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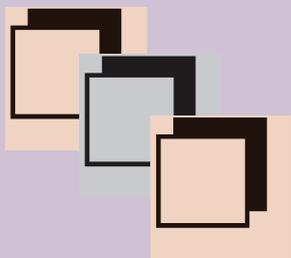
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Comment

Well, a happy Christmas, though probably not if you are a member of parliament. Yesterday I read that the prime minister is threatening detention for all the MPs who vote against her deal with the EU. (Due tomorrow as I write.) The Grinch is cancelling Christmas and they can stay in and keep voting until they get it right. It is a pity she won't give us the same opportunity. Of course if she did there is a chance that we might change our mind and she will have her chums in the European Research Group up in arms not to mention Farage fuming and starting new political parties.

There seems to be a general assumption that the whole country has moved to the far right – not my impression – along with all of the politicians. Also not true. A few, perhaps very few, members of the Conservative Party have shown their true xenophobic colours and insist that we should have nothing to do with Johnny Foreigner. The problem is that they tend to be noisy and sound as though they represent everyone else's opinion. Historically these are the people who, if they ever get into government find that they have to pass laws to stop people criticising them. They operate on bluster, shouting, misinformation and, when needed downright lies.

And here we are, on the verge of quitting the biggest trade block in the world, right on our doorstep with easy geographical access. And what to replace it with? Trade deals with countries thousands of miles away and on top of that a potential threat to national security as our former partners choose to keep us 'out of the loop' when it comes to sharing information.

One commentator that I read reckoned Mrs May's mistake was throwing her lot in with the head banging Brexiteers in the first place, no doubt thinking that she could rely on the sheep on her backbenches to do as they are told so all she had to do was placate the headbangers. And for all the stuff about bringing back control to our parliament the first thing she did was to try to keep parliament out of the law making loop. Fortunately the Supreme Court saw it differently and with any luck our MPs will take control on behalf of the rest of us – which is why we elected them in the first place.

At the last minute the European Court of Justice has decided that we could walk away from leaving if we want to. Which adds an interesting element if, as is expected, the government loses the vote on the withdrawal bill.

It has always been pointed out that there is no majority in the house of commons for us to leave the EU. Which is why those in favour have fought tooth and nail to prevent it having a say. It is a funny thing our version of democracy. When it suits governments they make much of it being 'representative' that is, we elect a local person to represent us and to act in our best, local, interests in Westminster. When it doesn't, you hear talk of the 'popular' vote; the point being that with our electoral system a party can have a majority of MPs even though it didn't win a majority of the total votes cast. Now it is 'the will of the people', conveniently ignoring the narrow majority which wouldn't be enough to change the constitution of my club. (75% of members voting in favour if you are interested.)

By the time you read this we might have the deal with the EU ratified – unlikely – we might have a new prime minister – even less likely – or be heading for a general election. If we are really fortunate we could be granted another referendum.

If the latter, let's hope we get it right this time. But whatever happens I and the team at The Fabricator wish everyone a happy Christmas, especially the prime minister!

John Roper