's left-wing, metropolitan agenda is at the heart of everything it does. And viewers are switching off in droves".

Warning....to 152,000 Brits living in France – it may not be safe. *The Times* reports hostility to wannabe EU head honcho – the now humbled President Macron - is running so high that he has been forced to forego a skiing trip to La Mongie in fear of the *gilets jaunes*.....whilst Europe1 radio station's *Jean-Michel Aphatie* adds "Macron is hiding because he understands the rejection that he has stirred up in the *gilets jaunes* crisis". Macron's approval rating teeters on just 20%. The grandeur is fading fast - after caving in to "*gilets jaunes*" metaphorical gunfire with an out-pouring of "concessions" – and a breach of "strict" EU Government debt rules, lost credibility and less than fraternal gloating from Italy's deputy PM Matteo Salvini. Sage advice is when in a hole stop digging – but – Macron's New Year message denounced the yellow-vest movement as a "hate-filled crowd" at odds with democratic French values. Clearly Macron's view of safety in France is shared by those would-be immigrants attempting to cross the English Channel. As would-be asylum seekers based in Calais are expected, if not obliged, to apply for asylum in the first "safe" country entered – could they agree with Macron and believe that France is not a safe country. Incidentally, Italy has granted all Brits full residency rights post-Brexit.

Etc Etc.

- **Congratulations to George Osborne** – for landing his 9th job since leaving office. (reports *The Times*).
- Newly released papers reveal that **Blair** asked government officials to keep secret details of the lucrative advisory work he carried out after leaving office.....in order to protect his clients... of course. These papers also reveal life peer **Neil Kinnock** as Labour leader was unimpressed by his grace & favour car – the model used by cabinet members – demanding a top-spec model – as he travelled on motorways.....
- **Overseas aid** - £4m given to the needy US since 2016 as the UK's 2018 foreign aid bill soared to £14bn - 20% more than Germany and twice that of France. ISIS-shielding Pakistan received £400m and oil-rich Nigeria £327m. Since 2014 some £1,200 per man, woman and child in the UK has been handed out.
- **Anti-terror police called out** to protect meat industry workers from extreme protests by militant vegans.
- **Snowflake censorship:** Organisers of a Unicef charity comedy night at the School of Oriental & African Studies insisted comedians were "respectful & kind". OK. But comedian Konstantin Kisin turned down the gig when the "behavioural agreement form" required acceptance of "a no tolerance policy on racism, sexism, classism, ageism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-religion, or anti-atheism to ensure a safe space and an atmosphere of joy, love and acceptance". Later, after turning down the offer, reading out the terms of the contract the comedian brought the roof down to loud guffaws at Comedy Unleashed in East London – proving – as *The Times* points out – the only appropriate response to such a massive sense of humour failure is laughter.

