



THE BBC and BREXIT

BBC News Coverage of the
2017 General Election
3 May – 7 June 2017

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SUMMARY

The survey covers EU content in the campaign period (3 May to 7 June) of the 2017 General Election on BBC1's News at Ten and BBC Radio 4's Today programme. In the 74 hours of combined airtime, 10 hours and 59 minutes were devoted to EU affairs - 14.7% of the available space.

There was a heavy imbalance in guest speakers. Of the 375 contributors, **189 (50%) were pro-EU or offered negative opinions about Brexit; 140 (37%) were anti-EU or offered a positive view about Brexit; and 46 (12%) were neutral.** Thus, in an election where Brexit was a pivotal issue, across the two BBC flagship programmes there were **a third more pro-EU/anti-Brexit speakers than those who supported leaving the EU.** The differential on the Today programme was greater: two-thirds more contributors were opposed to Brexit than supported it. Across the two programmes, only 62 speakers (16.5%) had campaigned or voted 'Leave' in the 2016 referendum and **only four figures from the business community who had supported Leave in the EU referendum appeared on Today, with just one on News at Ten.**

This bias applied across all areas of coverage, and was made worse by BBC correspondents and presenters. They one-sidedly emphasised the difficulties of Brexit; examples are detailed at pages 61-63. This was compounded by the BBC's so-called Reality Check Team, which put further undue weight on the disadvantages of leaving the EU. For example, Chris Morris, the unit's EU 'expert', posited as certain that halting immigration would have negative economic consequences, when this was disputed by many.

Coverage of the political parties was clearly inspired by the negative editorial input, and **Conservatives who appeared in relation to EU issues were toughly scrutinised.** By contrast, **the Labour party's policy towards the EU was hardly examined at all.** There were only two interviews with a serving shadow minister about Brexit, both with Angela Rayner, whose portfolio was actually education. **Keir Starmer, the shadow Brexit minister, was not interviewed at all.** This severe bias by omission is detailed in our other report 'Leave and the Left, 2002-2017.' It left ambiguous and almost unexplored the party's approach to the key issue of the election.

These headline criticisms of the coverage, supported by the detail of our 164 page report, show that **the BBC's coverage of the 2017 General Election was not impartial and was therefore in breach of its Charter.**

PART ONE: MONITORING STATISTICS

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND

On 23 June 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union by a majority of 52% to 48%. Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron resigned on the following morning, and after a short leadership contest, Theresa May became his successor.

Although Mrs May had campaigned for a Remain vote in the referendum, after her accession she committed to the withdrawal process, coining the phrase ‘Brexit means Brexit’¹ and stating ‘No deal is better than a bad deal’, indicating that Britain would leave the EU along with the single market and customs union, falling back on WTO rules for trade, if an acceptable deal wasn’t reached. On 29 March 2017, the UK government delivered a letter to the President of the European Council, invoking Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, and setting in motion a two-year timetable for the Brexit negotiations.

On 18 April 2017, Mrs May announced a snap election. Her intention was to secure an increased majority and a strengthened mandate for the Brexit negotiations. Mrs May said that ‘at this moment of enormous national significance there should be unity here in Westminster, but instead there is division. The country is coming together, but Westminster is not.’² On the day after the election’s announcement, a YouGov poll indicated the Conservatives were 24 points ahead of Labour³, and a Conservative landslide seemed inevitable. However, as the campaign progressed the polls narrowed and support for Labour increased. The Conservative party eventually won 318 seats, down from the 331 the party had secured in 2015 and eight seats short of an overall majority. This forced the Conservatives to enter into discussions with the DUP to form a working majority.

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-36764525/no-second-eu-referendum-if-theresa-may-becomes-pm>

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-39630009>

³ https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/04/20/voting-intention-conservatives-48-labour-24-18-19-https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/04xxn42p3e/TimesResults_170419_VI_Trackers_GE_W.pdf

1.2 SURVEY OVERVIEW

News-watch's 2017 General Election Survey focused on two flagship BBC news programmes: Radio 4's Today and BBC1's News at Ten. Both were monitored in full from the dissolution of Parliament on Wednesday 3 May until the eve of polling on Wednesday 7 June 2017, an interval of five weeks and one day.

All programme items were logged and timed, and all reports relating to the EU or to Brexit were fully transcribed. The gathered information was entered into a proprietary database, to facilitate comparisons between this election and previous surveys of the BBC undertaken by News-watch since 1999.

Today is BBC Radio 4's flagship news and current affairs programme. It broadcasts for three hours each weekday morning, and for two hours each Saturday. Between and June 2017 Radio 4's audience was at its highest level since records began in 1999, and Today drew a record weekly reach of 7.66 million (up from 7.13m in the previous quarter, and 7.35m in 2016).⁴ A full edition of each edition of Today is made available for one month from broadcast 'on demand' through the BBC iPlayer.

News at Ten is BBC1's nightly bulletin and features 25 minutes of domestic and international news on weekdays. The evening editions of the BBC Weekend News were also surveyed included, to provide a complete seven-day assessment of coverage. These programmes regularly draw audiences of between 4 and 5 million viewers. During the survey, a number of editions of News at Ten were extended to between 40 and 55 minutes, to include additional coverage of the election campaign, and for detailed reporting of terrorist attacks that took place in Manchester and London.⁵

1.3 EU/BREXIT COVERAGE ON THE TWO SURVEYED PROGRAMMES

The table shows the volume of Brexit and EU-related coverage carried by Today and News at Ten during the survey interval, as a proportion of each programme's available airtime.⁶

⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2017/rajar-q2-radio4-today>

⁵ On 22 May 2017, a shrapnel-laden homemade bomb was detonated at the exit of Manchester Arena in Manchester, England, following a concert by American singer Ariana Grande, killing 22 people, with 250 more were injured. On 3 June 2017, an attack took place in the Southwark district of London, England, eight people were killed and 48 were injured.

⁶ For the Today programme, available airtime relates to the programme's 'feature' items (excluding fixed and repeated content such as bulletins, newspaper reviews, weather forecasts, sports coverage and Thought for the Day). In the News at Ten it refers to all content apart from the opening headlines and sports news.

	Available Airtime	Brexit/EU	Brexit/EU %
Today	57h 13 m	9h 08 m	15.9%
News at Ten	17h 9m	1h 51m	10.7%

1.4 COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS ELECTIONS

News-watch has monitored the BBC's coverage of EU issues during the five general elections between 2001 and 2017. Where possible, data was isolated to allow direct comparisons between the 2017 election and those preceding it, analysing an identical 36-day interval in the run-up to polling day.⁷

	2005	2010	2015	2017
Today	4.1%	6.2%	6%	15.9%
News at Ten	n/a	4.6%	8.8%	10.7%

These figures indicate that Today in particular increased its EU/Brexit coverage significantly during the 2017 campaign period, with approximately 2.5 times more airtime devoted to these issues than during the two previous elections. The increase for News at Ten was smaller, just 1.9% more than in 2015, but still more than double the volume recorded in 2010.

The 2017 campaign coverage was also atypical in that almost all EU coverage focused on just one issue – Brexit – whereas previously EU coverage was apportioned between election-based reporting and a raft of other EU themes. (For example, during the period of the 2015 election, 6.1% of Today airtime was allocated to EU themes, but only 2.7% was focused specifically on the election.) In 2017, Today carried 8 hours and 53 minutes on Brexit and only 16 minutes on other EU themes. These other matters included: a discussion of the first meeting of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and newly-elected French President Emmanuel Macron, coverage of the EU's response to President Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and news that the European Commission was fining Facebook over its provision of 'misleading information' during the acquisition of WhatsApp. As such, Brexit-themed discussion accounted for 97% of all EU coverage recorded during the survey interval, with other EU stories accounting for the remaining 3% (equating to less than 0.5% of Today's total available feature airtime).

⁷ During the 2001 general election, the time between the official announcement of the election and polling day was only three weeks and three days, and therefore data collected during this survey cannot be compared directly to the 2017 election. Similarly, in 2005, monitoring of News at Ten only began once the election had been formally announced, so only 30 days of pre-election data was available.

News-watch's longitudinal research has shown that general EU affairs are often given a low editorial priority, but in this survey they were omitted almost entirely. Important stories covered in the press during the pre-election period were ignored or downplayed by Today – for example, a leaked German government report that 6.6 million migrants were waiting to cross into Europe from North Africa,⁸ widely reported fears that Greece could decline its next bailout loan, thus triggering a new debt repayment crisis,⁹ and ongoing problems with Italy's banking sector.¹⁰

⁸ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/23/66m-migrants-waiting-cross-europe-africa-report/>

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2017/may/30/euro-greek-debt-french-growth-pound-ftse-100-business-live>

¹⁰ <http://www.cityam.com/265712/italian-banks-face-another-eur10bn-writedowns-their-massive>

SECTION TWO: THE TODAY PROGRAMME

2.1 AIRTIME

News-Watch bases its airtime calculations on Today's 'features', the interviews and correspondent reports which account for approximately two thirds of Today's total airtime.

During the period of the 2017 General Election campaign, Today aired 57 hours and 13 minutes of feature reports, of which 9 hours and 8 minutes were related to Brexit/EU matters, amounting to 15.9% of the programme's available airtime.

The table shows the 27 surveys of the Today programme undertaken by News-watch between September 2002 and April 2017, amounting to 321 weeks and 1,926 full editions.¹¹ On average, the programme has devoted 7.1% of its available airtime to EU-related news and current affairs.

	Survey Date	Weeks	Total Airtime (minutes)	EU Airtime (minutes)	Proportion of EU coverage
1	September 2002 – July 2003	47	31,255	1750	5.6%
2	September – December 2003	12	7,980	455	5.7%
3	March – June 2004	13	8,216	871	9.8%
4	October – December 2004	10	6,650	365	5.5%
5	March – June 2005	15	9,975	1082	10.8%
6	October – December 2005	9	5,985	489	8.2%
7	February – June 2006	16	10,640	437	4.1%
8	September – December 2006	14	9,310	275	2.9%
9	March – June 2007	14	9,310	326	3.5%
10	September – December 2007	14	9,310	386	4.1%
11	March – June 2008	12	7,980	263	3.3%
12	September – December 2008	14	9,310	384	4.1%
13	April – June 2009	6	4,206	228	5.4%
14	September – December 2009	13	8,577	442	5.1%
15	March – May 2010	6	3,961	245	6.2%
16	September – December 2010	13	8,493	444	5.2%
17	March – June 2011	13	8,617	532	6.2%
18	October – December 2011	11	7,298	1639	22.5%
19	April – June 2012	12	7,938	1112	14.0%
20	September – December 2012	13	8,640	540	6.2%
21	April – June 2013	12	7,929	538	6.8%
22	September – December 2013	14	9,207	470	5.1%
23	April – June 2014	6	3,979	412	10.3%
24	March – May 2015	6	3,990	252	6.1%
25	Jun – Dec 2016 (Business Slots only)	26	n/a	759	n/a
26	Mar – Apr 2017	1	667	305	46%
27	May – June 2017	5	3,433	542	15.9%

Levels of EU coverage during the 2017 general election were the second highest recorded by News-watch in any survey of Today since September 2002. Only the previous survey (March –

¹¹ After the UK's vote to leave the EU in June 23, News-watch monitored six full months of the Today programme's business slots, an additional 26 weeks - but because whole programmes were not logged in their entirety, this content has been excluded from airtime proportion calculations.

April 2017) saw a higher proportion, with 46% of programme airtime given over to EU-related coverage, although this survey was atypically short, focusing on just a single week of programmes that coincided with the triggering of Article 50 at the end of March 2017.

2.2 EU/BREXIT ITEMS

Today transmitted 263 EU/Brexit related programme items in the 31 editions monitored during the election campaign period. There were 39 bulletin items, 30 mentions in the Newspaper Review section, and 194 'features' with a total duration of 9 hours and 8 minutes. EU/Brexit matters were mentioned tangentially or in passing on a further 35 occasions.

The average length of a Brexit-related sequence was 2 min and 49 seconds, low by historical standards¹², and a consequence of the majority of feature items combining discussion with other, non-related news themes. Indeed, only 66 reports (34%) discussed the EU or Brexit in isolation, the remaining 128 sequences combined EU/Brexit discussion with other matters.

2.3 SPEAKERS

There were **270 contributions** to Today's EU/Brexit coverage during the survey interval comprising **155 interviews** and **115 pre-recorded soundbites**.

Contributors were categorised according to their viewpoint on Brexit or the EU. Although the positions adopted by guests during the June 2016 Referendum were taken into consideration (and indeed, were often referred to within the interviews themselves, or used to introduce them), coding was not based solely upon whether they had voted Leave or Remain in the referendum: in News-watch's methodology the actual contents of the contributions has always been the key determinant.

In terms of compiling the statistics, former Remain-supporting politicians from the Conservative Party (including the Prime Minister herself) were given the benefit of the doubt and categorised as being pro-Brexit given that they appeared to be pushing forward the Brexit process.

¹² For example, in the 16 surveys undertaken between September 2002 and December 2010, only three saw a shorter average airtime duration, and the lowest recorded in this period was 2 minutes 38 seconds. Conversely, the Summer 2004 survey saw EU discussions averaging almost 5 minutes.

Conversely, although Labour's manifesto appeared to accept the referendum result, and avoided any suggestion of a second vote, the relatively small number of Labour guests on Today pushed for a 'soft Brexit', cautioned against the Prime Minister walking away from the negotiations with no deal, and rejected the Conservatives' 'cliff-edge' approach.¹³ For example, the longest interview of a Labour Party representative was with Chuka Umunna¹⁴, chair of 'Vote Leave Watch'¹⁵ who called during his interview for Britain to remain a member of the single market – at odds with official party policy. On 3 June it was reported in Today's Newspaper Review that Jeremy Corbyn had said that one of his first moves if was elected Prime Minister would be to make calls to the leaders of France, Germany and the European Commission to ensure a soft Brexit is set in motion.

Although the clear 'Leave' and 'Remain' binaries from the 2016 referendum period were dissipating during the 2017 general election survey, the shift in Labour's Brexit policy had little material effect on speaker balance. This was due to only ten Labour Party representatives being questioned on Brexit (or raising the issue themselves) amounting to just 3.7% of all contributor appearances during the survey.

Of the **270 speakers** who contributed to the EU/Brexit discussions during the interval:

147 speakers (54%) were pro-EU, or offered a negative opinion on Brexit.

84 speakers (31%) were anti-EU, or offered a positive opinion on Brexit.

39 speakers (14%) offered a neutral, factual or mixed view on the EU/Brexit.

The 23% differential between broadly Pro-EU speakers and broadly anti-EU speakers is striking, and greater than the long-term inequalities on Today identified by News-watch over many years.¹⁶

¹³ See, for example Interview with Hilary Benn, Thursday 11 May, 8.43am

¹⁴ 13 May 2017, 8.33am, Labour's Chuka Umunna interviewed jointly with Michael Gove, Conservative

¹⁵ A group of 16 Labour MPs who had tasked themselves with 'holding to account' politicians who argued for Brexit.

¹⁶ In the editions of Today monitored by News-watch between September 2002 and June 2015, a total of 5,050 guest speakers contributed to the EU debate on the Today programme. Of these, 1961 (38.9%) were in favour of the EU or its legislation, 1459 (28.9%) were against the EU or its legislation and 1630 (32.3%) expressed a neutral opinion or provided a factual overview. The long-term differential between broadly Pro-EU and broadly Eurosceptic contributions was therefore 9.6% - although many of the most prominent 'Eurosceptics' recorded by News-watch eventually supported Remain in the referendum.

2.4 POLITICAL SPEAKERS ON EU BY PARTY

The table shows all guest speakers from the main political parties standing in the election, arranged in order of the number of words spoken on Brexit. The 95 political contributions listed here accounted for 35% of the total guests speaking on EU/Brexit during the survey interval.

	Interview	Soundbite	Total	Words
Conservative Party	18	12	30	8,634
Liberal Democrats	10	5	15	4,280
UKIP	8	7	15	2,946
Labour Party	6	4	10	2,685
Green	4	1	5	1,412
SNP	4	3	7	1,249
Sinn Fein	1	2	3	1,011
DUP	1	1	2	873
Plaid Cymru	2	2	4	729
SDLP	1	1	2	362
Ulster Unionist Party	1	1	2	344
Total	56	39	95	24,523

Although the Conservative Party received the most space, not all representatives espoused party policy: the total, for example, includes long interviews with ardent Europhile Ken Clarke and prominent Remain campaigner Ruth Davidson. Although other Conservatives did appear to be holding to official Brexit policy, **only nine of the 30 Conservative speakers had backed Leave during the referendum.**

The figures also reveal Today's unwillingness to investigate and challenge Labour sufficiently on their Brexit policy, with party representatives speaking less on the issue than either the Liberal Democrats and UKIP. Labour politicians were disinclined to raise Brexit as an issue independently, and when pushed directly on the matter attempted to move the discussion onto domestic policy and their core campaign messages.¹⁷ The inconsistencies in Labour's Brexit approach and the clear divisions within the party¹⁸ were explored minimally, and given far less prominence than historically given to Conservative Party splits over the EU.

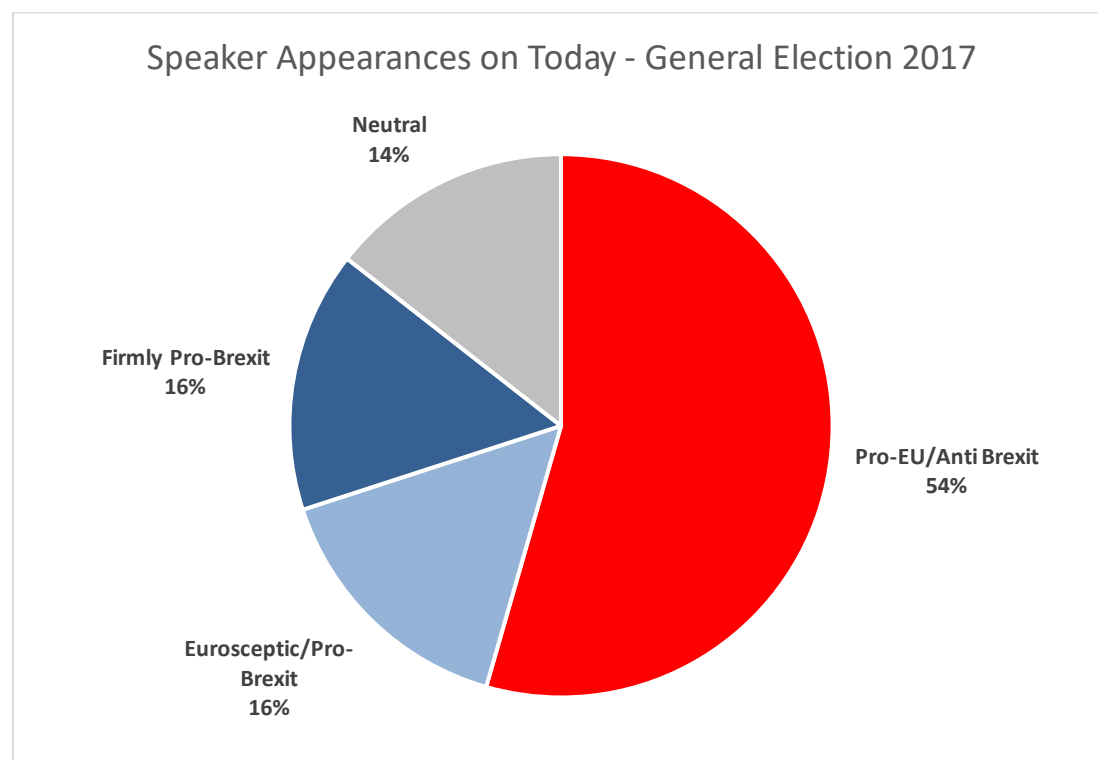
¹⁷ For example, Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner, interviewed by John Humphrys at 8.10am on 30 May 2017.

¹⁸ On 29 June 2017, 50 MPs defied the Labour whip to call for Britain to remain in the European single market and customs union after Brexit. The rebels included four frontbench MPs who resigned or were sacked.
<https://inews.co.uk/essentials/news/politics/jeremy-corbyn-hit-50-strong-labour-rebellion-brexit/>

Of the 95 political contributors, only 26 (27%) had campaigned for Leave during the 2016 referendum, and 69 (73%) had campaigned for Remain.

2.5 WITHDRAWALISTS

84 speakers coded as being favourable towards Brexit, but only half – 42 speakers – were firm supporters of withdrawal, in that they had campaigned for a Leave vote during the referendum, stated on air that they had voted Leave, or belonged to a political party advocating withdrawal from the European Union.



16 of the 'firm' withdrawalists were current or former members of UKIP, nine were members of the Conservative Party, nine were 'ordinary voters' (including seven members of the public specifically assembled by presenter Nick Robinson for his 'Election Take-away' focus group¹⁹). In addition, there were four guests from business, two politician from the DUP, a representative of the Leave.EU campaign group, and an appearance by the cricketer Geoffrey Boycott. Only one withdrawalist contributor appeared to be from the political left (a member of Nick Robinson's focus group who, when asked, said that she liked Jeremy Corbyn), representing just 0.4% of all EU speakers appearing on Today during this survey.

¹⁹ BBC Radio 4, Today, 11 May, 7.33am.

In total, the ‘firm’ withdrawalists amounted to 15.6% of the 270 speakers who appeared on Today to discuss Brexit and the EU. The table shows how this figure compares to previous elections.

	2005	2010	2015	2017
EU Speakers	55	66	111	270
Withdrawalists	7	5	10	42
% Withdrawalist	12.7%	7.6%	9%	15.5%

An increase in the prevalence of Brexit advocates was unsurprising, given that the 2016 referendum had essentially forced a binary choice. Guests were identified regularly by their referendum position in interviews and correspondent packages, and more Leave supporters were coded given that they were introduced in these precise terms, whether or not they made any clear or overt arguments for Brexit. However, it is striking that despite the outcome of the referendum, the proportion of committed withdrawalists was only marginally higher than during the equivalent pre-election period in 2005 – the figures show no sea change in editorial approach.

News-watch has made the point since beginning its research in 1999 that the proportion of Brexit supporters appearing in BBC news and current affairs programming has resolutely failed to mirror the strength of public opinion against EU membership. As the textual analysis for the survey shows, there was relatively little opportunity for many of these firm supporters of Brexit to make any positive case for leaving the EU.

SECTION THREE: NEWS AT TEN

3.1 AIRTIME AND EU/BREXIT ITEMS

During the pre-election interval, BBC1's flagship evening bulletin, News at Ten broadcast 17 hours and 9 minutes of coverage in total during the survey interval. Brexit/EU-related coverage accounted for 2 hours and 6 minutes of coverage, or 10.7% of available airtime.

News at Ten broadcast 53 individual items on EU/Brexit, and there were a further seven occasions on which the theme was mentioned in passing or tangentially. A high proportion of the coverage combined discussion of the EU/Brexit with other election themes – only 16 (30%) of the 53 reports focused on EU/Brexit exclusively.

87% of the News at Ten's EU coverage focused on issues surrounding Brexit, with just 13% on other EU themes, including the French presidential election and the European Commission's response to the US decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Change agreement.

3.2 SPEAKERS

Of the **105 speakers** who contributed to the EU/Brexit discussions on News at Ten during the survey interval:

42 speakers (40%) were pro-EU, or offered a negative opinion on Brexit.

56 speakers (53%) were anti-EU, or offered a positive opinion on Brexit.

7 speakers (7%) offered a neutral, factual or mixed view on the EU/Brexit.

This survey of the News at Ten survey represented one of the very few occasions in all monitoring undertaken by News-watch since 1999 where those speaking critically of the EU (or in favour of Brexit) outnumbered those speaking positively on the EU. However, over a fifth of the pro-Brexit contributions came from the Prime Minister Theresa May (who had campaigned against Brexit in the referendum). News at Ten's format meant that detailed arguments surrounding Brexit were rarely explored in anything more than a sentence or two – the average length of an EU-related contribution was just 50 words.

3.3 POLITICAL SPEAKERS ON EU BY PARTY

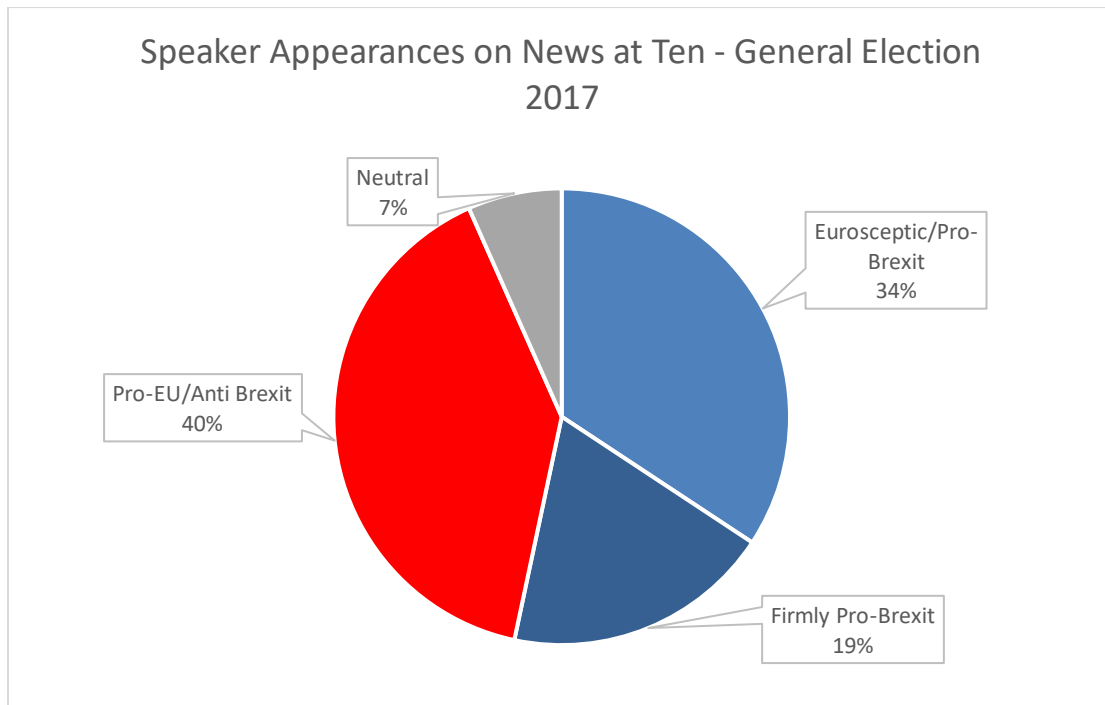
The table shows all guest speakers from the main political parties arranged in order of the number of words spoken. The 45 political contributions listed here accounted for 43% of the total guests speaking on EU/Brexit on News at Ten during the survey interval.

	Total	Words	Average Words
Conservative Party	16	1,235	77
Liberal Democrats	5	406	81
Labour Party	4	312	78
SNP	5	297	59
UKIP	8	286	36
Sinn Fein	1	187	187
Plaid Cymru	3	134	45
DUP	1	57	57
Green	1	54	54
Ulster Unionist Party	1	47	47
Total	45	3,015	

As the data shows, the Conservatives spoke approximately four times as many words on EU/Brexit matters than did Labour, an indication that the party had chosen to make Brexit one of their core campaign issues. Although UKIP had the second largest number of political contributions, the space given to them was less than the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the SNP, and the party had the lowest average contribution length of all the parties listed at just 36 words, compared to 187 for Sinn Fein and 81 for the Liberal Democrats.

3.4 WITHDRAWALISTS

Only 20 of the 56 speakers coded as offering a positive opinion on Brexit or a negative view towards the EU, were 'firm' supporters of withdrawal, in that they had campaigned for Brexit in the referendum, stated that they had voted Leave, or belonged to a political party advocating withdrawal. This equates to 19% of the total contributions during the interval.



11 of the 'firm' withdrawalists were politicians (representatives from UKIP, the Conservatives and the DUP), eight were vox pop interviewees or 'ordinary voters', and there was one contribution from property developer Richard Tice.

	2010	2015	2017
EU Speakers	32	45	105
Withdrawalists	5	5	20
% Withdrawalist	15.6%	11.1%	19%

As the table shows, there were four times as many withdrawalists speaking on EU matters on News at Ten during the 2017 general election as there had been in the previous two elections, although in relative terms, the increase in actual proportion was less pronounced, given that there were many more speakers than in the two previous elections. Historically, withdrawalist contributions tend to be more prevalent during election surveys: stricter rules on balance between the political parties generally equates to more UKIP appearances, and the representatives of the party tend to raise EU themes more frequently than members of the other parties.

PART TWO: CONTENT ANALYSIS

At the core of the report, as the statistics in Section One illustrate, is a huge deficit of pro-Brexit viewpoints. Coverage on Today and News at Ten during the General Election of EU-related issues did not achieve due impartiality or include sufficient ‘breadth of opinion’. There was ‘bias by omission’ through not ensuring that on the topic of the EU and Brexit, the positive perspective was included.

A central aim of journalism is to hold governments to account and to scrutinise policies. These programmes were clearly checking, as a central part of their editorial intent, whether there was sufficient detail and realism in the Brexit plans. But – as is shown in detail below – the focus on this was heavily disproportionate. In coverage of Northern Ireland, the DUP and Unionist perspective that a hard border could be avoided was under-reported. In business news, the difficulties of reaching trade deals were exaggerated. In political analysis, Labour’s inconsistencies of policy towards Brexit, as well as the left’s approach towards it, were virtually ignored.

Another major absence in the coverage was in exploring whether the EU was itself healthy. When Emmanuel Macron was elected in early May, it was frequently emphasised that it would be a fillip for EU unity, and a blow for populism. But despite the editorial resources at the BBC’s disposal, different perspectives on this – for example the growing resistance to the EU in countries such as The Netherlands, Germany and Greece, or the negative pressures being exerted on individual economies by the euro – were not explored at all.

The basic facts are that on News at Ten and Today, there were 375 speakers. 189 (50%) were pro-EU or offered negative opinions about Brexit; 140 (37%) were anti-EU or offered a positive view about Brexit; and 46 (12%) were neutral. Thus, in an election where Brexit was a pivotal issue, across the two BBC flagship programmes there were a third more pro-EU/anti-Brexit speakers than those who advocated leaving the EU. When the Today programme was analysed in isolation, the differential was even greater, with two-thirds more contributors opposing Brexit as supporting it. Across the two programmes only 62 speakers (16.5%) were ‘firm’ supporters of Brexit, in that they had campaigned or voted ‘Leave’ in the 2016 referendum.

Of course, numerical imbalance alone is not an indicator of bias, and nor is journalistic 'balance' achieved arithmetically. Despite the numbers, those in favour of leaving the EU could have had much more time to explain their points or faced a more favourable editorial set-up or interviewer. But the detailed analysis in this section shows this was emphatically not the case. A typical example was that David Davis was given a much rougher ride when he advanced the Government's Brexit policies on May 3 and May 30 than almost any other speaker.²⁰

Another example was the exchange featuring another prominent pro-Brexit speaker, the UKIP leader Paul Nuttall. His main Today interview²¹ did not cover in any detail the party's EU-related policy, but he faced a barrage of hostile questioning which posited that UKIP was 'simply racist', and was on a 'suicide mission'. To compound the negativity, the exchange was prefaced by a special report which highlighted that there were serious moves to oust Mr Nuttall as leader because of alleged incompetence.

Further evidence is that – even though Labour MPs and leaders of 'left-wing' groups such as trades unions had been prominent supporters of Leave – no national figure representing such a perspective was included in the General Election coverage.

Appendices 2 and 3, containing the 'pro' and 'anti' EU points on Today and News at Ten reveal that the deficit of anti-Brexit opinion was much worse than the headline figures suggest. They confirm that the speaker imbalance was the bedrock of overall bias.

Speakers who could be classed as 'firm' supporters of Brexit – those who had supported Leave in the 2016 referendum – were actually only half (42 out of 84) of those who expressed views in favour of Brexit. The total was made up of nine Conservatives, 16 drawn from the ranks of UKIP, two members of the DUP, four business figures, one from the Leave.EU campaign group and the cricketer Geoffrey Boycott. Nine were members of the public – seven of them in one Today feature in which Nick Robinson examined why a group of 'Leave' voters had done so and their likely approach to voting in the General Election. Only one of the supporters of withdrawal – a member of the Halifax focus group – was from the left.

²⁰ BBC Radio 4, Today, 3 May 2017, 8.10am and 30 May 2017, 8.10am

²¹ BBC Radio 4, Today, UKIP Manifesto Launch, 7.37am

Another way of analysing the figures is through looking at the features in which substantive issues about Brexit were specifically discussed and opinions about it were being specially sought. The table in Appendix I gives a breakdown. These were centrepieces of the output, important exchanges where EU opinion was explored. There were 65 contributors who made significant points against Brexit versus only 28 who made points in its favour, a ratio of more than 2:1. It is clear from the appearances that disproportionate editorial effort was applied to bringing onto the programme for key Brexit-related explorations figures such as economist Ngaire Woods, the fashion designer Katherine Hamnett, or senior academic Professor Dame Helen Wallace, who strongly favoured Remain, or were pro-EU.

This fundamental imbalance was also evident in individual editions of Today (and was not balanced by other days in which Brexit was more favourably considered):

The anti-Brexit skew was typified on May 5, as coverage of the campaign proper got underway. The bulletins were led by a warning from the chief executive US investment bank Goldman Sachs – an organisation that had been vociferous in its opposition to Brexit – that the City of London would ‘stall’ when Brexit happened, and that his company planned to move some of its 6,500 UK staff to the continent. The importance of the warning was bolstered by business presenter Katie Prescott who said Goldman Sachs was the world’s second largest bank and that Kamal Ahmed, the BBC’s economic editor had said London’s position was now ‘up in the air’. In business news, an element of counter-opinion was offered to the negativity by fund manager Tom Stevenson of Fidelity International, who said that, although such contingency plans were being considered, many organisations wanted was to stay in London if they could. Katie Prescott, however, immediately offset this by stating that that an additional factor against London was that the EU Financial Services Commissioner was pushing to win the UK’s share of the euro-swap market, worth around £7 billions. At 7.19am, Kamal Ahmed played the most negative clips from the Lloyd Blankfein interview and further commented that what he was asking for was a maintenance of the status quo with regard to the UK’s relationship with the EU. At 7.33am, Nick Robinson, in an item about the latest UK-EU skirmishes over Brexit negotiations, prefaced an interview with the Finnish Prime Minister Alexander Stubb – who had already said in February that the Brexit negotiations would be ‘tedious and messy’ – by stating that he had warned of ‘many skirmishes to come’. Mr Stubb attacked Theresa May’s approach to the negotiations, and reiterated his concerns about their complexity. Nick Robinson challenged Mr Stubb by suggesting that some EU bureaucrats

wanted the talks to fail, and others were leaking negatively. Mr Stubb accepted – with qualification - both points but then added that the real question was ‘how much we all lose’.

At 7.49am, Sir Michael Fallon accepted the EU negotiations were likely to be tricky and tough, and suggested that a woman like Theresa May was needed to achieve Brexit. Justin Webb, challenged his positive gloss by suggesting that the UK’s reaction to EU leaks about the negotiations was ‘out of hand’ and ‘over the top’. Finally that morning, Nick Robinson – observing that Nigel Farage had become a cheerleader for Donald Trump and Marine le Pen – suggested to Neil Hamilton, leader of the UKIP group in the Welsh Assembly, that the local elections had been all about the collapse of his party. Nick Robinson asked him why he did not pack up and return to his old party, the Conservatives. Mr Hamilton rebutted both suggestions and said UKIP had a role in ensuring Brexit happened.

Overall, on this one sample day, the programme selected two speakers who had strongly negative views about the Brexit process, and ensured that those of Lloyd Blankfein – a diehard supporter of Remain – were elevated to headline status. BBC reporters also amplified his views. Two pro-Brexit figures also appeared, but they were not treated with the sympathy afforded to Mr Stubb and Mr Blankfein. Indeed, both were challenged vigorously.

Three days later on May 8, bulletins said that a special investigation by the BBC’s Panorama had found that Facebook campaigns had been decisive in the Leave (Brexit) win. The purpose of the story appeared to be to question fundamentally the validity of the referendum result. Nick Robinson noted that Emmanuel Macron believed that Brexit would reduce the stature of the UK to the level of Guernsey. In business news, Steven Bell, of BMO Asset Management, when asked about the impact of the French elections on Brexit, said that if Marine le Pen had been elected in France, there would have been ‘an absolute nightmare’ (referring to exiting the EU). He added that Emmanuel Macron would make the Brexit negotiations tough. Rob Young suggested to Mr Bell that talk of City jobs draining to the EU might be a continuation of Project Fear. Mr Bell strongly denied this was the case and said there were ‘real regulatory problems’ and issues of ‘mutual recognition’ which could disappear as a result of Brexit. James Naughtie observed that Emmanuel Macron wanted to ‘revive the EU project’ and saw Brexit as a chance to lure business away from London, and would go for a ‘tough’ Brexit deal in the interests of France. Nick Robinson again suggested in the sequence that he wanted the ‘Guernseyfication’ (his word) of the UK. Chris Hopson, of NHS Providers, said that (because of

Brexit) recruitment of EU nationals to the NHS had fallen to a trickle, leading to 'large gaps' in healthcare provision. Europe Editor Katya Adler commented that the EU was rubbing its hands in glee at Macron's win, and said he would be a tough negotiator who put the EU first. Axelle Lemaire (a French National Assembly member) – asked to comment about the elections – said Macron believed France was far stronger in the EU, but said (despite strong pressure from Justin Webb) that the idea of actually punishing the UK was unlikely. Ashok Viswani, of Barclay's UK, suggested in the business news update that the UK needed flexible targets on immigration to ensure that companies like his had enough talent. At 7.30am, Gerard Errera, a former French ambassador to the UK, asserted the UK would not have a better status outside the EU than inside, and the interests of Europe would be defended in the Brexit talks. Caroline Lucas said the Green Party would fight against an 'extreme' Brexit. James Naughtie said Mr Macron's election was a shot of adrenalin to the EU, and would reinforce the Franco-German axis (against the UK). Jean Pisani-Ferry, an adviser to Mr Macron, was interviewed. He said that under Mr Macron, Brexit would be a 'tough negotiation'. Nick Robinson noted he had written a paper stating Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson were complicit in the Brexit 'crime'. Mr Pisani-Ferry replied it was an old paper. NR asked about the UK being punished. Mr Pisani-Ferry said it would not be, but he did want to strengthen the eurozone and the EU.

This was a day of reaction to the French election results, but the editorial approach made it another edition in which attacks on the complexities of Brexit were a recurrent and major, disproportionate theme. There were no balancing positive points. Both Katya Adler and James Naughtie stressed heavily that Mr Macron would seek to extract maximum advantage for France and the EU in the Brexit talks, and this concern was buttressed by comment from a raft of French commentators – supporters of both the EU and the French approach to Brexit – who also emphasised the negative outcomes for the UK, though being reluctant to say that punishment would be involved. France had voted for Macron, and it was necessary to reflect this, but different perspectives could have been sought. The problems of Brexit were also again elevated to bulletin status in a BBC-originating story which suggested, in effect, that the referendum result had been rigged by underhand use of Facebook campaigns. Yet again, business news explored how bad the impact of Brexit would be on the City, this time with a guest lawyer.

Another typical example of the negativity of Today's approach towards Brexit was on May 19, in a special edition which focused on immigration. The framework was set by Chris Morris, the

BBC's Brexit 'fact checker', who posited that if the UK started restricting EU immigration numbers, Germany would do the same. He said unequivocally that bringing numbers down 'potentially had a huge cost' for the economy' because it would reduce the tax take. The rest of the programme seemed geared towards reinforcing that latter point. In a business news sequence from Nottingham about the Brexit outlook, only one of the five participants (local business people) saw positives in Brexit and wanted continued free movement of people. Then Sir David Greenaway, vice-chancellor of Nottingham University, argued that continued immigration was vital for the university and also for diversity and cohesion. He claimed £90m of the university income came from overseas and, overall, students contributed £23 billion to the economy. The implication was that Brexit was putting all that at risk. John Humphrys reported on the immigration debate in a package from Shirebrook. A selection of vox pops with locals framed the sequence and provided (verging on) racist views about immigration. John Humphrys said that alleged local problems stemming from an influx from Eastern Europe to meet the labour demands of the HQ of Sports Direct) now seemed in the past; crime was down thanks to new police initiatives, an immigrant of only two years previously had become head boy of a local school, and that the local doctor believed that alleged pressure on waiting times for appointments from immigrants was fantasy. Kenneth Clarke warned in a later interview that if visa restrictions on immigration were introduced, businesses would be responsible for enforcing them. He said the UK could already decide who came in to the country. John Humphrys suggested that without immigrants, who brought in huge amounts of money, the UK would be in economic difficulty. Kenneth Clarke said he wholly agreed but he did not have hang-ups about living in a multi-ethnic community. He accepted the UK could not take in the world's poor, and also there was a need for more skills training of UK citizens. He blamed Nigel Farage for stoking up issues against immigrants.

On the positive ledger, one contributor to the Nottingham business news sequence suggested that the French and Germans would not stop trading with the UK because of Brexit. With John Bickley, of UKIP, John Humphrys claimed that it was a fact (in line with the Chris Morris fact-checking) that curbing immigration would hobble the economy. Mr Bickley replied that the economic needs of the country could be met by having strict quotas. In a business news update continuing the Nottingham sequence, Sir John Peace, chairman of Midlands Engine (a group of local businesses), said that business needed immigration, but its needs had to be viewed in the context of the referendum vote. There was a need for more UK skills training.

He wanted a roadmap for Brexit, but thought the business voice was being heard in negotiations.

Thus overall, there were three positive views about the post-Brexit landscape and prospects. They suggested between them that local industry in Nottingham would not suffer, and that quotas on immigration would also be positive.

But this was against much more prominent contributions arguing the other way. The ‘fact-checking’ by Chris Morris added up to that the BBC knew with certainty that restrictions on EU immigration would damage the economy and have substantial cost. John Humphrys provided a heavily-subjective package about immigration from Derbyshire which suggested, in effect, that those who had concerns about the impact on the local community were at best wrong, at worst delusional, and perhaps racist. To compound this impression, Kenneth Clarke, the Conservative party’s most prominent opponent of Brexit was interviewed. Very predictably – with scarcely a challenge – he, in effect, agreed with the projections of John Humphrys and Chris Morris that curbing immigration would have a damaging effect on the economy and ended on that Nigel Farage had ‘stoked up’ fears about immigration.

These are three ‘dipstick’ samples to illustrate the heavy imbalance against Brexit. The Appendices containing summaries of each day’s coverage, combined with the overall figures on guests confirm that this imbalance pervaded throughout, both on News at Ten and Today.

This basic bias in numbers and approach had a major negative impact on the General Election coverage, and this is further analysed in the sections which follow.

POLITICIANS /POLITICAL PARTIES

A central issue is the unequal treatment of politicians. The analysis here focuses in detail on Today, in which politicians appear regularly to be interviewed.

In terms of political contributions (interviews and soundbites), the approximate word totals were:

Conservative	8,000
Labour	2,500
Green Party	1,500
Liberal Democrats	2,800
UKIP	2,300
SNP	1,100

Thus in headline terms, the figures from parties supporting Brexit (Labour, Conservative and UKIP) were that they had appearances totalling 13,000 words, compared with 4,400 words from those who supported Remain (principally SNP, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party). The crucial part of the analysis below shows that this translates into that the policies of Conservatives and UKIP – the only national parties which unequivocally supported Brexit – were heavily scrutinised, whereas as Labour (whose policy towards Brexit was ambivalent), the Greens and Liberal Democrats were provided with relatively unchallenged platforms to explain their views.

Within the overall picture the key sequences were the interviews of the various politicians. The interviews were:

CONSERVATIVES

David Davis (3/5) – 1,903 words, in which David Davis was interviewed on how difficult the Brexit negotiations would be. Each point he made was strongly challenged by John Humphrys.

Michael Fallon (5/5) – 526 words, the main theme was again how difficult the negotiations would be. He denied that the government had over-reacted to leaks by Brussels.

Nadhim Zahawi (8/5) – 57 words, provided a few pointers (such as controlling student movements) as to how immigration would be reduced.

Michael Fallon (11/5) – 36 words, he said there would be a successful Brexit.

Kevin Hollinrake (11/5) – 515 words, he outlined (in a three-way exchange) that the Conservatives were the only party that were serious about Brexit, and also wanted to control borders and immigrant numbers while at the same time consulting with business.

Michael Gove (13/5) - 458 words, he said (in an appearance with Chuka Umunna) that he had stopped supporting EU membership when it became clear that the EU would not change, and attacked Labour's ambivalent EU policies. He wanted to take back control of borders, law, and money. He maintained that negative economic forecasts about Brexit were wrong and claimed there could be huge expansion outside the EU.

Michael Dobbs (13/5) – 72 words, he said Theresa May was setting herself up as the only person who could deal with Brexit.

Mark Harper (15/5) – 241 words, in a discussion about green policies, he said leaving the EU allowed the UK to apply environmental standards without pressure from the EU.

Camilla Cavendish (17/5) – 158 words, noted that the Chancellor had sensibly pushed back the deadline for balancing the books so that he could also ensure that business needs were met through the Brexit process.

Jeremy Hunt (18/5) – 399 words, said the manifesto aimed to bring people together over Brexit and sensibly control UK borders. He said the cabinet was united in this (against claims of splits)

Kenneth Clarke (19/5) – 836 words, he maintained borders were already under control and that any changes would have to be implemented by businesses, adding to red tape. He did not have hang-ups about living in a multi-ethnic community.

Amber Rudd (29/5) – 240 words, she said in response to claims that the UK would become an outcast as a result of Brexit, that strong relations would be maintained with EU countries and would work with the EU on security matters (against claims from Nick Clegg).

David Davis (30/5) – 934 words, in response to Angela Rayner, said that Brexit would generate cash for public services, and again denied suggestions from the EU that Brexit would take decades, and that the electorate had been 'infantilised' by not being given information on issues such as tariffs.

Jeremy Hunt (31/5) – 241, words said that Brexit would create more money for the NHS, and would protect UK jobs.

Damian Green (1/6) – 75 words, against claims in forecasts by the Bank of England that Brexit would create problems for the economy, he said the reverse would be true.

Ruth Davidson (2/6) – 712, words she accepted she had been strongly in favour of Remain but disputed that she was still battling for that outcome, and said she wanted the best outcome for 'team UK'. She wanted a free trade agreement and also to keep immigrant numbers down. She now wanted to respect the result.

Boris Johnson (6/6) – 495 words, he said that Brexit would include exit from the single market, free trade deals and intensified co-operation with EU partners. He refused to be drawn on the size of the 'divorce' bill or what his reaction would be to a return to the front bench by Michael Gove.

Overall, there were 18 occasions when key Conservative party spokesmen and women were invited on Today to outline the party's approach to the EU and Brexit. Between, them, analysis if the transcripts shows they made multiple points in support of Brexit and the government's policy towards achieving it. On every occasion, they were responding to accusations from various sources that Brexit would be complex, difficult and drawn-out. Presenters pushed these points very strongly, especially, for example, in the exchanges with David Davis or Ruth Davidson. Their approach was clearly to hold the government to account, to expose problems and to push alternative perspectives – especially those of the EU and figures like Emmanuel Macron – towards the Brexit process. In the interviews with Kenneth Clarke and Ruth Davidson, the programme deliberately drew attention to potential party splits over Brexit policy. Also in the equation was BBC 'fact-checking', which for example, suggested that Brexit could take much longer than was being projected, and, if free movement was ended, would be at a very high economic cost to UK business. On top of this, as is outlined in the section on correspondent opinion, it was very frequently suggested by BBC journalists that the whole process of Brexit was difficult and indeed, in the words of political editor Laura Kuenssberg, 'mind-bendingly complicated '. Government ministers protested otherwise in these interviews, but their points were swamped by the frequent and all-pervading correspondent comment.

The balance is that Conservative policies were outlined by party figures, but under tight scrutiny and against a background of a continual editorial effort to show that Brexit was hugely complex and would damage the economy and other key aspects of national endeavour.

LABOUR

John McDonnell (3/5) – 105 words, he asked John Humphrys to ask David Davis how big the EU 'divorce' bill would be.

Angela Rayner (10/5) – 303 words, claimed the Labour position was clear on Brexit (they would leave the EU) but would adopt a better negotiating position than Theresa May by being more moderate.

Hillary Benn (11/5) – 499 words, he said he did not want a 'hard' Brexit. Businesses wanted to trade without tariffs and so the UK walking away without a deal would be very bad. He said that party policy was to press for a better deal. The absolute priority was to be able to trade without barriers, to work out what sensibly to do about immigration, and to continue to co-operate with the EU over security and research.

Chuka Umunna (13/5) – 728 words, against the background of 16 Labour London MPs stating that the UK should stay in the single market, Mr Umunna said that the Brexit negotiations must yield the same benefits as those currently enjoyed, and that meant continuing membership of the single market. 600,000 jobs depended on this and 'exit' from the single market was not on the ballot paper. He said free movement could be modified to accommodate this.

Karin Smyth (15/5) – 114 words – in a discussion in Bath, she said that the Conservative approach to Brexit would damage environmental regulations.

Angela Rayner (30/5) – 702 words, pushed by John Humphrys, she repeated that Labour would leave the EU, but said her party was more focused on domestic policies such as health and education. On the EU front, they would protect jobs by being moderate and achieving concessions that meant the terms of the single market continued to apply. 'No deal' – as was

being contemplated by the Conservatives – was not an option, she would rather be working with partners across Europe. Labour would tackle concerns among Labour voters about immigration by improving wages.

There were thus only six interviews of Labour politicians. Despite official Labour policy being to support Brexit, none of the interviewees was unequivocal about the topic. Two (Mc Donnell and Smyth) featured MPs who made incidental or minor policy points. Two (Benn and Umunna) were with backbench former shadow ministers who strongly opposed formal party policy of leaving the single market. Only two exchanges (those with Angela Rayner) featured attempts by Today to clarify official party policy towards Brexit. Ms Rayner suggested that Brexit was accepted, as was leaving the single market. But in both interviews she also claimed that a friendly approach to the negotiations would achieve conditions akin to staying in the single market. She also put forward that concerns about immigration could be dealt with by boosting wages.

In summary, this added up to a remarkable lack of editorial curiosity about the Labour approach to Brexit. Keir Starmer, the shadow Brexit minister (and Mr David's counterpart) did not appear at all. But further, Angela Rayner – in her appearances – provided nebulous answers to the apparent contradictions in the party's stance, and in sharp contrast with the treatment of (for example) David Davis, there was little editorial attempt to penetrate the vagueness or force more definitive responses. Before the EU referendum, David Cameron had attempted to win concessions similar to those which Angela Rayner said she could achieve from the EU simply by being non-confrontational. David Cameron failed to do so – so what made Angela Rayner think that she could succeed? This was an obvious point to have put to her, but no attempt was made to do so.

Further analysis of the transcripts shows that, at a very basic level, Today presenters themselves appeared unclear about what Labour policy was towards Brexit. Nick Robinson, interviewing Nicola Sturgeon of the SNP on June 2, posited to her that it was Labour policy to leave the single market. He was wrong. On Nick Robinson's own programme, Angela Rayner had said on May 30 that this was not the case. News at Ten reports also presented a confused picture. On the eve of the poll, Christian Fraser said that the Labour approach was to scrap the Brexit White Paper, and put the emphasis on the single market and the customs union and remaining within it.

If Today (and News at Ten) presenters were confused, or uncertain about this key point, where did this leave the audience? Clearly – as well as fudge from Angela Rayner – mixed messages were coming out of the party from figures such as Hilary Benn and Chuka Umunna. It boils down to that in the BBC coverage of Labour and Brexit, there was major bias by omission. Bluntly, party figures were not interrogated enough to achieve clarity. The small amount that was transmitted emphatically did not flesh out their approach to the EU.

Another key issue in the programme's approach to Labour is that a whole strand of opinion within the party – supported by at least 10 MPs and arguably 3.5m (35%) of the Labour vote – was ignored in the coverage. No one from the party who supported Brexit for traditional 'left-wing' reasons was interviewed. This was also major bias by omission.

UKIP

Neil Hamilton (5/5) – 271 words, it was suggested to him that the election had been about the collapse of his party. He said UKIP would facilitate a full Brexit, with a manifesto that (for example) slashed foreign aid.

Paul Latham (5/5) – 160 words, in a two-handed interview with the Greens, he said that UKIP had strong local support and said punitive tariffs were unlikely to be introduced and that the fall of the value of the pound had helped industry.

Ian Kealey (15/5) – 195 words, speaking in a debate in Bath, he faced hostile jeering, but managed to say that his party was not standing in seats where Conservative candidates strongly backed Brexit.

John Bickley (19/5) – 597 words, he spoke about his party's policy of wanting a five-year freeze on immigration because 4 million had come here since 2000. John Humphrys said that economic analysis showed that they were vital, and communities like Shirebrook were in any case coping. Mr Bickley denied this and said the needs of business would be met by allowing essential skills in. He claimed the Conservative manifesto could not be trusted to cut immigration.

Paul Nuttall (25/5) – 1016 words. Very unusually, the sequence with the party leader was prefaced by a report earlier in the programme which said that a no-confidence motion in his leadership was being framed because of his alleged incompetence. It was put to him by John Humphrys that his policies sounded ‘simply racist’, that the party was now just a pressure group, and was ineffective because it had no MPs. Mr Nuttall made points about cutting foreign aid and immigration and that only his party would deliver Brexit.

Neil Hamilton (1/6) – 82 words, he said the party’s immigration policy would accommodate the need for doctors and nurses but would not allow uncontrolled entry.

John Bickley (7/6) – 109 words, he was asked if Britain should become poorer to accept less immigration. He replied that this was a ‘switch and bait’ question – before 1997 there had been 22 years of balanced immigration and the economy had boomed.

There was one other interview of a UKIP figure, of former party leader Nigel Farage (3/6). It has been discounted as part of the election coverage of UKIP because it was about his alleged personal connections to Russia.

Overall, there were seven interviews of senior UKIP figures, more than of Labour party spokesman. They were able to project against consistently hard-ball questioning that they wanted to sharply reduce immigration because the UKIP population had risen by at least four million since 1997; that this would not be not economically damaging; that they wanted to ensure that the Conservative party’s approach to Brexit led to a clean break; and, briefly, that there should be tougher home security, including a ban on the Islamic burka. However, despite the numbers, treatment overall of UKIP was much more negative than that of Labour.

Transcripts show that, from the local election results in early May, correspondents regarded the party’s prospects as very limited. Laura Kuenssberg, for example, in her verdict on the poll results, concluded that the UKIP vote had now gone back to the Conservative fold.

The interviews outlined above focused disproportionately on immigration, and in pushing editorially that the party’s policies were both economically damaging and potentially racist. By contrast, there was little editorial effort to explore UKIP’s demands about the terms of Brexit. In the exchange with John Bickley on May 19. John Humphrys suggested, that BBC ‘fact-

checking', showed that that cutting immigration numbers would inevitably damage business. Mr Bickley denied this, but the same point was put to him three weeks later as the central focus of his interview by Mishal Husain. John Humphrys also suggested that his own research gathered in a report from Shirebrook in Derbyshire indicated that the alleged problems of immigration, including adverse pressure on doctors' waiting lists and problems with crime, were no longer an issue.

The treatment of Paul Nuttall by today was exceptionally negative, not matched in any other interview. First, the programme also carried on the morning of the interview a special feature from Rotherham which focused on that some in the party had no confidence in Mr Nuttall's leadership and wanted to remove him. It was not a major news story and seemed deliberately designed to undermine his credibility. Then, in the interview itself, Mr Nuttall and his party were accused of being 'simply racist' (for wanting to cut immigration to zero and to ban the burka), and John Humphrys also claimed that the party had launched its manifesto too soon after the Manchester bombing, was on a 'suicide mission' (apparently insensitive to how that sounded after his first question), that he added to the chaos in the way the party was run, that UKIP was now only a 'pressure group' (rather than a fully-functioning political party) and neutered as a political force because it had no MPs. Against this barrage of hostility, Mr Nuttall was able to make only the basic rebuttals mentioned above.

Clearly, opinion polls were showing throughout the campaign that the party was suffering a decline in support. But UKIP had commanded four million votes in the 2015 General Election, and its main objective of getting the UK to leave the EU had been backed by almost 52% in the EU referendum. It may not have had an MP in the House of Commons, but it had support in the House of Lords, the largest number of UK MEPs, representation on the Welsh Assembly and, even after the poor results in the May local elections, a significant number of local authority councillors. Throughout UKIP's history, the BBC editorial approach to UKIP (as detailed in News-watch reports) had been to suggest it was disorganised, a 'one-trick pony', and xenophobic at best, racist at worst. The coverage in the 2017 General Election campaign crudely perpetuated that approach, but the negativity was augmented by the 'fact-check' suggestions that the core policy on immigration was economically damaging, and by the heavy new emphasis on a party both in decline and at odds with its leader.

The editorial purpose of Today's coverage of UKIP was not to clarify party policy, but to project primarily why it was divisive, economically illiterate and illogically opposed to immigration.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Lady Kramer (5/5) – 88 words, she contended that because Labour and the Conservatives supported Brexit, her party was the only effective voice for Remainers.

Norman Lamb (6/5) – 61 words, he said the issue was not about Brexit but effective government and ensuring there as not a one-party state.

Tim Farron (10/5) – 588 words, he said he wanted to stay inside the EU unlike Labour and the Conservatives, thereby saving £100 billion on the Brexit bill. He claimed the Conservative approach to Brexit was 'the most extreme' and would offend even 'leave' voters. He focused on the need to spend a further £7 billion on education.

Greg Mulholland (11/5) – 482 words – part of the three-way with Hilary Benn and Kevin Hollinrake. He said other issues than Brexit were central in voters' minds, such as jobs. Nick Robinson suggested that the reality was that Brexit would have a 'dramatic' impact on the country and the economy – other issues were the equivalent of a 'dropped fiver'. Mr Mulholland said other issues were coming up on the doorstep. He said the Tory approach to Brexit would get the 'worst deal'

Paddy Ashdown (15/5) - 172 words, said that the Conservatives were abandoning green principles.

Ed Davey (17/5) – 522 words, he said there had been no Brexit 'deal', that what the Conservatives and UKIP wanted would be a disaster and there needed to be a further referendum to ratify whatever was agreed. Sarah Montague said there had been no evidence of a shift in opinion towards Brexit since the previous year – polls showed otherwise. Mr Davey said that was because no-one had given an alternative.

Nick Clegg (22/5) – 266 words, in the context of the 'young' vote, said a 'hard' Brexit should not be pursued because 70% of youngsters otherwise – it was 'generational theft'. John

Humphrys said that was democracy, and they were out-voted. Mr Clegg said they had been ignored.

Nick Clegg (29/5) – 780 words. It was said in news bulletins that Nick Clegg had warned that withdrawing from the ECJ would weaken British defences because it would mean security services could not access EU databases. Mr Clegg fleshed out the claims in his interview and said it would remove access to a ‘devastatingly effective’ tool. The Conservatives were providing no answer to the dilemma.

Willie Rennie (2/6) – 479 words, said the people should have the right to reject a bad deal from the EU rather than Theresa May. It was right to do so, as had happened after the independence referendum. He argued that it was only the Liberal Democrats who would secure British interests.

Nick Clegg (7/6) – 604 words, he said that the Conservative attacks on human rights (in wanting out of the EU framework) were wrong and dangerous. He repeated that the UK must have access to the EU databases to ensure security. John Humphrys said the UK would still be able to access such data. Mr Clegg said not because it would be illegal under EU rules to do so. He accused Conservatives of ducking all the issues about Brexit.

Over 10 interviews – more than both UKIP and Labour - the Liberal Democrats were presented with only minimal challenge to their core EU-related policies, including that exit from the EU would be economically damaging, and that there was a need to hold a second referendum on EU membership once exit terms had become clear. Nick Clegg also pushed prominently that the country must remain subject to the ECJ and be part of the EU security network. It was put to party spokesmen by presenters that their policy did not seem to be resonating with voters and that the claims about not having access to the EU security databases were overblown. But the overall picture was that the party had a relatively easy time in outlining their Brexit-related policies. This was in sharp contrast to UKIP, who were so closely questioned that they struggled to put across even the most basic points about party policy.

GREEN PARTY

Caroline Lucas (8/5) – 62 words, said that the Conservatives must be stopped from imposing an extreme Brexit.

Ed Carlisle (11/5) – 346 words, in a constituency interview, doubted if the core election issue was Brexit. He noted that the value of the pound had helped UK exports and thought it unlikely that punitive tariffs would be introduced by the EU against the UK. The value of the pound also boosted tourism to Yorkshire.

Molly Scott Cato (15/5) – 237 words, she said the Greens had tried to stop an extreme Brexit by being strategic in fielding candidates but other parties were not co-operating.

Caroline Lucas (3/6) – 761 words, said free movement was a 'wonderful gift' because it had let so many people into the UK to fill jobs. She did not want Brexit to happen and terms agreed should be put to the British people in a second referendum. People had not voted to scrap environmental protection but that was happening. She repeated that immigration was not a problem, people had been fooled by the right-wing press into thinking it was.

SNP

Stephen Gethins (12/5) – 142 words, said the Scottish Parliament had voted to stay in the single market, and then had offered a compromise proposal to Westminster, which had been rejected.

Stephen Gethins (27/5) – 102 words, said Brexit created funding problems, and in that context, SNP had created its youth manifesto to protect free education.

Angus Robertson (30/5) – 407 words, he said that Scotland needed its own immigration system and a contribution by people from the rest of the world was hugely important for the economy. He wanted the 400,000 already there in Scotland to remain, and to stop them leaving, and to keep the possibility of letting them come and go. He would not give a number but maintained that Scotland was not 'full'.

Nicola Sturgeon (2/6) – 394 words, Nick Robinson said Labour wanted to keep the UK in the single market, but Ms Sturgeon said they emphatically did not. She added that Theresa May

had gone back on a promise to listen to the nations about Brexit and had rejected the idea of Scotland staying in the single market. Ms Sturgeon said that a vote for SNP would give her her a mandate to strengthen Scotland's hand in the negotiations. She clarified that she wanted a referendum on Scottish independence after the Brexit negotiations were complete.

SINN FEIN

John O'Dowd (22/5) – 700 words, outlined that he wanted Northern Ireland to remain a member of the EU Parliament's North-South Ministerial Council which would be able to access EU funding. This is analysed in more detail in the section on Northern Ireland coverage.

DUP

Arlene Foster (26/5) – 703 words, details of the interview are in the Northern Ireland section; she rejected that Brexit would necessarily lead to a 'hard' border.

There were also interviews with the SDLP and Ulster Unionist Party, details of which are in the Northern Ireland section.

PLAID CYMRU

Leanne Wood (16/5 and 6/6) – 619 words, said that Wales accepted Brexit but wanted continued financial aid, protection for Irish jobs, tariff free access to EU markets and the benefits of the single market.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the analysis above shows that there were serious problems in Today's handling of its EU-related political interviews.

UKIP, the only party supporting a full break from the EU, was not interviewed on that theme. The focus of inquiry was mainly – as has been usual in the BBC's coverage of UKIP over almost 20 years – on its policy towards immigration, and, in particular, why (according to the BBC's own 'fact-checking') it was supporting restriction on numbers which would be economically damaging. Paul Nuttall, UKIP's leader was treated particularly negatively, and he was accused of heading a party which was electorally now irrelevant and pursuing racist policies.

The Conservative Party coverage gave party spokesmen and women the chance to outline that they believed that Brexit negotiations would proceed smoothly and yield a variety of

benefits. However, this was heavily offset. Kenneth Clarke was brought on to show that there was disagreement in Conservative ranks about how Brexit policy should proceed. Another factor was that the questioning of Conservative figures was much more rigorous and adversarial than that for equivalent figures in other parties (other than UKIP). Another was that the editorial framework throughout the campaign period was strongly but unduly negative about Brexit. On the one hand, correspondents regularly suggested that the leaving the EU would be highly complex with the cards stacked in the EU's favour. On the other, a raft of programme guests drawn from the pro-EU arena and the business community, were brought on the programme with the express intention of reinforcing the difficulties identified by the correspondents and presenters. A third factor was the BBC's own 'fact-checking' seemed specifically designed to refute any claims that Brexit could be straightforward or easy.

With Labour, as has already been noted, there was serious bias by omission in that the party's EU policies were not sufficiently scrutinised. There were only two interviews with an official party spokeswoman, Angela Rayner, about the topic. In both she presented an implausible picture of how her party would handle Brexit, but John Humphrys did not challenge her sufficiently about her stance. The two other main interviews about Brexit – with Hilary Benn and Chuka Umunna – showed starkly that some senior figures in the party disagreed with the 'leave the single market' approach of the leadership. It seemed there was no real interest in exploring the fundamental contradictions involved. This seems totally unjustifiable in the context that it is estimated that at least a third (3.5 million) of Labour voters in the 2015 General Election opted for Brexit in the EU referendum. A further issue of bias and omission here is that there was no effort by the programme to explore 'left-wing' opposition to Brexit.

In the other political interviews, representatives of the various parties were given clear opportunities to outline their respective policies against mildly adversarial questioning. The only one to face tough scrutiny on a par with that of UKIP or the Conservatives was Arlene Foster of the DUP – which, of course, favoured Brexit.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The treatment of Northern Ireland during the General Election illustrates in microcosm the extent of the BBC's in its treatment of EU-related themes.

There were several reports on the impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland. A central theme was that the Northern Ireland border with the republic would be a major problem. It was also suggested that the peace process could be put at risk by the Brexit process. Clearly these were issues being discussed in Ireland, and they could not be ignored. But again the focus was strongly and disproportionately on the negativity created by Brexit and stressed the difficulties rather than solutions and alternatives. Sequences where more positive views were featured, for example, the interview with former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern stood out prominently for precisely that reason.

ITEMS:

On May 10, Dominic O'Connell filed three linked reports from Northern Ireland for Today's business news about the impact of Brexit on economic prospects. His first interviewees were a representative of the Bombardier company, a former works convenor of the now defunct Visteon car parts company and a taxi driver. None mentioned Brexit specifically, but the latter two painted a bleak outlook. A local academic said Ireland was still heavily dependent on funding from the UK, there being a local deficit of £10 billion. A tech company representative said that high local educational standards provided a good supply of labour. Dominic O'Connell then noted that many feared Brexit because it would interfere with cross-border links. Angela McGowen, from the CBI, said all her members were fearful about not reaching a deal. Barclay Bell, a local farmer, who said a hard border would be very difficult and contended that he must have an unlimited supply of immigrant labour. Both he and Ms McGowen also stated that business planning was impossible in the current climate. At 7.15am, in business update, Dominic O'Connell interviewed Ellvina Graham from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce. She said members were very worried about a hard border, with 30,000 crossings each day. She wanted a soft approach, and was concerned about a lack of representation at Westminster. Mr O'Connell suggested she didn't have a voice at Westminster. She added that, however, businesses in Northern Ireland were resilient, weak sterling was bringing advantages, and there were new, wider trading opportunities. In the third part of the report, at 8.36am, Dominic O'Connell spoke to a cross-border estate agent who said he would not survive a hard border being reintroduced, a sheep farmer who claimed his business could be set back 25 years and that people did not want borders of any sort. An emeritus professor of geography argued that the main borders would be in the airports and seaports of Britain, rather than in Ireland. Dominic O'Connell concluded that big issues were

at play, 'and those on both sides of the border 'hope that the politics of peace triumph over the politics of Brexit'.

John Humphrys then spoke to former Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern. He said the main issue was the movement of goods and imaginative thinking was required. He noted that 70% of Irish goods exported from Ireland – either to the UK or Europe itself – passed through Britain. There had been friendly relations for the past 20 years and he hoped those would continue. Humphrys suggested that checks were 'inevitable'. Mr Ahern said politics was the art of the possible, and a solution would have to be found. But he warned it would not be easy. John Humphrys suggested that this would give the 'whole issue of a united Ireland a new lease if life'. Mr Ahern said it already had, but suggested now was not the time to have a border poll – the main issue was to broker a deal over customs. John Humphrys suggested that the current Taoiseach was not a 'passionate Republican'. Mr Ahern said that he did not think he or his successor would be pressing for a border poll. John Humphrys said that Brexit had created a 'huge conundrum' without as yet a way out. Mr Ahern said that Brexit was creating more problems than Ireland would like, but people had voted and solutions had to be found. He had spent his life negotiating, but this time it was tricky to see a way out. It was not easy.

On News at Ten (May 11) Fergal Keane reported from Northern Ireland. It was said in the intro that chief EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier had warned there could be customs control between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, but that he wanted to avoid a 'hard' border. Fergal Keane reported first that Brexit left unionists uneasy because it had spurred demands for a referendum on Irish unity. A unionist cleric hoped 'defeatist' attitudes towards Brexit would be avoided. Mr Keane said that Brexit had 'complicated' the agreement on ending the Troubles. A South Armagh farmer recalled troops on the border and strict border controls. Mr Keane suggested that the reintroduction of a border with customs posts would be costly and politically divisive. The farmer predicted 're-partitioning'. Mr Keane said Ireland's history was full of 'unintended consequences' and noted that Dublin had secured agreement for Ireland to remain in the EU if there was unification. He asked whether in 'our lifetime' there would be a united Ireland. Republic of Ireland politician Michael McDowell said there could be – the economic interests of the people of Ireland post-Brexit required unity. Mr Keane finally visited his home town of Cork, where in vox pops, the locals appeared interested in the economy rather than reunification. Mr Keane concluded that there was now uncertainty across Ireland and claimed that protecting the gains of peace was a great challenge in the Brexit negotiations.

The following day, for Today, Chris Page also reported from Northern Ireland about the Michel Barnier visit and special meeting of the European People's Party, the biggest grouping in the European Parliament. Mr Page said Mr Barnier was prioritising Irish issues and was also expected to see Tony Blair, discussing issues to do with the border and the businesses 'who would be most affected' if there were any tariffs or other interruptions to trade. Mr Page was asked if these issues could be a 'serious stumbling block' to Brexit. He replied that Mr Barnier believed that because Ireland would be inside the customs union and the UK not, there would have to be customs enforcement. He added that officials were looking at electronic monitoring, but it was not sure what sort of system could be designed and this was thus 'the trickiest issue' facing the negotiators.

On May 22, James Naughtie, discussing the launch of the Sinn Fein manifesto, said there were now more nationalists than unionists in the Northern Ireland Assembly and that the nationalists wanted a poll on the status of the border post-Brexit. There was a second linked item at 7.18am. James Naughtie said that there was now a clash in Northern Ireland over the teaching of Gaelic, 'sharpened by Brexit' because 'the border is centre-stage again'. Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan, of Ulster University, said the border question had been out of Irish politics for 20 years, but the Brexit negotiations had put it back in again. A Sinn Fein spokesman said Brexit was bad for the economy and undermined the peace process – it would create a hard border despite the Irish people voting Remain. Jim Naughtie said unionists had secured 11 out of the 18 Northern Irish seats at Westminster in 2015, but three more were in play this time, perhaps tilting the balance further to Sinn Fein. Alison Morris, introduced as being from the nationalist Irish News, said this was a 'ten year stomp' towards a united Ireland. James Naughtie said that the curious thing about the contest was that many nationalists who perhaps had voted Remain now saw political advantages in Brexit 'because it made everything constitutional again'. He concluded that the election might be the prelude to 'something more serious'.

At 7.51, Justin Webb interviewed John O'Dowd of Sinn Fein about his party's election manifesto. He asked what the party's requested EU-designated special status for Northern Ireland meant. He explained that Northern Ireland was coming out of conflict, and the EU 'brought in a role in removing the border' (the economic border) from the island of Ireland. He added:

The peace process removed the military aspects of the border, so what we're seeing is continued representation in the European Parliament, under the North-South Ministerial Council, which is a joint council between the Assembly in the North and Parliament in the south, that our ministers would be still able to access council meetings, that will be still able to access European funding which has been strategic in developing the peace process, both in terms of communities and the infrastructure around our society. So those are the broad frameworks of what we are seeking going into the future. Justin Webb responded:

...to make it clear, we'll get onto the referendum issue in a second, but just to make it clear that the status that you're seeking wouldn't, wouldn't give the EU sovereignty over Northern Ireland, and it wouldn't mean that Northern Ireland would be part of the EU, but it would, would be a framework into which it could, could join in order to make sure that there didn't have to be a border?

Mr O'Dowd denied that the EU had sovereignty over the North, or any part of Britain. Mr Webb said it had a say via the ECJ and it would lose that under his proposal. Mr O'Dowd said the ECJ had been important in solving hotly contested issues and would be part of the deal he wanted. Mr Webb wondered how he would sell that to unionists. Mr O'Dowd said it would be through debate, adding (to the suggestion from Mr Webb that this might be threatening) that the majority had voted to stay in the EU, and the vote was across Unionism and Nationalism – some sections of Unionism were having a debate about Brexit and the future role of the EU. Justin Webb said that a poll in 2016 had shown that only 22% supported a united Ireland. John O'Dowd said we had learned to be very wary of polls, and said he wanted an independence referendum. Justin Webb suggested that having a mature debate would include Sinn Féin taking up its Westminster seats. Mr O'Dowd said persuasion had not worked, for example over Brexit. Irish nationalists had never been able to influence the programme at Westminster.

At 8.45am, James Naughtie reported from Northern Ireland again. He suggested to Robin Swann, of the Ulster Unionist party, that Brexit had brought border back into politics for the first time in 20 years. Mr Swann replied that he did not know why – no party wanted a hard border and there would not be one. The main aim was to get as many unionist MPs elected as possible on June 8. Claire Hanna of the SDLP said that Brexit was undoubtedly the main issue of the election because Northern Ireland would be disproportionately effected. Local issues also mattered. James Naughtie reminded the audience that 56% of Northern Ireland

had voted Remain. Claire Hanna said the vote had put a united Ireland into sharper focus and was the biggest economic and political problem ever faced in the province. Nobody wanted a return to borders but no-one had explained how problems would be avoided.

On May 26, Arlene Foster of the DUP was interviewed. Nick Robinson first asked if the General Election could solve any of the province's problems. She said it was about getting the best deal for Northern Ireland in the EU negotiations and the restoration of devolution. Nick Robinson said Sinn Fein had come close to the DUP in the Assembly elections and was now talking about a border poll. He suggested that the DUP had helped the UK to get out of the EU – against the majority view in Northern Ireland – and that was now 'fuelling republicanism'. Arlene Foster disagreed and denied Nick Robinson's suggestion that harder immigration policies in the UK would force the creation of a 'hard' border. She said that parties in Dublin, London and Belfast had all said that and the need was to be 'innovative' to find a solution. NR asked if that meant electronic tagging of goods. Ms Foster agreed it would. Nick Robinson suggested that if a 'soft-ish' border was possible, it could lead to a united Ireland – people would say 'it no longer matters'. Ms Foster replied that it was more than about economics, the key issues were culture and identity. Mr Robinson said that Brexit had caused the General Election and wondered how confident she was that in her lifetime, there would be no such poll. Ms Foster said she was very confident. People were superimposing on Brexit another issue – that of an independent Ireland. People may have voted for Remain, but if asked if they wanted to stay in the UK, they would say yes.

Dan Mulhall, an Irish diplomat who was taking up the ambassador role in Washington (May 30), said the government in Dublin was committed to 'avoid any hardening of the border'. Mishal Husain asked it was inevitable that there would be stopping and searching and checks for lorries. Mr Mulhall said any hardening would be damaging and the goal was to avoid that. Ms Husain then asked about 'the effect on people' with regard to whether there had been an increase from people living in Britain of applications for Irish citizenship. Mr Mulhall confirmed a 70% rise, an extra 20,000. Ms Husain noted that Arlene Foster had said there would be no poll on Irish reunification in her lifetime. Mr Mulhall said the issue was not connected to Brexit but the terms of the Good Friday Agreement allowed such a poll to be called. Ms Husain asked if Brexit 'increased the chances of that circumstance'. Mr Mulhall replied that 'Brexit complicates the situation for everyone in these islands'. Ireland would prefer if Britain remained in the EU because that would be the easiest way to maintain the good situation

between Britain and Ireland. The republic had a huge trading relationship with the UK worth £1 billion 'every week of the year' and that needed to be preserved.

On May 31, it was said that the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland wanted to stay in the EU and to mitigate the impact of Brexit. Naomi Long said many unionists wanted to stay in the EU and those on the nationalist side thought they had been disenfranchised. A hard Brexit brought the border into focus.

Mishal Husain (June 3) interviewed the outgoing Irish Taoiseach, John Bruton. She said the new PM's most pressing decisions related to Brexit and its impact. Mr Bruton replied that his successor Leo Varadkar would work within EU structures to get the best deal for the EU and for Ireland – the only country with a land border with a country leaving the EU. Ms Husain asked if the UK could ask for anything special from Ireland, or would they act purely as one of the 27. Mr Bruton replied:

Well, Ireland would have preferred if Britain had decided to go for a softer Brexit, by either accepting the European Economic Area option, or the customs union option, or accepting some limited jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice. But the British government after the referendum, after the referendum, decided to throw aside those options and is going for a hard Brexit. And obviously, the harder the Brexit, the harder the border in Ireland, and the more disruptive the Brexit will be for the Irish economy and for Irish people. We deeply regret that, but there's nothing we can do about it.

These sequences on Today and News at Ten of the perceived negative impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland and on Anglo-Irish trade illustrate in microcosm the overall serious imbalance of BBC journalism during the General Election.

The emphasis of this coverage was that a 'hard' border – hampering trade and endangering the peace process - would be a near-inevitable consequence of Brexit, as would a poll on the 'reunification' of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This was relentlessly pursued by presenters and correspondents. It was assumed that Britain had caused this problem by voting for Brexit, thus necessitating the ending of the single market and customs union arrangements, and putting the whole of relations with Ireland at risk.

The programme never considered the alternative perspective: that it was the EU that was causing potential problems in Northern Ireland, and itself putting the peace process at risk, by insisting that the UK should not be allowed to operate free trade after Brexit with an EU member state. No one from within the EU was challenged on this point.

The central editorial quest was to find ways of illustrating this perceived potential negativity. This was evident especially in the interviews of Bertie Ahern, Dan Mulhall and John Bruton. The issues of the border were described as variously as 'inevitable' and a 'huge conundrum' by interviewers Mishal Husain and John Humphrys. Mr Bruton was not challenged about his highly negative assessment of what would happen to the border; the more hopeful analysis of Mr Mulhall and Mr Aherne was met with suggestions that border stop and search would be introduced, that there would be a revival of calls for unification, that the peace process would be put at risk, and (in Mishal Husain's case) that there were further linked problems such as a huge surge in the demand from Irish citizens in the UK to acquire Irish (EU) passports.

The programme thus brought on three senior figures from the Republic of Ireland and the over-riding editorial intent – despite pragmatism from Mr Mulhall and Mr Aherne – was to illustrate how serious the border problems were likely to be.

Fergal Keane's approach on May 12 was closely similar. He also raised the spectre of continuing and persistent Brexit-related problems including the hugely negative potential of a hard border and associated threats to the peace process. The only faintly positive part of the feature was vox pops, which suggested that people in the Republic of Ireland were not that concerned about reunification, despite the fears elsewhere. Dominic O'Connell, in his three report from Northern Ireland was also heavily negative about Brexit through the five main contributors. To summarise: Angela McGowen, of the CBI, was 'very, very fearful' about the impact on trade; farmer Barclay Bell said it could hit agricultural trade and would be 'very difficult' to make plans; Ellvina Graham, from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, said members were very worried about a hard border, with 30,000 crossings each day, and wanted a soft approach; a cross-border estate agent said he would not survive a hard border being reintroduced; and finally, sheep farmer claimed his business could be set back 25 years by a hard border and that people did not want borders of any sort. The only minor qualification to this picture of gloom was from Ellvina Graham, who said her members, though deeply worried, also saw the possibility of new trading opportunities in the post-Brexit world.

The other important element of the coverage was the treatment of the Northern Ireland politicians who were interviewed.

The first May 22 package by James Naughtie was ostensibly 'balanced' in that it contained views from a unionist and a Sinn Fein spokeswoman, plus a republican journalist and an academic. However, the editorial set-up was designed to show that the border question was centre-stage for the first time in 20 years and that this, in turn, meant that there was a strong thrust towards unification and a strong challenge to the dominance of unionism. In the second package – also ostensibly 'balanced' by the presence of an Ulster Unionist and SDLP candidate – most space and weight was given to the latter. Robin Swann, an Ulster Unionist, denied James Naughtie's suggestion that Brexit had made the border an issue because no one wanted a 'hard' border. Claire Hanna of the SDLP, unchallenged by Mr Naughtie, maintained that Brexit was a problem because Northern Ireland would be 'disproportionately affected'. James Naughtie reinforced her point by reminding the audience in response that 56% of Northern Ireland had voted Remain, and Ms Hanna added that a united Ireland was in sharper focus and was now 'the biggest economic and political problem ever faced in the province'

In the interview with John O'Dowd of Sinn Fein, he simply outlined what he wanted in terms of continued EU involvement and an 'independence referendum'. Justin Webb suggested to him that the people of Northern Ireland did not want reunification and polls showed that. Mr O'Dowd discounted the polls and said his party would not engage with Westminster politics because Labour and Conservatives wanted Brexit and never listened to Irish Nationalists.

Finally, on May 26, in the Arlene Foster interview, Nick Robinson made the key issues the possibility of a border poll, that the DUP was 'fuelling republicanism' and that there would be a hard border, or alternatively, if, somehow a 'soft' approach was found, this would allow in reunification by the back door because the border would no longer matter. Ms Foster denied these points, but the exchange was framed in terms of the BBC's approach to the perceived negatives of Brexit.

Overall, this was not impartial reporting either of the issues facing the province or of Brexit as a main issue of the election. The 'breadth of opinion' did not include anyone who was positive about post-Brexit trade prospects in the Northern Ireland context. Two Northern Ireland

politicians (Ms Foster and Mr Swann) thought the alleged problems with the border could be easily dealt with and did not believe that reunification was back on the agenda or the peace process was threatened. Two senior figures from the Irish Republic thought that in order to protect Irish trade, the problems with the border must be solved. But ranged against them were a raft of other figures who did not agree. Presenters and correspondents in their overall approach and questioning added to the overwhelming negativity, and encouraged or emphasised most the anti-Brexit perspective.

BUSINESS COVERAGE

David Jordan, BBC Director of Editorial Policy, July 2017, described elements of the BBC's referendum coverage:

The BBC was abundantly clear, for instance, that the overwhelming weight of expert economic and business opinion was advising people to vote Remain. Nonetheless, the BBC should be open to those who may challenge a consensus – not all such conventional opinions stand the test of time, as those many economists who banged the drum for the Euro or who failed to anticipate the financial crash might now attest. Different voices must be heard from time to time, though not necessarily given the same weight or exposure.

The BBC has not made clear how it arrived at this sweeping assessment. But for at least three years in its business coverage in the context of EU debate its coverage of business news has been overwhelmingly negative about the prospects of Brexit. Their presentation has been that economists and economic forecasts, and businessmen and the business community want to remain in the EU and believe that seriously negative economic consequences are attached to changes in the UK's relationship with the EU.

In the 2015 General Election, for example, Today's business news slots projected overwhelmingly that Brexit would be damaging. Only four business news guests who spoke in favour of the Conservative referendum policy, or who more broadly supported EU reform, appeared on the programme against 18 speakers who believed an EU referendum was a threat or a worry to business. There were no contributors who saw withdrawal from the EU as positive.

After the referendum, from June to December 2016, News-watch further analysed the Today business news coverage of Brexit-related issues. . It found that of the 366 guest speakers, 192 (52.5%) were negative about the impact of the vote and only 60 (16.3%) expressed opinions which were pro-Brexit or saw the post-referendum economic outlook as positive. There were three times more anti-Brexit speakers than pro-Brexit ones. The most serious imbalance was

that only 10 (2.9%) of the Business News interviews (from six speakers) were with supporters of withdrawal from the EU.

In a third survey – of coverage by Today of the handing of the UK's Article 50 letter (between March 29-April 4, 2017) – News-watch found that business coverage made special effort to show that the City of London was under pressure because of Brexit. A story that Lloyd's of London were establishing a Brussels 'headquarters' was elevated to major significance in the bulletins, and across several mentions in business news slots, even though the chief executive admitted that 'only 'tens' of jobs were involved.

Business coverage in 2017 continued in this negative vein.

NEWS AT TEN:

The only positive voice about Brexit on News at Ten, other than brief soundbites by politicians, was businessman Richard Tice (May 18) - who, it was said, had been involved in campaigning for an 'out' vote. Business Editor Simon Jack, commenting on the Conservative pledge to cut immigration, said that access to the right business skills was the top of many businesses' wish list, and at a time of high employment, was in short supply. He added that the plans to make hiring overseas labour more expensive could make the economy suffer. In that context, he asked Mr Tice why he believed it vital that British industry thought 'UK first'. Mr Tice replied that businesses needed to think about training UK young people to have the requisite skills rather than going for the cheapest offer abroad. Mr Jack concluded that large and small businesses were feeling under attack, and a Tory government would be 'hands on' in its approach to business. This was followed by a sequence from Halifax, where, in a vox pop, voters expressed concern that immigrants were taking jobs over locals. John Pienaar commented that 'Mayism' was about the state doing more with no more money, and Laura Kuenssberg concluded:

And of course, the complications of Brexit means whatever else she's promising could be derailed by that becoming extremely difficult, and not just hard to deliver but also potentially very nasty. So broadly though, as with any particular idea, a mainstream leader for the mainstream – easier to say than to prove.

In a series of three special News at Ten economic reports (May 14-16, the only ones of their kind), Merseyside was projected as a go-ahead, booming area because it embraced globalism

and unlimited immigration. London was an area facing the fears of a massive City jobs drain to the continent because of Brexit, had an economy dependent on free movement of people – but that was now also under threat, again because of Brexit. In contrast, Sunderland and South Yorkshire were portrayed as having stagnant or declining economies, and the negativity was bracketed with locals voting for Brexit either because they feared immigration or wanted a restoration of national sovereignty. These three items were the only forays during the election on News at Ten into background reporting of this kind and the tone was overwhelmingly anti-Brexit.

In the economy-related items, on May 3, there was mention of Sainsbury's results. The item recorded that the company had claimed that trading conditions were now challenging and unpredictable, 'caused by Brexit' and were struggling not to pass on price increases. No other business reports on the programme during the campaign period mentioned Brexit, and so the only one that did was negative about it.

Kamal Ahmed, economics editor, reported on May 11 that Mark Carney had warned that economic prospects for the UK depended on getting a smooth Brexit deal, and though he believed that in the long term things would work out, he had also warned of 'challenging times'. A sequence of vox pops underlined concerns about inflation and 'the impact of Brexit'. Mr Ahmed concluded that a key issue was that inflation (caused by Brexit) was outstripping the growth in earnings, and that the bank's targets depended on a 'smooth Brexit'.

On May 30, Ben Wright, reporting from a debate about the economic impact of Brexit in Wales, said that the Conservative participant Darren Miller, had observed that the Brexit government department had a minister from Wales. He added that that Plaid Cymru had claimed that the Tories would grab the wealth from the EU rather than redistributing it. Mr Wright said that Plaid's main election 'slog' was to defend Wales by 'standing up to Brexit'. He said the Liberal Democrat spokesman, Mark Williams claimed that only his party could do that and warned that those who had voted to Leave had not seen the likely impact on agriculture on small business or higher education. The UKIP spokesman, Neil Hamilton had said his party would make Wales a low-tax haven.

Chris Morris (June 1), in a 'Reality Check', said that neither (main) party had provided detail about Brexit. This was perhaps because it was (as an over-arching factor) 'incredibly complex';

because there was disagreement about the future role of the courts; that there could not be an ending of free movement and access to the single market (as Labour wanted); and because the Office for Budget Responsibility, at odds with the promises of both parties, had predicted that inflation was likely to be higher and growth lower for the next few years. He concluded that in an election called about Brexit, remarkably little was known about Brexit plans.

On Today, negative Brexit-related business news and comment included:

May 3: Bulletins were led by claims in the Financial Times that the UK's Brexit bill would top 100 billion euros. Kevin Connolly stressed that this was one of the most sensitive Brexit issues, and included demands for farming subsidies, as well as exclude the UK from a share of the EU assets. The bulletin piece was reinforced with a further report from Kevin Connolly at 6.10am, who said that there was no doubt that the requirements for such payments were in the Treaty of Lisbon. In business news update, US hedge fund manager Bill Ackman, said London was currently the best financial centre in London, said the post-Brexit outlook was negative. He qualified that to an extent by saying that the devaluing of the pound made investment more attractive, though that was not yet recognised by the markets. In his interview with David Davis, John Humphrys suggested that claims that the EU needed the UK more than the UK needed the EU because of a trade imbalance were not founded. Chris Morris, in a reality check, referring to the bill for the UK exit from the EU, said the definition of what the EU owed 'had been widened to the widest possible extent', and warned the dispute could end up in The Hague.

May 4: James Naughtie, discussing the French elections, said in two separate items that Emmanuel Macron had said the UK would have to pay a high Brexit bill of up to 80 billion euros.

May 5: Bulletins included that the chief executive of Goldman Sachs, Lloyd Blankfein, had warned that the City of London would stall as a result if Brexit, with thousands of jobs at stake. The warning was amplified in business news. It was also said that EU was lobbying to end the 'extremely lucrative' euro derivatives market at a cost of billions. A feature on Lloyd Blankfein's concerns was presented by Kamal Ahmed in business news update. The former's warnings were repeated, along with his plea for the UK not to leave the EU.

May 6: In more 'fact-checking', Chris Morris said that Francis Hollande had warned that there would be a price and a cost for Brexit, and the UK would be worse off outside the EU than in it. Mr Morris said the cost to the UK would run to 'tens of millions'. He observed that Michel Barnier had released details of the Brexit negotiating talks that were 'complex, technical and politically explosive'. Jean-Claude Piris, former director-general of the EU legal service, said the UK was more reliant on the EU economically than the other way round.

May 8: Nick Robinson, noting the French election results, said that Emmanuel Macron had warned that Brexit could lead to the 'Guernseyfication' of the UK. In business news, Steven Bell of BMO Asset Management, said that a big pressure on the 'Europeans' had receded because the defeat of Marine Le Pen had taken pressure off the euro. Rob Young asked Mr Bell how Mr Macron would regard Brexit. He replied that Mr Macron wanted the UK to suffer for leaving. Mr Young observed that banks were making 'contingency plans' for life after Brexit, and said that legal firm Freshfields believed that the two year negotiating period was not enough. He asked James Smethurst of Freshfields about the impact, and he said large numbers would move. He denied that this was a continuation of Project Fear. It was said in the 7am bulletin that Angela Merkel had hailed the Macron victory as a vote for a strong and united Europe. Katya Adler said that Emmanuel Macron – over Brexit – would be one of Britain's trickiest negotiating partners. Axelle Lemaire, a French National Assembly member, was asked whether France would now seek to poach City jobs, and affirmed that he was strongly pro-EU. At 7.19am, Ashok Viswani, of Barclay's UK, suggested in business news update that the UK needed flexible targets on immigration to ensure that companies like his had enough talent.

May 10: Dominic O'Connell reported from Ireland. The contents are in the section in which the handling of the impact of Brexit on Northern Ireland is analysed. Each component was gloomy about the prospect and impact of a 'hard' border, with only one partially positive comment about future trade prospects from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce. In addition, former Taoiseach Bertie Aherne warned that the Brexit negotiations would be 'very tricky' in respect of trying to avoid a negative impact on the economy. Angela Rayner, shadow education minister, said the Conservative approach to Brexit would be economically very damaging and would lead to a 'cliff edge'. Tim Farron, Liberal Democrat leader, said he wanted the UK to stay in the single market to yield increased cash flow to fund public services.

May 11: In more 'fact-checking', Chris Morris warned that if tariffs were applied to UK trade as a result of leaving the single market it would change business plans 'massively' (negatively). James Landale said the UK was attending a trade conference about Somalia to counter claims it was 'sticking its head in the sand' over economic issues related to Brexit. At 6.39am Kamal Ahmad previewed an expected statement from Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England. He said it was a chance for Mr Carney to stand back amid the rows about Brexit. He would say there could be problems over economic growth (implied because of Brexit). Later, in a section on the economic outlook in Leeds, it was said a general fear was that if the Brexit talks broke down, tariffs would be introduced that could be up to 20%.

May 12: Chris Page, reporting from Northern Ireland, suggested that after Brexit, there would have to be some kind of customs control and this would be one of the 'trickiest issues' in the Brexit talks. At 8.10am, there was a two-way interview with Leave supporter Andrew Lilico and the economist Ngaire Woods, who was a strong supporter of Remain. The exchange was angled on fears expressed by Mark Carney that Brexit would make us 'poorer still'. Ms Woods said there would be a wide range of negative impacts of Brexit, including investors pulling out of the UK, and serious customs problems.

May 13: Labour backbencher and former shadow trade minister Chuka Umunna argued that there would be major negative Brexit consequences unless the UK stayed in the customs union and the single market.

May 15: Bulletins said a report from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development followed a warning from the Bank of England that inflation was hitting living standards. Theo Leggett said the fall was caused by the fall of the pound (following the Brexit vote).

May 16: Nick Servini, from Wales, heavily stressed the Plaid Cymru perspective of protecting Wales from the economic consequences of Brexit. In the 7am bulletin, similar points were made. Sylvie Bermann, the French ambassador to London, and Peter Ammon, her German counterpart, both confirmed that the two countries would be working together to tighten European integration, with them at the heart of change. Mr Ammon said the UK would have to accept free movement of people as an aspect of border reform and dealing with immigration. Leanne Wood of Plaid Cymru reinforced the manifesto launch points. Sarah

Montague suggested the party had changed from Remain. Ms Wood replied that Brexit must not happen in an 'extreme way'.

May 17: In an item about the future of scientific research, Tom Fielden said that the drugs company Astra Zeneca had made a decision to invest £500m in Cambridge before the referendum vote. He suggested that they might go 'elsewhere' (another country) in future. In business news, Paul Drechsler, president of the CBI, said they had set up a special task force to deal with Brexit. Dominic O'Connell suggested that this meant they were not currently happy. Mr Drechsler said that a positive outcome was possible, providing it was a 'soft' Brexit. Tom Fielden repeated in a second feature that AstraZeneca's Cambridge investment had preceded the Brexit vote and was by a 'footloose multinational' that wanted free movement of labour. This was repeated in an interview with Astra Zeneca's lead scientist, who stressed that free movement and continued membership of the European Medical Agency were essential.

May 18: In business news, Katie Prescott observed that the Conservative manifesto promise to reduce immigration was unlikely to go down well with the business community. Her guest, stockbroker Russ Mould, agreed, and added that immigrants were vital for GDP growth.

May 19: Chris Morris, with another 'fact-check', said if the UK started restricting EU immigration numbers, Germany would do the same. He said that bringing numbers down 'potentially had a huge cost' for the economy' because it would reduce the tax take. In a business sequence from Nottingham, all but one of the participants saw negatives in Brexit and wanted continued free movement of people. Sir David Greenaway, the vice-chancellor of Nottingham University, argued that immigration was vital for the university and for diversity and cohesion. He claimed £90m of the university income came from overseas and overall students contributed £23 billion to the economy. Kenneth Clarke, the Conservative MP, warned that if visa restrictions were introduced, it would have a negative impact because businesses would be responsible for enforcing them. He said the UK could already decide who came in to the country. John Humphrys suggested that without immigrants, who brought in huge amounts of money, the UK would be in economic difficulty. Mr Clarke said he wholly agreed and did not have hang-ups about living in a multi-ethnic community. The UK could not take in the world's poor, and there was a need for UK's skills training. He blamed NF for stoking up issues against immigrants.

May 20: Luke Johnson (who supported Leave) was on a panel with designer Katherine Hamnett, and crossbench peer Victor Adebowale. Ms Hamnett was appalled by the prospect of a cut in immigration and Mr Adebowale said it had been positive for the country. Ms Hamnett said no one understood how the Brexit process would happen. She supported Gina Miller's stance and was against a hard Brexit.

May 22: Kevin Connolly explained the EU General Affairs Council and claimed it meant that the Brexit process would be legally mandated and would remove flexibility from the UK's hopes for the negotiation. James Naughtie, discussing the poll in Northern Ireland, filed reports (outlined in the section about Northern Ireland) which suggested that the imposition of a hard border would lead to negative economic consequences and raise the spectre of reunification.

May 24: It was reported that four of the UK's national academies, including the Royal Society, had warned of a loss of funding of science post-Brexit. Professor Dame Helen Wallace warned that European funding underpinned research and this made for 'better science'. She claimed that up to £600m could be lost. She argued for open access of scientists and a commitment to 'collaborative work'. She argued that the UK should stay part of the European Research Council.

May 25: Norman Smith said that the UKIP manifesto, which wanted strongly restricted immigration, had been described as 'uncompromising'. He said people were leaving the party in droves and more likely to vote Conservative because of the 'Brexit factor'. Party leader Paul Nuttall was interviewed. John Humphrys suggested that his leadership was a 'car crash', that stopping immigration would undermine wealth (and asked what could be done about all the money 'we would not have'), that his policies sounded simply racist, and that the party had lost its purpose.

May 26: Nick Robinson suggested to Arlene Foster of the DUP that in supporting Brexit, she had fuelled republicanism and put to the forefront the need for a hard border.

May 29: Sarah Montague said that economist Christian Noyer had been appointed by Emmanuel Macron to tempt financial institutions from London to Paris. Mr Noyer said that 20

institutions were planning to leave London. The companies were from a range of different countries and would locate part of their activities because of Brexit. Ms Montague said that Moody's had observed that they thought the impact would be limited because most banks could still operate from London. Mr Noyer said they were estimating that 20% of their operations would move and would involve banks, asset management and insurance. Ms Montague asked if the intention was to play hardball. Mr Noyer said not, but the logic for the UK was to stay in the single market and accept the four freedoms, and the ECJ, as Norway did.

May 30: Bulletins noted that Nicola Sturgeon had said the UK must stay in the Single Market. Sarah Smith said that the SNP believed Scotland could stay in the single market and be part of the UK even after the UK had concluded Brexit. It would require the devolution of more powers, including control over immigration and the option to continue free movement of people. She said this had been ruled out by the Conservatives. Angus Robertson (SNP) was interviewed primarily about immigration policy. Mishal Husain pushed on what numbers above the 400,000 already in Scotland were needed. Mr Robertson said that immigrants were needed and he did not want to lose any. Kenny Jacobs, chief executive of Ryanair, was asked if he was worried about Brexit. He said he was, it looked like being a very ugly divorce and he particularly wanted to continue with the Open Skies EU arrangement. Dominic O'Connell asked if Ryanair could be excluded from the UK altogether. He said he wanted to avoid this, there were 40m passengers but there would be major disruption unless Open Skies was kept. Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, was challenged over Labour's EU policy by John Humphrys. She said the party did not want to stay in the single market but wanted tariff-free access to it, and again attacked the Government's approach to the negotiations. The UK was now the back of the queue with the EU and the laughing stock. Mr Humphrys suggested that this was because the UK had voted to Leave. Ms Rayner said it did not have to be like that, David Davis laughed and smirked at the EU. She said Leave had lied about promises to raise cash to give back to the UK. She said Labour's approach to migration would make it work for the UK.

May 31: In business news, Dominic O'Connell noted that in the referendum debate, big business had argued 'Vote Remain', but had been ignored. Stephen Martin, of the Institute of Directors, said that, though there were different views, business thought Brexit could have a damaging impact. Justin Webb said that political parties (especially David Davis) were unwilling to talk about Brexit plans, whereas the 'Europeans' were adopting the very opposite approach. Katya Adler said that draft negotiating documents had been released by the

European Commission and were very detailed, covering issues such as what would happen to the ECJ. This was for transparency among the 27 countries. It was clear that discussion about trade would not come first and that it was a condition that the ECJ should maintain its jurisdiction.

June 1: Correspondent Jenny Hill said that Angela Merkel was trying to facilitate the move of the European Banking Authority from London to Frankfurt. John Humphrys said the Brexit process involved 'endlessly complex' negotiations in which the UK would have to pay a price. A forum would be held in Berlin to consider the EU's finances without the UK. Kamal Ahmed noted that there was a squeeze on earnings in the UK as a result of inflation (linked to Brexit).

June 2: Norman Smith said there was a question mark over whether it was desirable to bring immigration down in a short time frame because, as a result of Brexit, business was going through upheaval and would find it difficult to deal as well with a reduced amount of foreign labour – there would not be enough time to train up British worker to replace foreign ones. Nicola Sturgeon, of the SNP, said she wanted to stay in the single market to save thousands of jobs. People in Scotland should have choice about Brexit.

June 3: Outgoing Irish PM John Bruton said that he would have preferred the UK to stay in the customs union and to accept jurisdiction of the ECJ. A hard Brexit was now in prospect, and this would be disruptive to trade. John Owen of the Institute of Government (interviewed with Lord Green of Migration Watch) said that experts agreed that if immigration was cut, the economy would suffer. He added that restrictions on medium-skilled workers would be unpopular with businesses and the public services. Caroline Lucas, leader of the Green Party was interviewed. She claimed that restricting immigration would damage public services – free movement was 'a wonderful gift'. There would be serious shortage of labour if there were no immigrants. Free movement had been vital to the economy. John Humphrys said that some believed that living standards had been eroded. Ms Lucas said the answer was to have minimum wages.

June 5: Katya Adler said that the EU wanted to get on with the Brexit process. The first meetings would be about procedure. She said the British government was under 'huge time pressure'. The UK wanted to talk trade immediately but the EU did not. Ms Adler added that the EU believed that the UK was tearing itself apart over Brexit, but they were smug and were quietly getting their ducks in a row.

June 6: Mishal Husain, introducing business news, said that there was a warning that the UK had a pervasive shortage of skills. A spokesman for the body which had conducted the survey said the shortage applied to numerous categories. Vicky Pryce, of the Centre of Economic and Business research, said that there was the amazing statistic that nursing applications from the EU had gone 92% since the referendum. Other shortages were building up for the future. Using immigrants educated and trained elsewhere had been an easy way of filling vacancies and that could not continue forever. In the 7am bulletin, Jonty Bloom noted the Conservative plan for a revived Board of Trade, but observed that trade deals took years to negotiate and that 'experts' doubted whether the economic benefits of Brexit would outweigh the costs. He noted that the Liberal Democrats had called it a 17th century idea.

BUSINESS NEWS POSITIVES TOWARDS BREXIT ON TODAY:

May 3: David Davis was interviewed and claimed that the EU had a trade deficit with the UK which would work in the UK's favour in the Brexit negotiations.

May 5: Tom Stevenson, of the Fidelity International investment fund, said that warnings from Goldman Sachs that City jobs could go to the continent were not necessarily well-founded, because the preference was for the status quo.

May 8: Rob Young, in business news, asked a devil's advocate question – whether warnings of City job losses were a continuation of Project Fear. Axelle Lemaire, a French National Assembly member, claimed that Emmanuel Macron was business friendly and would not seek to punish the UK for Brexit (but was strongly pro-EU).

May 9: In business news, Ian Stuart of HSBC said that after Brexit, there would be huge opportunities in developing trade between China and the UK.

May 10: Dominic O'Connell's features from Northern Ireland contained one comment about better economic prospects from the spokeswoman from the Chamber of Commerce. Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern accepted that a goal of the Brexit talks should be to avoid as far as possible damage to UK-Ireland trade.

May 11: Dr Victoria Honeyman said a lot of the (Labour) working class had voted Leave and wanted Brexit to be driven through, with money coming back from Europe and improvements in local areas, in job prospects.

May 12: Andrew Lilico, who had supported Leave, said that the impact of Brexit was already positive, with more investment. He said inflation was unlikely to get much higher.

May 13: Michael Gove said that Britain was not getting poorer as a result of the Brexit process. There would be more opportunities.

May 15: Ian Kealey from UKIP in front of a hostile live audience in Bath (which he noted) said UKIP were not contesting all seats because they did not have the financial backing to do so. He argued that the Leave vote had triggered more inward investment to the UK.

May 16: In Business News, Mike Amey of Pimco said that markets had so far not been hit by Brexit, they had recovered from what negatives there had been.

May 18: Jim Naughtie reported from Scotland. He found former SNP fishermen who were planning to vote Tory.

May 19: There was mention in bulletins of Paul Nuttall's demand for an immigration points system. In a business news sequence from Nottingham, one company engaged in exporting said it was unlikely that the French and Germans would want to stop trading with the UK (most contributors were negative about Brexit). John Bickley of UKIP argued for the party's policy of a five-year freeze on immigration against suggestions from John Humphrys that such labour was vital to the economy. Sir John Peace said immigration was vital to the central region but it had to be viewed in the context of concerns expressed in the referendum, and therefore more training in the UK was required. Dominic O'Connell asked if the business voice was being heard in the Brexit negotiations. Sir John said it was.

May 20: Luke Johnson (appearing with two Remain supporters) said a 'hard Brexit' (Mishal Husain's phrase) could lead to a more enterprise focused economy and one more open to the rest of the world, and that immigration should be controlled.

May 22: Former Conservative treasurer Michael Spencer argued that it was in the EU's interest to reach sensible arrangements over financial services; that damaging London as a financial centre would damage the EU, too; and said that the idea that France and Germany should 'own' euro financial clearing was a fallacy. The EU's approach was nothing more than a real nasty piece of economic nationalism and protectionism. He had voted Remain but now now believed the UK could prosper outside the EU.

May 25: Norman Smith said that Paul Nuttall wanted to present UKIP as patriotic and plain-speaking party and show that it would deal with immigration, while opposing the handing over money to Brussels for exit and demanding that fishing rights were brought back. Paul Nuttall was interviewed by John Humphrys. He briefly was allowed to mention that the party wanted zero migration and explained that although GDP grew with immigration, wages were depressed by it. He said this was bad for working class communities and argued that integration was simply not happening. He wanted people with the right skills to come to the UK. In the 8am bulletin, an extract from the interview was used. Paul Nuttall said that UKIP was the only party with a clear commitment to cut immigration and foreign aid.

May 26: Arlene Foster, against strongly adversarial questioning from Nick Robinson, said there could be a 'soft' border with Northern Ireland.

May 29: In business news, Michelle McGrade of TD Direct Investing, noting the contrasting financial results of Starbucks and Patisserie Valerie, said that the reason for good or bad figures was not Brexit but individual business's customer appeal. Amber Rudd was interviewed. John Humphrys observed that the EU could no longer rely on the UK as a partner. Amber Rudd said that when Brexit negotiations started, a goal would be to impress on other countries that the UK would remain a strong partner in defence, security and trade.

May 30: David Davis was interviewed and made several positive points about Brexit against a strong challenge by John Humphrys. Mr Davis said that a successful Brexit was the underpinning of sound economic policy that would lead to money being made available for investment in public services; that the EU's demand for a Brexit severance payment of £100 billion was not acceptable, that the UK was aiming for a tariff-free deal, but no deal was better than a bad deal.

June 1: Damian Green said that a successful Brexit would lead to a stronger economy. Neil Hamilton of UKIP in Wales claimed that uncontrolled immigration pushed down wages.

June 2: Guests in Scotland (Laurie Lambie of Investec and Stuart Patrick of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce) made positive points about the prospects for the Scottish economy post-Brexit. Mr Patrick said that most Scottish trade (apart from that with the UK) was with the US.

June 3: Lord Green of Migration Watch said that Brexit was an opportunity to introduce work permits and reduce immigration to 100,000 a year. He pointed out that before 1997, the economy had not needed immigration to be successful.

June 6: Boris Johnson was interviewed and asked what the approach would be to the Brexit negotiations. Mr Johnson said it was outlined in the Lancaster House speech and included free trade deals, exit from the single market and the customs union and intensified co-operation with EU partners. He added that there was no case for paying huge sums to the EU for exit.

June 7: John Bickley of UKIP defended the call for zero immigration against strong pressure from Mishal Husain that it would lead to serious economic losses and said before 1997, with balanced immigration, the UK economy had boomed for 22 years. Leave campaigner John Longworth, interviewed with Gina Miller, made several important points about Brexit – including that Remainers in the business community now accepted the need for Brexit, that it was now clear that a free trade agreement with the EU was not necessary. The UK needed to leave the single market and customs union and benefits would then accrue.

Overall, the above shows that while positive perspectives about Brexit were included in the Corporation's business-related coverage, these were heavily swamped by exploration and presentation of the negatives. Far more guests with a pessimistic view of the post-Brexit outlook appeared and they were mostly encouraged to express their negativity, rather than being challenged about it. There were a number of business-related features which included two or more guests – for example, the discussion including Luke Johnson on May 20 – but in almost all of them, the positive view of Brexit was given less than equal precedence. The three special economic features on News at Ten conveyed that Brexit-supporting areas (such as the chosen venues of Sunderland and Hatfield) were locked in a negative economic outlook, while those in Liverpool and London who had embraced the principles and outlook of the EU were

booming – though very afraid of the almost inevitable negative consequences of Brexit, such as the ending of free movement. Special economic reports on Today, such as the three features on Northern Ireland (May 10), were dominated by fears of a hard border, shrinking agricultural opportunities and nose-diving house sales. Several guests from EU countries such as the Emmanuel Macron economist Christian Noyer (May 29) said that while Britain would not be ‘punished’ for deciding to leave the EU, there would be a dire economic impact, including the loss of up to 20% of jobs from the City to EU countries. On a number of occasions, negative economic stories about Brexit were elevated to bulletin level, for example the warning by Goldman Sachs chief executive Lloyd Blankfein (May 5).

In contrast to the programme giving regular and relatively unchallenged appearances to a richly-diverse array of figures who opposed Brexit or who thought it was a bad move, there were only four appearances from figures who were interviewed specifically about their positive hopes for Brexit.

A major omission was that there was nothing in the economic coverage which explored the negativities in the EU itself: for example its alleged rigid espousal of federalism and socialist principles: its support for big business and Corporatism at the expense of small business and personal enterprise; its inflexible and formulaic support for the euro – which had, according to many economists, including eminent figures on the ‘left’ in the UK trades union movement, brought Greece to its knees and needless suffering to the Irish Republic; or its ideological inflexibility towards ‘free movement’ of people, which, in the eyes of many critics had caused both security threats and brought with it severely negative economic consequences.

The BBC – in the views expressed by David Jordan above – appear to believe that this sustained highly-skewed approach to business coverage was acceptable because most businessmen and economists are, and have been all along, opposed to Brexit. Put bluntly, it seems that during the General Election ‘due impartiality’ – in accordance with the Corporation’s own rules – required that anti-Brexit opinion should be given maximum exposure; other perspectives could be ignored.

NEGATIVE CORRESPONDENT COVERAGE

Another area of bias was that BBC correspondents focused heavily on the negative consequences of Brexit at every opportunity. There were very few equivalent positive

descriptions. The hallmark of their analysis was that every element of Brexit was going to be fraught with complexity. Their approach compounded the imbalance of guests and opinion already noted. In the concerted opinion of BBC journalists, Brexit was indisputably hard and the government's approach faced insuperable obstacles.

The overall negativity was further enhanced by what was described as 'fact-checking' by Christopher Morris. His assessments, however, were at best questionable. For example, he claimed (May 19 on Today) that controlling immigration would inevitably have a huge net cost to the economy. This is strongly disputed in some quarters, for example by Migration Watch . Yet Mr Morris's point was elevated to the level of unassailability and and quoted as 'fact' by a range of presenters.

The editorial default anti-Brexit position of coverage in the commentary of BBC correspondents and in interview questions was typified across the two programmes by:

- Laura Kuenssberg, who described negotiations as 'mind-bendingly complicated':
- Chris Morris who (in addition to the above) said in his 'fact-checking' that the issues of Brexit were 'incredibly complex', that the UK was 'under-estimating the complexity, that the UK would face a bill of £60 billion', that there could be the reintroduction of tariffs, that the talks were the 'biggest determinant' of the UK's financial health over the next six years, that restricting immigrant numbers 'potentially had a huge cost for the economy'. He also said the negotiations over the UK's Brexit bill had been extended to 'the widest possible terms', and if there was no agreement on this, the dispute could end up at The Hague. Mr Morris, describing Michel Barnier's release of terms of the negotiations, said what was involved was 'complex, technical and politically explosive'.
- Katya Adler, who said the election of Emmanuel Macron meant the UK was now facing a 'tough negotiator' who would put the EU first, and later in the campaign that the draft negotiating guidelines showed that Britain would not be allowed to negotiate in the terms or in the way it wanted, that the Article 50 rules put the UK under 'tremendous time pressure' to achieve what it wanted, that the EU believed the UK was 'tearing itself apart' over Brexit;

- James Naughtie, who contended that Mr Macron's election would give the EU a 'shot of adrenaline'(in how it handled Brexit);
- James Landale, who said the UK was attending a trade conference in Somalia to make it clear that the UK was not withdrawing from the world stage because of Brexit;
- Katie Prescott, who said the Conservative manifesto pledge to cut immigration would not go down well with the business community (because of the cost involved);
- Kevin Connolly (explaining the powers of the revived EU general Affairs Council) said Brexit was going to be an 'arduous and seemingly never-ending process' with no possibility for the UK to achieve the sort of flexibility or deal it wanted;
- Jenny Hill, who asserted that the EU negotiations were 'endlessly complex' in which the UK would 'have to pay a price';
- Norman Smith, who claimed that business would not be able to cope because of reduced EU labour, and there would not be time to train UK replacements;
- Kamal Ahmed, who said there was a squeeze on earnings caused by Brexit;
- Jonty Bloom, who claimed that trade deals took years to achieve and economic experts doubted in any case that the benefits of Brexit would outweigh the costs;

Further examples on News at Ten:

On May 3, Europe Editor Katya Adler, commenting on the Brexit negotiations, said the atmosphere between the UK and the EU had got 'quite nasty' and was souring. The EU was about 'consensual policies' but the UK was now viewed as 'difficult'. The election of Emmanuel Macron was projected solidly has likely to have a negative effect on Brexit.

On May 18, in reaction to the Conservative manifesto promise, Laura Kuenssberg suggested that the plans to limit immigration might cost the economy billions and Simon Jack added that

access to the right business skills was the top of many businesses wish list – the Conservative plans could make the economy suffer. Laura Kuenssberg concluded that the complications of Brexit could derail what the Tories were promising and make things ‘not just hard to deliver but very nasty’.

A report included comment from Labour that the Conservatives, in their conduct of the Brexit negotiations, had made the UK the laughing stock of Europe.

On May 25, Ben Wright, assessing the leaders’ debate in which Theresa May had asserted that the Conservatives would deliver Brexit, said that she had refused to give the cost of leaving and had reiterated that no deal would be better than a bad deal ‘without explaining what no deal would look like’.

Chris Morris (June 1) in a ‘reality check’ item said that Brexit was ‘incredibly complex’ and claimed that ‘remarkably little’ was actually known about either main party’s Brexit plans. He said Labour could not end free movement and still have access to the single market, and also claimed – on the basis of forecasts from the OBR - that Brexit was likely to be complicated by higher inflation and lower growth than was being predicted in other quarters.

Also on June 1, Laura Kuenssberg attempted a balanced discussion of the differing approaches to Brexit. Her central point was that it would require ‘huge’ changes in the law and to who was in charge. Much was unknown about what was wanted.

Katya Adler (June 6) said Brexit would create huge time pressures for whoever won the election because of the March 2019 deadline. She pointed out that Theresa May had promised to be ‘a bloody difficult woman.’ The Conservatives wanted out but Labour wanted to retain the benefits of the single market and the customs union.

Laura Kuenssberg (June 7) said that whoever ended up in Number 10 would be one negotiator up against 27 other countries in seeking a deal that would shape the UK’s future for decades to come. She noted that one voter had asked Theresa May why on earth she would really want the job (of Prime Minister).

Of course, Brexit is an unprecedented process, and some others apart from the BBC think it will be difficult to achieve. The government minister Michael Fallon was among those who concurred with this in his Today programme appearance during the General Election period. But such opinion mainly emanates from those who were in the Remain camp (Michael Fallon included), and there are others who supported Brexit who think strongly otherwise. This different perspective was NOT reflected in correspondent assessments or in the Corporation's so-called fact-checking. The BBC's approach to this was thus not neutral.

Some argue that the role of journalism is to look for and expose pitfalls in government planning and strategy. But in this context, BBC staff were disproportionately negative towards Brexit and this amounted to bias not against the government, but against a topic of national importance that was supported in the 2016 EU referendum by 52% of the electorate.

CONCLUSION

A cross-party group of MPs met Director of BBC News James Harding on July 4, 2017, to discuss concerns about BBC bias in its EU-coverage. In advance, the MPs sent a memorandum to him which outlined that preliminary concerns about the BBC's coverage of the General Election identified by News-watch included the following:

- a) Little examination of the strength of the UK's bargaining position; negotiations seen largely through Brussels' eyes.
- b) Assumption that a reduction in immigration will damage the economy
- c) Business coverage dominated by Remain or 'soft Brexit' opinion and questions. Good economic news usually described as 'in spite of Brexit'. Fall in the pound and inflationary pressure viewed as negative and attributable to Brexit.
- d) Huge complexity of Brexit negotiations assumed and laboured.
- e) Positive opinion about Brexit from within the EU not sufficiently explored, e.g. growing Euroscepticism in several countries.
- f) Irish border issue presented as inevitably negative.
- g) Still no attempt to examine negative aspects of the EU project, e.g. the euro's effect on Greece, eurozone performance, unemployment, etc.
- h) We cannot find mention of the fact that 80% of the electorate voted for parties committed to Brexit in the General Election.

The initial concerns are borne out by the analysis above. Coverage was overwhelmingly reactive to negativity about the EU-UK negotiations, in which the UK was cast as the struggling supplicant. Especially missing was any analysis of the EU's own problems, for example continuing low growth and the pressures of maintaining the single currency in the face of such issues such as the Greek debt crisis or severe problems with Italian banks, both covered extensively in other media outlets during the election campaign, but not on Today or News at Ten. The assumption of the BBC editorial process was instead uniformly that exiting the EU would involve leaving a beneficial club.

Overall, the survey shows that the BBC seemed institutionally determined to project Brexit as a threat to the UK. This was exemplified perfectly in the coverage of the Northern Ireland border. There was sustained, disproportionate editorial effort to explore the views of those opposed to leaving the EU, and to challenge heavily those who thought otherwise.

On August 27, 2017 it began to emerge that Labour's policy towards Brexit had moved strongly towards accepting continued membership of the EU single market and the customs union.²² Commentators noted that this was at odds with what had been laid out in the Party's 2017 General Election manifesto but in line with what senior party figures such as Hilary Benn and Chuka Umunna had been strongly advocating throughout the EU referendum campaign and in the months afterwards.

This formal volte-face raised the suspicion that the party's manifesto pledges on this topic amounted to a fudge designed to ensure that the millions in the party who had voted to Leave the EU in the 2016 referendum and wanted an end to the EU's free movement arrangements would vote for the party.

Whatever the reasons, the Labour party's approach to Brexit was ambiguous and uncertain throughout the 2016 referendum, with senior party grandees such as Peter Mandelson claiming that leader Jeremy Corbyn secretly wanted Brexit, despite formally backing Remain. In the months that followed the poll, many senior Labour figures became prominent in the movement to block Brexit, but despite this, the party voted almost unanimously to back it.

²² <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/846321/jeremy-corbyn-labour-plot-parliament-guerrilla-tactics-theresa-may-brexit-DUP>

Against this background – in an election in which Brexit was obviously centre-stage – it would seem obvious that the BBC’s job as an impartial public service broadcaster, was to explore in depth the policies of all parties towards Brexit. This certainly happened with the DUP, UKIP and the Conservatives, the parties which supported Brexit. The survey shows that Labour, however, was let completely off the hook. This failure to hold Labour to account was major bias by omission.

APPENDIX ONE: SUBSTANTIVE PRO AND ANTI BREXIT SPEAKERS ON TODAY

All speakers who contributed more than 150 words and made substantive points for or against Brexit are listed in the tables below:

Speakers in favour of Brexit or making pro-Brexit points		
03 May	David Davis	Conservative Party
05 May	Tom Stevenson	Fidelity International
05 May	Michael Fallon	Conservative Party
05 May	Neil Hamilton	UK Independence Party
11 May	Kevin Hollinrake	Conservative Party
11 May	Paul Latham	UK Independence Party
12 May	Andrew Lilico	Europe Economics
13 May	Michael Gove	Conservative Party
15 May	Mark Harper	Conservative Party
15 May	Ian Kealey	UK Independence Party
16 May	Leanne Wood	Plaid Cymru
17 May	Nigel Dodds	DUP
18 May	Jeremy Hunt	Conservative Party
19 May	Sir John Peace	Midlands Engine
19 May	Malcolm Hall	Hall-Fast
19 May	John Bickley	UK Independence Party
20 May	Luke Johnson	Entrepreneur
22 May	Alison Morris	Irish News
22 May	Michael Spencer	ICAP
25 May	Paul Nuttall	UK Independence Party
26 May	Arlene Foster	DUP
29 May	Amber Rudd	Conservative Party
30 May	Richard Walton	Former head of the Counter-Terrorism
30 May	David Davis	Conservative Party
31 May	Jeremy Hunt	Conservative Party
03 Jun	Lord Green	Migration Watch UK
03 Jun	Nigel Farage	UK Independence Party
06 Jun	Boris Johnson	Conservative Party
07 Jun	John Longworth	Former head of the British Chambers of Commerce
03 May	David Davis	Conservative Party
05 May	Tom Stevenson	Fidelity International
05 May	Michael Fallon	Conservative Party
05 May	Neil Hamilton	UK Independence Party
11 May	Kevin Hollinrake	Conservative Party
11 May	John	Leave Voter
11 May	Paul Latham	UK Independence Party
12 May	Andrew Lilico	Europe Economics
13 May	Michael Gove	Conservative Party
15 May	Mark Harper	Conservative Party
15 May	Ian Kealey	UK Independence Party
16 May	Leanne Wood	Plaid Cymru
17 May	Nigel Dodds	DUP
18 May	Jeremy Hunt	Conservative Party
19 May	Sir John Peace	Midlands Engine
19 May	Malcolm Hall	Hall-Fast
19 May	John Bickley	UK Independence Party
20 May	Luke Johnson	Entrepreneur
22 May	Alison Morris	Irish News
22 May	Michael Spencer	ICAP
25 May	Paul Nuttall	UK Independence Party
26 May	Arlene Foster	DUP
Total	28 Speakers	

Speakers against Brexit or making anti-Brexit points

03 May	Bill Ackman	Hedge Fund Manager
05 May	Alexander Stubbs	Former Finnish Prime Minister
05 May	Lloyd Blankfein	Goldman Sachs
06 May	Anne Applebaum	London School of Economics
06 May	Jean-Claude Piris	European Commission
08 May	Chris Hobson	NHS Providers
08 May	Stephen Bell	BMO Asset Management
08 May	Dr Carlos Vargas-Silva	Oxford University
08 May	James Smethurst	Freshfields Law Firm
08 May	Gerard Errera	Former French Ambassador
08 May	Axelle Lemaire	French National Assembly Member
08 May	Jean Pisani-Ferry	Economic Advisor to French President
09 May	Kerry-Anne Mendoza	The Canary
10 May	Bertie Ahern	Former Irish Taoiseach
10 May	Angela Rayner	Labour Party
10 May	Tim Farron	Liberal Democrat
10 May	Barclay Bell	Ulster Farmers Union
11 May	Andy Mill	Winder
11 May	Michael Ryan	Bombardier
11 May	Hilary Benn	Labour Party
11 May	Greg Mulholland	Liberal Democrat
11 May	Ed Carlisle	Green Party
12 May	Neil Everett	Brockman's Distillery
12 May	Ngairé Woods	Oxford University
13 May	Chuka Umuna	Labour Party
15 May	Paddy Ashdown	Liberal Democrat
15 May	Molly Scott Cato	Green Party
16 May	Dr Peter Ammon	German Ambassador
16 May	Sylvie Bermann	French Ambassador
17 May	Paul Drechsler	CBI
17 May	Ed Davey	Liberal Democrat
17 May	John Finucan	Sinn Féin
18 May	Sir Konrad Schiemann	Former ECJ
19 May	Chris Hobson	East Midlands Chamber of Commerce
19 May	Mark Church	Police Sergeant
19 May	Beth Barrett	GP
19 May	David Greenaway	Vice Chancellor, Nottingham University
19 May	Ken Clarke	Conservative Party
19 May	Richard Manyard	S&S Plastics
20 May	Victor Abedowale	Crossbench Peer
20 May	Katherine Hamnett	Designer
22 May	Nick Clegg	Liberal Democrat
22 May	Claire Hanna	SDLP
22 May	Robin Swann	Ulster Unionists Party
22 May	John O'Dowd	Sinn Féin
24 May	Professor Dame Helen Wallace	British Academy
29 May	Christian Noyer	French Government Brexit Envoy
29 May	Miranda Green	Former Lib Dem Press Secretary
29 May	Nick Clegg	Liberal Democrat
30 May	Kenny Jacobs	Ryanair
30 May	Dan Mulhall	Irish Ambassador to London
30 May	Angela Rayner	Labour Party
30 May	Angus Robertson	Scottish National Party
31 May	Naomi Long	Alliance Party
02 Jun	Ruth Davidson	Conservative Party
02 Jun	Willie Rennie	Liberal Democrat
02 Jun	Nicola Sturgeon	Scottish National Party
03 Jun	Joe Owen	Institute of Government
03 Jun	John Bruton	Former Irish Taoiseach
03 Jun	Caroline Lucas	Green Party
06 Jun	Vicky Pryce	Centre for Economic and Business Research

06 Jun	Kevin Green	Recruitment and Employment Confederation
06 Jun	Leanne Wood	Plaid Cymru
07 Jun	Nick Clegg	Liberal Democrat
07 Jun	Gina Miller	Pro-EU Campaigner
03 May	Bill Ackman	Hedge Fund Manager
05 May	Alexander Stubbs	Former Finnish Prime Minister
05 May	Lloyd Blankfein	Goldman Sachs
06 May	Anne Applebaum	London School of Economics
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09 May	Kerry-Anne Mendoza	The Canary
10 May	Bertie Ahern	Former Irish Taoiseach
10 May	Angela Rayner	Labour Party
10 May	Tim Farron	Liberal Democrat
10-May-17	Barclay Bell	Ulster Farmers Union
11-May-17	Andy Mill	Winder
11-May-17	Michael Ryan	Bombardier
11-May-17	Hilary Benn	Labour Party
11-May-17	Greg Mullholland	Liberal Democrat
11-May-17	Ed Carlisle	Green Party
12-May-17	Neil Everett	Brockman's Distillery
12-May-17	Ngaire Woods	Oxford University
13-May-17	Chuka Umuna	Labour Party
15-May-17	Paddy Ashdown	Liberal Democrat
15-May-17	Molly Scott Cato	Green Party
16-May-17	Dr Peter Ammon	German Ambassador
16-May-17	Sylvie Bermann	French Ambassaador
17-May-17	Paul Drechsler	CBI
17-May-17	Ed Davey	Liberal Democrat
17-May-17	John Finucan	Sinn Fein
18-May-17	Sir Konrad Schiemann	Fomer ECJ
19-May-17	Chris Hobson	East Midlands Chamber of Commerce
19-May-17	Mark Church	Police Sergeant
19-May-17	Beth Barrett	GP
19-May-17	David Greenaway	Vice Chancellor, Nottingham University
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30-May-17	Dan Mulhall	Irish Ambassador to London
30-May-17	Angela Rayner	Labour Party
30-May-17	Angus Robertson	Scottish National Party
31-May-17	Naomi Long	Alliance Party
02-Jun-17	Ruth Davidson	Conservative Party
02-Jun-17	Willie Rennie	Liberal Democrat
02-Jun-17	Nicola Sturgeon	Scottish National Party
03-Jun-17	Joe Owen	Institute of Government
03-Jun-17	John Bruton	Former Irish Taoiseach

03-Jun-17	Caroline Lucas	Green Party
06-Jun-17	Vicky Pryce	Centre for Economic and Business Research
06-Jun-17	Kevin Green	Recruitment and Employment Confederation
06-Jun-17	Leanne Wood	Plaid Cymru
07-Jun-17	Nick Clegg	Liberal Democrat
07-Jun-17	Gina Miller	Pro-EU Campaigner
Total	65 Speakers	

APPENDIX TWO: TODAY RUNNING LOG

May 3

Bulletins suggested that, with the EU's guidelines due, the UK – according to the FT - would have to pay 100 billion euros for a final settlement. This was because Germany and Poland were reported to be making 'tougher demands'. Kevin Connolly said the size of the departure payment was 'one of the most sensitive issues' in the 'long months of negotiations' that lay ahead. He said the new higher figure included 'high demands' for UK contributions to farm subsidies after Brexit. He added that the EU might also be planning to refuse to allow the UK a share of the Union's assets including buildings and bank deposits. The suggestion that the payment would be made in instalments would not do much to soften the blow from the British perspective.

At 6.10am, KC said that the FT had an economic model to make the calculation, and suggested that the increase was based on hardening stances in other European capitals over demands for farm subsidies. He added that the higher the figure 'the harder it gets'. Justin Webb pointed out that the House of Lords had suggested a zero figure, and that Guy Verhofstadt had told Today that the figure was 'political'. JW said Brexiteers would therefore suggest this was simply politics. KC agreed and said that the other countries were seeking to plug holes in their budgets. He added that the framework was laid down by the Treaty of Lisbon, and asserted:

It's clear that some kind of payment or progress towards some kind of payment is going to be demanded, the only question is how much, and how palatable it will be in terms of British politics...

John Humphrys noted (6.32am) that Theresa May had put EU leaders on notice that she could be a 'bloody difficult woman'. Norman Smith suggested that this was heavyweight eye-balling and that it suited TM's election narrative to be tough in this way. David Cameron, he suggested, was thought to have blundered by being too amenable, but he warned that TM's toughness might limit her room to negotiate. If she did not live up to Thatcher's toughness, she would be deemed to have sold out.

At 6.45am. in a sequence from Bridgend, Ross Hawkins noted that the Conservative candidate Angela Jones-Evans had been a Remain campaigner and now wanted the best possible deal. The Liberal Democrat, Elliot Sabin Motson claimed that the Richmond by-election was solely based on Brexit and the message was Brexit. RH pointed out that Richmond was a Remain area but Wales was a Leave nation. ESM said he was capitalising on Remain voters across the country. Plaid Cymru's candidate, Stefan Lewis, suggested that everyone agreed that no-one in Wales should be worse off financially because of Brexit. RH noted that UKIP had 'after splits and defection' five members sitting in the Welsh Assembly. He noted that Neil Hamilton 'one who remained' had been reprimanded for suggesting suicide to a Remain voter.

At 7.09am John McDonnell, shadow Chancellor said:

I'll tell you, why don't you go . . . when David Davis comes on, tell you what my big worry is: the IFS, the IFS has said Hard Brexit means 40 billion cost, the Treasury said 52 billion, you ask him where he's going to find that money from.

JUSTIN WEBB: They want to talk about you, and you want to talk about them.

JM: Well, I want honesty from them. We will be honest in what we're going to . . . well, the policies we're going to produce, the costings of them, and where we're going to find the money, they're not honest about this. They've been telling lies about us, I want you, as the BBC, to put them on the spot now.

In Business update (7.23am), Dominic O'Connell asked whether 'Wall Street' had changed its mind about the UK 'post Brexit'. He spoke to Bill Ackman, introduced as one of the best known hedge fund billionaires. BA said that London was the best financial centre in Europe to list shares, but banking businesses, in deciding where to locate people, were seeing post-Brexit changes. DOC asked whether this would mean that London would decline in importance over time. He replied:

I think there'll be, you know, the JP Morgans of the world will keep . . . will have to stuff your people here, and pick alternate locations in Europe as a result. I do think it is a negative for the UK.

Moves on to discuss performance of his fund.

DO: And just to come back to the Brexit question, do you think you're more likely to invest in the UK now post-Brexit, or less, or it doesn't matter at all?

BA: For us, it's a company at a time, and the circumstances with respect to that business, so if there's a business here, where the stock has declined significantly and, but the business values still remain as a result of sort of anti-UK sentiment with Brexit, it might create an opportunity for us to make an investment. Or if the depreciation of the pound has made a business more profitable, and that hasn't been recognised by the market, it might attract us to invest here.

At 8.10am, David Davis was interviewed. John Humphrys observed that no one had ever said that a Brexit deal was going to be easy, but it had probably not been expected that the parties had not got to negotiating table before 'they started taking chunks out of each other'. He said:

...which is what they've been doing since Theresa May and a couple of the most powerful EU negotiators shared what was meant to be a friendly dinner in Downing Street last week. Apparently, the president of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, got so cross with Theresa May's approach that he said she was on another galaxy and he was now 10 times more sceptical of getting a deal done. And she put him on notice yesterday that he is about to find out – if she wins the election of course – she can be 'a bloody difficult woman'.

JH first noted that the Times had reported – 'true or not' - that TM would not be doing the negotiating, and wondered therefore whether it mattered if she was 'bloody difficult or not'; what being 'bloody difficult' meant; that the tough times would be tough for DD because TM would only be allowed to address individuals; that the UK was leaving so would not be able to determine how the process worked; that in the EU's map, the UK was merely a greyed-out blob; that it was not an equal relationship, the UK was effectively the supplicant because the UK wanted a deal - they could simply say, 'fine off you go, pay what's owed and that's it'; that a simple equation of a trade balance of 290 billion to us against 230 billion for them was not a fair comparison because 'they' was 27 countries; whether he was stating that there was a difference (divide) between what Juncker was saying and the leaders of the 27; that Angela Merkel was four-square with Juncker; that it was true that Juncker had said that TM was on a different galaxy; that Angela Merkel believed that the UK was being delusional; that these were 'pretty difficult, if not bloody' negotiations and DD seemed too sanguine; DD was suggesting that they would come crawling to the UK but they would not; he did not use that phrase but that was the impression given; whether the UK wanted to deal (as DD had suggested) with the issue of the fate of EU nationals; whether Britain could take the 'high ground' in insisting that the fate of the EU nationals in the UK should be sorted out, that they had earned the right to live here and they could stay; whether DD did not think their fate would be a serious problem; that money might also be a serious problem because the House of Lords had said the UK should be able to leave without paying a penny; whether the UK's legal obligations would be sorted out by the European Court of Justice; Michel Barnier was insisting that the ECJ should still be the court of arbitration, and the UK might be forced to accept that because he was insisting; that it was now more likely than before that the UK would leave the EU without an agreement; TM could walk away from negotiations 'like Mrs Thatcher'; the latter had something to offer when she negotiated with the EU, but TM had nothing; whether walking away would mean that what was owed to the EU was cancelled; whether Brexit was going to be the big issue in the election campaign.

David Davis responded that the UK was not going into the negotiations as a supplicant; that the rows had been miscast, Britain would be firm when necessary; there were two sides in negotiations and the EU would have to obey the rules; that the EU generally liked the UK position and accepted that a trade deal was very important against a background that they sold £290 Billion to the UK, the UK sold £230 billion to them; the EU were sounding tough – all 27 countries – but this was an early part of the negotiation; that Theresa May was a good and decisive negotiator; the UK wanted to reach agreement over what would happen to EU nationals in the UK; that there would be some hitches en route; that the UK would honour international obligations in terms of what was owed to the EU; the ECJ would have no jurisdiction in the UK; that Michel Barnier would do deals; and the need was to give Theresa May a good negotiating hand.

At 8.49am, there was a “Brexit Reality Check”. JH suggested there was not a lot of reality about and wondered what Chris Morris thought about the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and vice versa. CM said the nub was that the UK wanted a deal straight away whereas the EU was waiting for a ‘serious British response to their proposal’. Then the UK wanted to a deal under British law, but the EU was worried that there was no guarantee that British law would change. He said:

There needs to be legal certainty over all sorts of things: healthcare, pensions, what happens to their family members. So it’s that issue of jurisdiction, which, when you look across Brexit, it deals with so many things, but at the moment, in particular on citizens’ rights, the idea that it can be dealt with under UK law is not acceptable to the EU.

JH suggested there were all sorts of figures in play over the cost of the financial settlement. CM said that MB had originally suggested 40 to 60 billion, but the FT had upped that considerably. He added:

What’s happened in the last few weeks since the first draft negotiating guidelines came out from the European Council, and (*fragment of word, unclear*) of course, then the final version was approved at the summit on Saturday, is that the position of, of member states harden. This wasn’t being pushed by the Commission or by institutions in Brussels, the member states were looking at this and thinking, ‘hang on a minute, we’re going to lose out here’, and that’s one of the problems for the UK on this specific issue, is it’s really hard to find any allies. Normally in a budget round, where the EU (*corrects himself*) where the UK’s a member of the EU, it can rely on allies, other countries who want to cut the budget, but now of course, if the UK doesn’t pay what the rest of the EU thinks is the UK’s fair share, then either the countries that receive money lose, or the countries that pay in money have got to pay in a lot more. So one of our closest allies on a number of things, the Netherlands, for example, which says, ‘Come on, we do need to start talking about future trade relations as soon as possible’ is also saying, (*laughter in voice*) very, very strongly, ‘We are not going to pay a single extra euro, as a result of the . . . UK leaving. So the, the, the definition of what the UK owes has been widened pretty much to its broadest possible extent.

He added:

if there is no deal, then if there is no legal agreement, then we’ve certainly heard from the House of Lords Committee that that would probably be the case, but then I’d, I’d suggest we probably see things going to the . . . not to the European Court, but to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, and it would be extremely messy, extremely damaging for business and clearly something that no one on either side actually wants to happen.

May 4

At 6.32am, James Naughtie noted that Marine Le Pen had said in a televised French presidential debate that Emmanuel Macron would not be able to pursue his EU-related policies unless they were approved by Angela Merkel. He added:

Incidentally, she seemed to get into a bit of a tangle with her policy on the euro, which seems to be to use the euro for foreign transactions but to have a French currency at home, which he said politically doesn't make any sense, economically doesn't make any sense. And he said, 'Look at Britain, they're going to have to pay €60-€80 billion to get out of the EU, as a consequence of Brexit' – he just threw that in as an aside.

At 7.34am, JN said:

It wasn't a wild, uncontrolled one, there were also steely thrusts by two fencers who were looking for a way through. He was specific about the reformed EU that he said would be good for France, and incidentally, claiming in the course of it that Britain would be paying between €60 and €80 million (*sic, he means billion*) for Brexit, she was emphatic that he was the product of the very failed system that he claimed to want to change.

In a sequence starting at 8.31am, Katya Adler said:

This election, like the election campaign in the United States, like, to a certain extent the EU referendum in the United Kingdom has been emotion-driven, because it's not just about Le Pen/Macron in this case, it's not just about political personalities, not just about economics as elections traditionally are, it's about vision, the vision for your country, the sole of France in this case, is it multicultural, is it internationalist, globalisation-friendly, or is it France First, safeguard what's seen as the French culture, slash immigration, so I think French voters, when they go to the polls on Sunday, if they choose to vote, and of course, if there are high abstentions that will favour Marine Le Pen, when they go to vote they won't just be inspired by one of those visions, but they feel their countries threatened by the other, so emotions really are running deep.

At 8.53am, a point emerged about Brexit in an interview about a book on liberalism:

When the Berlin Wall fell, many assumed we had reached the "end of history" and the spread of liberal democracy was inevitable. But since 2000 the number of functioning democracies has fallen, and countries like China have proven that you don't need the vote to create a booming economy. Is liberalism really in trouble or is a shakeup badly needed? Ed Luce, Financial Times journalist and the author of the Retreat of Western Liberalism and Pankaj Mishra is the author of The Age of Anger.

JOHN HUMPHRYS: Ed, the retreat of Western Liberalism?

ED LUCE: Yes, I think we've seen, not just in 2016 with Brexit and the election of Trump, but over a period of many years now, the rise of right wing and left wing parties, but more right wing populist reactions against a political system that the people, well, growing numbers of people don't believe is delivering for them, and that just gets . . . larger and larger over a period of . . . if not since the Berlin wall, certainly during this century, the last 15, 20 years.

JH: And they don't take solace from the fact that they do have a vote?

EL: Well they use that vote, I mean, this is one area where . . .

JH: (*speaking over*) That's the point isn't it.

EL: . . . people, where people do feel they're still empowered is in the ballot box.

Moves on to discuss America, he says that 2016 and 2017 will not be the end of this phenomenon;

May 5

In the 6am bulletin, it was said that the chief executive of the American investment bank Goldman Sachs had said the City of London would 'stall' when Britain left the EU. It continued:

Lloyd Blankfein said the bank, which employed 6,500 people in the UK had contingency plans to move staff to the continent depending on the outcome of Brexit talks.

Zeb Soames added that the Brexit secretary, David Davis, had accused senior EU officials of trying to bully Britain. He had added that the Prime Minister had been quite right to object to officials giving misleading briefings to the media about her meeting with the president of the European Commission.

At 6.07am, in a sequence about the election results, Bethan Jenkins, a Plaid Cymru representative, claimed that the results showed that South Wales needed to get the best deal out of Brexit and that his party were trusted to attain that deal.

At the end of the sequence, John Curtice, of Strathclyde University, said:

Well, one clear obvious headline that you've just ended on, which is that UKIP have had a very bad night. Four years ago, in these equivalent set of elections in England, they did remarkably well, tonight we've seen pretty much confirmation of the message of the opinion polls that the UKIP vote now seems to be being badly squeezed, not least by the Conservatives, apparently because UKIP voters now think Theresa May is going to bring about the vision of Brexit that they're after. That's the one clear and unambiguous thing.

In the link to business news Justin Webb repeated that the head of Goldman Sachs had warned about London stalling as a result of Brexit. Katie Prescott said:

...of course it's not the first time we've heard that banks are worried about what will happen after Brexit, but it does come at a sensitive time as talk around the negotiations is starting to hot up. And of course, it's also significant hear from Goldman Sachs, the world's second-largest bank employing 6500 here, and not least to hear from the chief executive, Lloyd Blankfein himself. Well, speaking to the BBC's economics editor, Kamal Ahmed, he said part of the attraction of being in London for the American bank is the easy access that it gives to EU markets, and the current uncertainty around what will happen to the City after Brexit means this access is now up in the air.

LB confirmed that London had lots of advantages currently as a trading centre. He added:

If you cannot benefit from access to the . . . EU from the UK, and no one knows what those rules and those determinations would be, then the risk is that there'll be some adjustment that will cause some people to have a smaller footprint in the UK.

KP was then joined by Tom Stevenson of Fidelity International. She put it to him that 'of course' Goldman Sachs was not the first to say this, others included 'JP Morgan, HSBC and UBS'. TS replied:

Yeah, I mean it would be quite surprising if big international businesses like Goldman Sachs were not thinking about contingency plans. But I think it's also important to recognise that they will already have operations all across Europe. So, their preference would be to stay in London, there's a sort of network effect about London which is that everyone is there, the banks find it easy to operate there for the reasons that he said, culturally, linguistically. Erm, but plainly they will be looking at maybe changing the emphasis a bit and upweighting their European operations and maybe downweighting a bit their London operations, but their preference really is the status quo.

KP asked if they were waiting to see what happened and making sure they had a footprint somewhere. TS replied it was very early days and people were getting in their lobbying early. KP said:

And it's not just the banks who are lobbying, of course, the EU is also putting pressure on the sector. The EU Financial Services Commissioner said yesterday that the European Commission is looking at some financial services like the clearing of derivatives denominated in euros, and where that might sit, and London clears about three quarters of all euro-denominated swaps, so we're seeing lobbying on both sides at the moment?

TS responded that such trade was 'extremely valuable' and yielded £70bn in tax to the UK, 11% of total tax revenue came from the City, and the EU was very keen to get a slice of that.

The 7am bulletin included a voice piece about the election from Chris Mason. He said:

UKIP's vote has collapsed. In Lincolnshire, where its leader Paul Nuttall will contest a parliamentary seat next month, the party was wiped out on the county council. Lisa Duffy, who stood unsuccessfully for the leadership of the party and is a councillor in Huntingdonshire did her best to sound positive.

LISA DUFFY: We know tonight going to be extremely challenging for us as a political party, we are going through a new phase, we got Brexit, or we certainly won the referendum, and we're well on our way to Brexit now, with the general election being called so quickly, it's going to be a difficult night, but it's one that we will grow from.

Also in the bulletin was mention again of the Goldman Sachs warning, this time with the same extract from LB used in the business news about relocation.

At 7.08am, Ross Hawkins said that the positive results for the Conservatives weren't all a result of the UKIP vote collapsing. He added that all UKIP had not been wiped out – they still had some councillors – they would be losing their MEPs they could very rapidly become, in a situation where they had 'very, very few elected representatives, and not much of an electoral history, and they have to really consider whether they are going to be a presence in the future.

At 7.19am, Justin Webb said:

It's going to be one of the most contested areas during the Brexit negotiations: financial services, the trillions of pounds worth of banking and insurance business that at present operates pretty seamlessly between Britain and the rest of the EU. For Britain, it matters not just because of the jobs, or the large amount of tax paid by the sector in the UK, but also because it's one of the few areas where we enjoy a very substantial trade surplus with the rest of the EU. The banks themselves will be a significant voice and today, well, we're hearing a fresh warning from no less than Lloyd Blankfein, the chief executive of one of the most significant of those banks, Goldman Sachs. He's been talking to Kamal Ahmed, our economics editor, who is here. And, another warning, Kamal. There is going to be a whiff, isn't there of, of special pleading, not just on behalf of the sector but on behalf of individual banks. To what extent should people, do people take this kind of thing seriously?

KA responded that LB was under no illusion that he as a national treasure, but he had admitted that the negotiations on Brexit 'were not for our comfort or convenience'. He had claimed there was a difference between the 'megaphone' political diplomacy currently underway and the economic reality, and that if there were more barriers between Britain and its largest trading partner, the European Union, there would be the creation of less wealth. KA said:

I kicked off the interview by asking him if the UK was less attractive to international banks outside the EU and the single market.

LLOYD BLANKFEIN: A lot of people elect to have their European business concentrated in a single place, and the easiest place, certainly, for the biggest economy in the world to concentrate, would be the UK, partly the culture, the language, the special relationship, and we're an example of that. If you cannot benefit from access to the . . . to the EU from the UK,

and no one knows what those rules and those determinations would be, then the risk is that there'll be some adjustment that will cause some people to have a smaller footprint in the UK.

Justin Webb asked KA is a smaller footprint meant fewer jobs. KA said it could do but suggested that an interesting part of the interview was LB's 'commitment to London'. KA said:

He said he didn't want to do this. He sort of almost (*laughter in voice*) almost pleaded with the leaders to say, 'Let's keep the deal that we have at the moment which is good economically, even if politically Britain leaves the European Union.' But he did say again, this reality, banks need to do business in the European Union, not for their own good – that's part of it – but also for the good of European businesses and European governments that raise lots of finance using banks in London, and if they can't do it from here those banks, they will have to move. I did ask Mr Blankfein how far advanced any plans were for shifting jobs out of the UK.

LB: Without knowing how things will turn out, we have to plan for a number of contingencies. And our hope is that we don't have to implement anything, but if there's no period of time to implement whatever changes are brought about in the negotiation, we may have to do things prematurely and will have to do a range of things as a precaution.

At 7.33am, Nick Robinson said that the battle 'of' Brexit was continuing with David Davis alleging on Question Time that the European Commission had held a deliberately misleading press briefing at the Downing Street dinner the previous week. There was a clip of DD saying that they had tried to bully the British people, but the government would not allow that. NR added that Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, had tried to calm things down, calling for moderation and respect. NR said he had been speaking to Finnish prime minister Alexander Stubb, who had warned of many, many more skirmishes to come. AS suggested it was as 'serious as it gets' and there would be more problems, for example in the wake of the UK election and the 2019 European Parliamentary elections. NR asked what he thought of Theresa May's claim of interference in the UK election. AS said he didn't buy such rhetoric. If he was TM he would be playing the Brussels card at this stage. The sad thing was that it was a lose-lose proposition, and the toughening of language would 'lose people'. It was not needed. NR asked if TM had a point in claiming that some Brussels bureaucrats wanted the negotiations to fail. AS responded:

I think you probably have people on both sides of the Channel who want them to fail. I think Brexit is a reality, and unfortunately we have to live with it, and we must try to make it the best possible thing. I don't like this blame game, you know, and there are, and I do agree with Prime Minister May here, some people on the continent proper who want to make sure that Britain doesn't get a good deal. There are many reasons for that, some might say that if they get a good deal, then my country would want to get out of the EU as well, and other people just want to punish the UK. I think we have to be more civil about this, at the end of the day this is lose-lose and it's just a question of how much all of us lose.

NR asked if he included those who wanted the talks to fail Jean-Claude Juncker in that his office appeared to be leaking in the 'most hostile' way. AS suggested that this had been a 'silly leak' and he hoped people on both sides had learned lessons. He added that he did not think the President of the Commission wanted the talks to fail and nor did he want to punish the UK. The Commission's role was to protect the treaties and the interests of member states and that is why he was using tough language. He wanted the best for Britain as well. NR suggested to AS that he thought the UK started with a bad negotiating hand because of the EU rules. AS said this was definitely the case. The only points that had to be determined were the leaving date and the cost of departure. He added:

Everything else is, so to speak, unnecessary, but of course, in reality there will be thousands of detailed and minute negotiating issues. We all know that, these negotiations are going to be nasty, brutish and hopefully short – let's not make the nasty, brutish and long, let's try to be civil about them, let's try and find good solutions for both sides.

NR asked if Theresa May defining herself as a difficult woman made things tough and 'counter-productive' for TM. AS said it was difficult to say but it evoked pictures of Margaret Thatcher demanding her money back. NR suggested some thought she had achieved that. AS said the UK would end up paying 'to get out and 'quite a lot'. NR wondered if that would be £100bn. AS said the calculation was not straightforward. He asserted:

I don't see the EU as an accounting exercise, you know, you cannot calculate the cost of free movement of people, money, goods and services, you cannot calculate the cost of full and abrupt and stoppage of trade, and dealing with issues in the court, so it's impossible to calculate. It's nice to try to give a figure, we can do that by looking at previous commitments. But my bottom line is that it's all good and well to talk tough, but then you actually have to deliver on it. And the truth is if you have extremely high expectations on the negotiating outcome, usually then end up getting quite disappointed when you don't get what you want. I hope that the tough rhetoric that we've seen on both sides of the Channel now calms down and we can get into the rhythm of negotiation.

At 7.49am, Sir Michael Fallon was interviewed. He claimed that the recent leaks showed that the UK was now facing a really tricky, tough negotiation. Justin Webb suggested there was a huge weight on TM's shoulders. He added:

. . . to get that successful negotiation, and it does bring to mind, doesn't it, the, the extent of the effort, and it's an effort throughout the party to talk about her and to talk up her leadership abilities, that, well, there is the potential, if it goes wrong, for things to go badly for you and for her very quickly as well.

MF said this would be achieved through her strong leadership. JW asked whether MF thought the election results were a success for his party. MF refused to confirm this because he said too few votes had yet been counted. JW pointed out that Andrew Bridgen and other MPs had claimed the leaks about the Downing Street dinner had been sexist, patronising and inaccurate. Donald Tusk was saying everyone should cool it and emotions had got out of hand. MF said the negotiations would be very complex and that the leaders of the other countries knew this. He said criticism of Commission officials who had been responsible for the leaks was 'fair'. JW suggested (and then repeated) that the reaction had been over the top. MF said he did not accept that. The negotiations would be tough and needed a tough leader. JW wondered whether it would be better if Donald Tusk and others did not make comments. MF said it would be easier.

In the 8am bulletins, Lloyd Blankfein's warnings about post Brexit relocation away from London were repeated. Kamal Ahmed added:

Mr Blankfein called for an implementation period of at least two years after the exit deal expected in spring 2019. Without it, Goldman might have to act prematurely in moving job to ensure they maintain stability. The political debate has been incendiary so far, but Mr Blankfein said he believed calmness would be restored, and hoped that Britain and the rest of the EU would strike a good and close deal in the economic interests of both sides.

At 8.10am, Laura Kuenssberg said that one very useful statistic from the elections results was that 71 seats had been held by Labour 'where the Labour majority is smaller than the number of UKIP voters. NR observed that Brexit had 'divided the country' but 'it reunited the right of British politics under Theresa May'. LK responded:

Yes. And that is what the Tories are really trying to do in this general election. They are hoping that like a magnet those UKIP voters slammed straight back onto the Tory party and they stick there. And if that is repeated around the country in four or five weeks' time, then that could spell something extremely dangerous for the Labour Party.

At 8.53am, NR suggested to Neil Hamilton (leader of UKIP in the Welsh Assembly) that the election had been 'all about' the collapse of his party. NH said he had been around long enough to have seen landslides 'come and go'. This was a Brexit election, it was nothing to do with local elections, and TM had clothed herself with the mantle of Boadicea, prompting some UKIP voters to move back because they wanted a full Brexit. He had no confidence that she would deliver. NR said:

Is that why you don't just pack up and go back to your old party? Because lots of people have, as you know, Douglas Carswell has, erm, Mark Reckless has, Nigel Farage seems to have decided it's more fun being a radio host and cheerleader for Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump.

NH: Yeah, yeah, no, UKIP has a full manifesto of policies which I was elected on in the Welsh assembly last May, and which we put before the British people in the general election last time. And our manifesto for this one will be published very shortly, and we have lots of policies that none of the other parties will espouse . . .

NR: (*interrupting*) Okay.

NH: . . . like slashing the foreign aid budget to put the money into the health service for example.

NR suggested to Lord Faulkner that some of UKIP's vote had come from the Labour party and maybe the other story of the night was that they had failed to win those votes back. Lord Faulkner did not answer. Lady Kramer (LD) claimed that Labour supported the Tories on the key issue of Brexit:

So nobody was out there being a voice for those who had a different view, and we've been consistent, we work coherently as a party, we haven't got this internal infighting, and we've been an effective voice, that's what we need to be, the opposition and that voice.

NR later said:

Neil Hamilton, you gave the most candid answer of all today, you said 'Yes, we have collapsed, UKIP' – I put it to you that in a funny way you're sitting in a party that is almost finished, but you think you've won the battle of your lifetime, the policies you've always wanted are finally happening?

NH: Well, of course, UKIP came into existence to achieve Brexit, and that would not have been achieved but for UKIP. We will have to explain to people and convince them that UKIP has a continuing role to play post-Brexit . . .

NR: (*speaking over*) Just a few more seconds please.

NH: . . . and that's what this general election coming up is all about . . . and the Tories are enjoying a huge honeymoon at the minute because the Brexit negotiations are not even started . . .

May 6

Norman Lamb, Liberal Democrat, said (7.31am):

And I suppose my message to the country is, this election is not just about electing a government to negotiate the Brexit deal, vital though that is, we're electing a government that will have stewardship of our NHS, funding for schools and so on, and do we really want to live in a one-party state, because that's what we're heading towards?

At 7.49am Mishal Husain said that for TM, the election was all about Brexit and strengthening her hand for the negotiations 'which would explain the very tough talk of the last few days, when she accused EU officials of trying to affect the outcome of our vote'. She said Chris Morris had looked 'on the other side' at the tensions and frustrations. CM said it had got 'testy' even before the negotiations had

started. He said leaders of the other 27 had put on a display of unity, and Francois Hollande had summed it up:

There will necessarily be a price and the cost for the United Kingdom. They have made their choice. This is not punitive, but the EU will defend its interests, and tomorrow, the UK will be worse off outside the EU than it is as a member.

CM said:

The first big challenges once negotiations finally start – settling past accounts running into tens of billions. And working out how to guarantee the rights after Brexit of EU citizens in the UK and British citizens on the continent. On that point, the European Council President, Donald Tusk said he was still waiting for a serious British proposal.

DONALD TUSK: Over the past weeks we have repeatedly heard from our British friends that they are ready to agree on this issue quickly. But I would like to state very clearly that we need real guarantees for our people to live, work and study in the UK. And the same goes for the Brits.

CM: And real guarantees mean legal guarantees. And legal guarantees mean a role for the European Court of Justice. Difficult. The Commission president, Jean-Claude Juncker weighed in, arguing that perhaps the British side underestimated the technical difficulties involved in reaching a deal. But it was what was being said behind the scenes about Mr Juncker's views that really caught the eye. Theresa May was living in a different galaxy on Brexit, they whispered – the chances of a deal were less than 50%. Within days that Downing Street dinner which was the source of all the leaks was a new entry in the rollcall of famous political meals. By Wednesday evening though, Theresa May decided to strike back.

THERESA MAY: The European Commission's negotiating stance has hardened. Threats against Britain have been issued by European politicians and officials. All of these acts have been deliberately timed to affect the result of the general election that will take place on the 8 June.

CM: 'There, there' said the Europeans it really is all about your election. Earlier in the day, the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier said he had in fact bonded with the Prime Minister over a shared passion: mountain-walking.

MICHEL BARNIER: You have to learn to put one foot in front of the other, because sometimes you are on a steep and rocky path, you have to have stamina, because it could be a lengthy path, and you have to keep looking at the summit.

CM: Mr Barnier's caution was understandable. He had just released the details of how the EU is going to handle talks on Brexit. It's complex, technical and politically explosive. There is so much to do and so little time, with negotiations now on hold until after our election. Still, the irrepressible Mr Juncker had time for one last counterpunch.

JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER: I will express myself in French, because slowly, but surely, English is losing importance (*laughter from audience*) in Europe.

CM: It was meant as a joke, and it showed that Mr Juncker isn't going to be put off by some bruising headlines in the British tabloids. Once the dust has settled, bygones will have to be bygones, sleeves will have to be rolled up and the hard work will have to begin.

Mishal Husain then interviewed Jean-Claude Piris, former director-general of the EU legal service. She asked whether the recent talk over negotiations had been 'antagonistic' or normal posturing; that talk by Jean-Claude Juncker, that Mrs May was in a different galaxy, had been released by the EU side; if he still believed it would be 10 years before a deal was reached; could it be only two?; the UK wanted it done quicker and would say that the biggest thing in Britain's favour was the amount of exports that

were sent from the EU to the UK; (in response to a point that the UK relied on the EU) that the EU's exports were a 'large amount'; and whether it said the treaties that there needed to be an exit bill; that the UK would 'have to pay its way out'. Jean Claude Piris argued for his part that things needed to calm down; that leaks from the EU side were a mistake; that ten years was the most pessimistic estimate; that the UK was more economically dependent on the EU than the other way round; that there was not an 'exit bill' as such, but the accounts had to be looked at.

At 8.51am, in a session with three historians, Anne Applebaum from the LSE said that at precisely the time of complex negotiations with the EU, there was a 'collapsing' opposition. This was a crisis in democracy. AB also observed that Theresa May had opened her campaign with a 'really extraordinary' claim that the election was being meddled with by the European Commission. There was no proof of this, and in reality wanted to get on with the negotiation. TM was positioning herself as a 'tribune of British nationalism' in the forthcoming negotiation rather than someone trying to get the best deal. Andrew Roberts, from King's College, said he disagreed with AB. Jean-Claude Juncker was trying to damage her through his intervention and wanted to reduce TM's majority. He added that in adopting this approach, they were failing to understand that the British people (as also with Obama) would not be spoken to in that way. Tom Devine from Edinburgh University claimed that TM 'did not have a clue' about what was going to happen in the near future and the complexity of the negotiations.

May 8

Bulletins said that Emmanuel Macron had promised to heal France' divisions. The centrist had secured 66% of the vote against the 'far right' Marine Le Pen. Lucy Williamson said that his 'liberal project' had decisively beaten 'the protectionist promises of his far right rival Marine Le Pen'. The newsreader said that Theresa May had spoken to Mr Macron and discussed briefly Brexit. He added that senior figures in Donald Trump's presidential campaign and the Leave side in the EU referendum had told BBC Panorama that Facebook had been a 'decisive factor' in the victories. Dara McIntyre said:

BBC Panorama spoke to those in charge of the digital campaigns for Donald Trump's Republican Party and the political consultant behind Leave.EU's referendum strategy. They said that Facebook was decisive in both wins. The program has also discovered that Facebook had teams of people working directly with both the Republican and Democrat campaigns in America. Facebook says that it helps politicians and governments make good use of Facebook when asked, and not just in elections.

At 6.08am, Nick Robinson, commenting on the French election, said that before the EU Referendum, EM had warned that Brexit would lead to what he called the Guernseyfication of Britain and the UK becoming a little country in the world.

In business news, Rob Young spoke to Stephen Bell of BMO Asset Management. He said that if Marine Le Pen had been elected it would have been 'an absolute nightmare' and the euro would have collapsed. He added:

As far as the European Central Bank is concerned, their main issue is with Germany who strongly objects to their policies, and I think they are going to stick exactly as they are, possibly indicate that they'll retreat a bit from some of these policies where they buy other countries' bonds, which, you know, sounds like a bail-out. Erm, and Germans certainly object to that. But the German elections are not a big issue now because Angela Merkel and the opposition Monsieur Schulz, Herr Schulz, he . . . they both believe in the same sort of things as far as Europe is concerned, so I think the big pressure has receded on the Europeans.

RY asked about the impact on Brexit negotiations. He replied:

...had Le Pen won, we would have had an ally, but Macron, I'm not surprised that the phrase *pour encourager a les autres*, where they hung some general who was probably innocent is French, because they're going to make it tough. They want us to look . . . suffering from leaving the European Union.

RY then said that banks were making contingency plans for 'life after Brexit', based on a worst case scenario of no deal. He added that law firm Freshfields believed that a two year negotiation period was not enough time for banks to reorganise how they operated, and wanted a transition period. He asked James Smethurst of Freshfields how many staff were being relocated and to where. He replied:

Well, we don't have any specific numbers as yet. And the actual impact and the actual contingency plans vary very much from institution to institution and sectors sector. Those firms that have a principally domestic focus, the impact is relatively limited. Those that have done a lot of cross-border business, the sorts of contingency plans that are being looked at are establishing new operations in Europe or bulking up the operations that they, that they already have there.

RY said HSBC had talked about moving 1,000 to Paris but these were small numbers for them and 'most bank employees are going to stay where they are'. JS said that large numbers could be moved. He claimed the only positive in the equation was if banks managed the 'shaping a UK regulatory regime in a way which is, perhaps, more tailored towards the UK, the UK sector, the UK economy than it has been to some extent in the past'. RY wondered if the idea that Brexit would lead to fewer EU rules being imposed on the City was gaining credence. JS replied that it was hard to say because 'equivalence' was needed. RY said:

Some might say this is just an extension of what was called Project Fear during the referendum campaign, the City putting pressure on politicians to give in and give them what they want?

JS: Er, I wouldn't agree with that, I mean, actually, what we're seeing is some very concrete plans being put in place, this isn't creating an atmosphere of fear which doesn't exist, I mean these are real issues and real regulatory problems which institutions are having to address in order to be able to continue to service their business.

RY: And what's the impact on your profession, on lawyers?

JS: Er, the impact on law firms, again, it's not dissimilar to other financial services and related professional services firm. We have benefited from a system of mutual recognition of qualifications and that, that system, if there is no deal, will disappear.

At 6.32am, reporting from Paris, James Naughtie said that EM wanted to revive the EU project. He added:

The Franco German axis is at the heart of it, he can inject it with excitement. He says that. Secondly, he can produce, he says, economic reforms which will free up the French economy, and of course in that context, one of the things he's saying to France is, look, Brexit is actually an opportunity for France to get more investment... He is a man who has apparently turned the tide that, you know, people talk of being represented by Brexit and by Donald Trump.

Nick Robinson suggested that on Brexit he took a hard line, and had predicted that it would lead to the Guernseyfication of Britain. JN said he would go for a very tough deal that would be in the interest of France.

At 6.52am, NR spoke to Chris Hopson, of NHS providers, and asked if the ability to get EU workers in some areas had 'almost dried up'. CH replied that 10% of doctors and 5% NHS nurses came from the EU and that had slowed to a trickle 'and very large gaps were opening up' very quickly as a result. In some areas EU staff were vital. The NHS needed commitment about future levels of immigration. NR asked if patients were at risk. CH said they were, with doctors under huge amounts of pressure.

In the 7am bulletin, Diana Speed (newsreader)said that Angela Merkel had hailed EM's win as a victory for 'a strong and united Europe'. Katya Adler noted that EM had chosen the EU anthem to herald his first public appearance and in the Brexit negotiations, EU unity would be his top priority. She added:

EU leaders believe Marine Le Pen's defeat is a strong sign that Eurosceptic nationalism is now ebbing. But while far-right populists have been defeated in Austria, the Netherlands and France, the barbed issues that drove voters to them - unemployment, immigration and fear of globalisation - remain to be resolved.

At 7.09am, Justin Webb asked KA what was expected on Brexit after the Macron win. She replied:

First of all from Brussels's point of view – they're rubbing their hands with glee, I mean, Emmanuel Macron, he campaigned with EU flags alongside the Tricolour, he chose to play the EU anthem when he first came out to greet his supporters, I mean, Number Ten said last night that Theresa May congratulated him and said that France is one of Britain's closest allies, but the truth is, over Brexit, France is one of Britain's trickiest negotiating partners, and that won't waver under Emmanuel Macron, because for him, it's EU unity first.

JW then interviewed Axelle Lemaire, a French National Assembly member. JW asked asked her if Macron would be particularly tough with the UK or 'particularly aggressive' when it came to France benefitting from the UK's departure; whether he would poach jobs from the City to France; and whether there would be a big change in French policy towards the UK. She replied that Marine Le Pen would have been far worse. He was far more business friendly; he defined himself as a patriot and thought France was stronger in Europe, but he had no willingness to punish the UK or Brexit; he would start from that point and be fair and realistic; that France had decided not to follow the same path as the UK and to say yes to Europe despite terrorism. He had a strong mandate to reform how Brussels worked.

At 7.16am, Nick Robinson said the government had been reluctant to spell out their policy towards immigration, but now the BBC had been told the Tory manifesto would keep migration to tens of thousands. Dr Carlos Vargas-Silva, from the Migration Observatory at Oxford, suggested that there would be differences about how the scale was measured and the definitions, especially in those coming to the UK for study and family reasons. NR suggested the Home Secretary was reluctant to take students out if the equation. CVS suggested there would be more flexibility. NR asked how many there would be if the figure for the EU was zero. CVS said it would be above 100,000.

At 7.19am, Ashok Viswani, of Barclay's UK, suggested in business news update that the UK needed flexible targets on immigration to ensure that companies like his had enough talent.

At 7.30am, Gerard Errera, a former French ambassador to the UK suggested that Emmanuel Macron would work to reform the EU and he could not do that without Germany, so there would be a renewed alliance. GE said that Macron would also have to address the issue of Brexit. He declared:

It's both very complicated and also very clear, nobody intends to punish Britain because of Brexit. At the same time it will be difficult to imagine that a country which has voted to be out of the European Union can have the same status or even a better status outside the European Union than inside. But it's a negotiation and I think that everybody is addressing that negotiation very seriously to defend the interests of Europe.

At 7.37am, Caroline Lucas, the Green MP, said he party would fight against an 'extreme' Brexit.

At 8.10am, Nick Robinson noted that de Gaulle had stopped the UK from joining the European Community, Pompidou had reversed that, and now Macron would be the key to negotiating the 'new relationship' as the UK left the EU. James Naughtie first observed that EM perhaps had the chance to give France a new voice and the EU 'a shot of adrenaline'. JN added that EM believed he would make France feel better about itself, reinforcing the Franco-German axis that would produce EU reform in his view, and delivering an economic resurgence. NR interviewed Jean Pisani-Ferry, an adviser to EM, and first noted that he was in favour of a hard Brexit. Would he be a tough negotiator? JPF said no one wanted a hard Brexit, a new relationship with the UK that preserved prosperity was needed, and which retained co-operation over security. But he accepted it would be 'tough' negotiation. NR said:

Who, who should we believe though, you see, because Mr Macron has used some extremely strong words, at one stage he talked about Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson being responsible for quote, 'this crime' – he called it a serious mistake, he said that Britain would not be taking back control, we would have servitude – his words – to the United States. Now, you on the other hand, helped author a very influential report for a very influential Brussels think tank which talked of a new cooperative relationship between Britain and the rest of Europe?

JPF said he was referring to an old paper. NR suggested that his paper suggesting good relations with the UK did not get a good reception among the governments of Europe. JPF suggested that people could be grown up on both sides. NR asked if the British press was right to be speculating that Macron would want a tough Brexit and would want to punish the UK. JPF replied:

Punish certainly not. But he believes, er, today, even today, Europe is part of the solution to the problems we're facing. So he's a very committed pro-European, and he's . . . not the kind of man that would, you know implicitly agree with the sort of dismantling of the EU. He's, he's very keen on, on er . . . building more . . . integration on, on . . . he's very keen on, especially in the eurozone, on strengthening the eurozone, he's very keen on defence cooperation. So, for this reason, he's both criticising the EU as it is, and he will be a tough and demanding partner.

May 9

Bulletins noted that the Labour manifesto said the party was not trying to find a way to keep the UK in the EU. Iain Watson said that Jeremy Corbyn was being accused by some of his own MPs of ignoring the EU issues, 'so today, he'll be unequivocal in declaring that the issue of Brexit has been settled, and he'll be positive about the potential Brexit safeguard for vital industries'.

In business news, Ian Stuart of HSBC said that after Brexit, there would be huge opportunities in developing trade between China and the UK.

At 6.35am, Mishal Husain noted that social media was used extensively in the EU referendum. Media correspondent Amol Rajan said it was hard to estimate how much Vote Leave had spent in that arena but in the US the Republican party had spent £70m 'just with Facebook'.

At 7.35am:

As the local election results came in last Friday we spent the day with two younger voters, to see how they were informed by their social media feeds. Jessica Taberner is 23, a full time student from Derby, living in Salford and Rosie Lucas is a 25-year old teacher in London who says her political beliefs are left wing.

JESSICA TABERNA: And here's one from the Conservative Party, it's just saying that there's a few that don't want our Brexit talks to succeed, and I'm one of them (?), and that we should support our prime minister, and we cannot risk of some of the most important negotiations in our country's history being led by Jeremy Corbyn.

Moves on to discuss other stories.

ROSIE LUCAS: So this is Left Wing UK who have shared Another Angry Voice's photo, which is just a picture of the change in vote share since the 2013 local elections. So it says, 'What happened to all those Kippers who furiously denied that UKIP was just a Tory Trojan Horse protest party, that worked to drag the UK political spectrum off to the fanatically right-wing Thatcherism on steroids territory – they all turned into Tory voters.'

7.51am Twitter and the Election (Extract)

Social media will be a key part of the election campaign. Interview with David Wilding, director of planning for Twitter UK.

DAVID WILDING: The main topics that are being talked about in terms of hashtags, perhaps not surprisingly, number one is Brexit, and there's been twice as many tweets about Brexit as the next issue, which is the NHS. Er, but one of the things that we are seeing which I guess is different since the 2015 election is a lot more use of emojis which you just alluded to, and you can actually search Twitter now using and emoji, and I think while the big issues like Brexit are clearly on people's minds, it also allows small issues to come up.

At 8.25am, Mishal Husain said that targeted campaigns on social media had been linked to 'Donald Trump's victory and to the EU referendum result'. Gerry Gunster, who ran Leave EU, said specific targeting of groups such as fishermen could be achieved. Amol Rajan, media editor, said:

Cambridge Analytica are a company who are very proud and boastful of the fact that they were hired by the Trump campaign, they played, as they put it, a very important role in Trump's election. And there's been a tremendous amount of controversy over here, Mishal, about whether or not they had a role to play in Vote Leave, the decision to er, or the campaign to take Britain out of the European referendum (*sic*), Carole Cadwalladr, who's an Observer journalist has been doing some outstanding work digging up their involvement in the campaign, but she's had something of a spat online with Dominic Cummings, who's one of the key figures behind Vote Leave, and Dominic Cummings, and indeed, Cambridge Analytica say that they had no involvement whatsoever that they did no paid or unpaid work. But here's what we do know, Cambridge Analytica are partially associated with a secretive billionaire called Robert Mercer. Robert Mercer is involved in a company called SCL, which is the parent company, and Robert Mercer is a friend and backer of Donald Trump. Now, we know that Cambridge Analytica had a tremendous influence in American, in that election, and may have had influence over here, but Cambridge Analytica will speak to us about it, I've been trying for a very long time to get Cambridge Analytica to let me take some radio microphones or some TV cameras into their office, they initially were warm and friendly to the idea, then they went cold. I know the today programme has approached them time and time again. And what we have here is a picture which is unclear, we'd like to ask them questions, we'd like to get them into the studio, but we have a picture of companies using very advanced and sophisticated technology of millions of pounds being spent by very rich people to influence elections in advanced Western democracies at the time when there's lots of controversies about foreign powers and so, but we don't have answers to the questions, and we don't have a regulatory framework in place.

At 8.51am, Mishal Husain challenged Andrew Walker, who used to work for Breitbart, over his assertion that the progressive agenda permeated the entire news media in the UK. MH said newspapers weren't. AW said:

I think if you read most of the newspapers, watched most of the TV, you wouldn't be under the impression of the huge opposition there are (*sic*) to things like mass, uncontrolled immigration

May 10

In business news, Dominic O'Connell was in Northern Ireland to consider the potential impact of Brexit. He spoke to Bombardier, who said that technology was the most important issue, then to John McGuire, a former convenor of Visteon a now defunct car parts company. He was now a taxi driver and said that although there were jobs around, they were not very good. Professor Neil Gibson said Northern Ireland was still heavily dependent on funding from the UK. There was a deficit of £10bn. Brendan Mooney, who had a software company. He said it was reliant on local skills. DOC observed that many Northern Ireland businesses feared Brexit because it could interfere with cross-border links, and because their needs might be overlooked. Angela McGowen, from the CBI, said there had been good private sector growth, but she was very, very fearful about Brexit:

...this is one of the things that comes up constantly when I go out and I visit my members. They have, obviously, fears around access to markets, around access to skills, erm, and as you know, Northern Ireland are very, erm, embedded in an all-Ireland economy, erm, they're very much

integrated with the Republic of Ireland, we're the only region across the UK that has a land border with the EU, so obviously for us things like talk of 'no deal is better than a bad deal', I mean, that is really for us a great fear.

Barclay Bell of the Ulster Farmers Union, expressed fears that a hard border would be very difficult and wanted unlimited immigrant labour. He said about post-Brexit prospects:

...Yes, when I think, when you do look at the UK, still only is 60% self-sufficient in food, there are opportunities there, but I think in all of this, what we do need are the signals from the government where we are going in all of this, we need some certainty. Farming is a business that takes, you know, it is a three or four-year plan, when you look at some the . . .

DO: Because, because the . . . of course, for the politicians, the, the (*words unclear, sounds like 'drop dead'?*) date is March 2019, when we are meant to leave the European Union, but businesses need to make decisions probably sometime next year I suspect?

BB: Absolutely, you know, as you say, even at a farm level, to allow businesses to plan, we need that sort of three or four-year period, and I suppose the whole issue of, of support within the industry as well.

DO: And Angela, if I could just bring you back, the same applies to manufacturers as well, I suspect?

AG: That's true, and many of our CBI members will say to me that they can make short-term decisions right now so if they need to replace a bit of machinery or a bit of capital, that's okay to do, but they really find it very difficult to make those longer term decisions, and that is something for example, last week in our CBI manifesto, are really pushing government, whatever government gets into power, to prioritise that stability and give us a long-term vision for the economy going forward.

At 7.15am, in business news update, DOC interviewed Alvina Graham from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce. She said members were very worried about a hard border, with 30,000 crossings each day. She wanted a soft approach. DOC suggested she didn't have a voice at Westminster. AG said she had not. Stability was vital. She was asked about Brexit. She replied:

Yeah, well some of our businesses, that's one thing about the businesses in Northern Ireland, is they are very resilient and, already they're looking at new markets, they are looking at potential businesses, you know, doing business . . . you know, doing more business with China, the Far East, so yes, I think there is that sense of, of looking for opportunities. In the short term, obviously, the weaker sterling is giving our businesses a distinct advantage if you're around the border, retailers thriving, tourism is thriving, you know, if your raw materials are coming from home, your business is doing well, so I think there's lots of opportunities too.

At 7.35am, John Humphrys interviewed shadow education minister Angela Rayner. She said the party rejected the TM 'cliff-edge approach' to Brexit and wanted to protect jobs and trade. The party did definitely want to leave, but would go back to the negotiating table to secure a better deal. Angela Rayner said:

...Well, John, I think our position has been absolutely clear on Brexit, and our voting record was absolutely clear, we did trigger . . .

JH: (*speaking over*) Hmm, we know your voting record, but we're not at all clear about what you will do after the Brexit negotiations have ended, and we're certainly not less clear (*sic*) after what Jeremy Corbyn said, or rather did not say, to Laura Kuenssberg yesterday.

AR: Well, I think we are a lot clearer than what Theresa May said which is that she's . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Well you tell us what you think, then and . . .

AR: . . . just going to be 'a bloody difficult woman', we've said . . . we reject the Tories' cliff edge approach, because we think that's incredibly damaging for Britain and for UK workers, and, and jobs up and down the UK.

JH: *(speaking over)* Ah, ah so . . .

AR: . . . but, we would, we would return to the negotiating table . . .

JH: *(interrupting)* What, you'd keep returning, would you? If you couldn't get a deal, you'd keep returning? Because all I'm asking you to do really . . .

AR: *(speaking over)* Oh . . .

JH: . . . and that's all Laura was asking yesterday is, will you confirm, can you confirm that you are going to leave the European Union? Just . . . that's it really, that's a yes or no, isn't it?

AR: Yeah, we've said that we are leaving the European Union, but it's about . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Come what may?

AR: . . . it's about how you do that, John. Let's be clear . . .

JH: *(interrupting)* Why didn't he say that yesterday then, if it's, if *(word or words unclear)* the case.

AR: *(speaking over)* You're asking . . . you're asking the question and I'm, I'm being dead clear, but when you start negotiations, I used to be a trade union rep, and if I went to management and started my negotiations . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Ah no . . .

AR: . . . by saying, 'I'm going to be a bloody difficult woman', you're not going to get very far, you're not going to get a good deal, so it's about how you start those negotiations . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Well no, no, no, no . . .

AR: . . . and how they continue.

JH: . . . because the principal negotiating position has been set by the British people, they have voted to leave the European Union, that's *(fragment of word, or word unclear due to speaking over)*

AR: *(speaking over)* And we've been clear on that, and we voted to leave . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* A— Absolutely, so therefore . . .

AR: *(speaking over)* Okay.

JH: . . . there's absolutely no reason, is there, why Jeremy Corbyn couldn't say, 'Yes of course we are going to leave the European Union, now then let's talk about the sort of deal we *hope* to get, but whatever the deal we'll leave the European Union.'

AR: Well, I didn't hear that interview with Jeremy, but every conversation that I've had with Jeremy . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* I'm sure you've read it.

AR: Every conversation I've had, John, with Jeremy, has been absolutely clear, and that's that we are leaving the European Union. Now, I know that that's not what everybody wants, but that's what the democratic will of the people was, and that's how we've voted in Parliament so far, we can't be much clearer than that, it's about . . .

JH: Alright . . .

AR: . . . what type of Brexit we have. At the moment, Theresa May is not doing us any favours, at the moment, we're being a laughing stock around Europe . . .

JH: Alright . . .

AR: . . . and we're not going to get a good deal under her.

8.20am. Tim Farron interview – he attacked the most extreme form of Brexit now being contemplated. He also wanted to stay in the single market because that would yield money to spend on other services.

At 8.36am, DOC returned to Northern Ireland, and spoke to a cross-border estate agent who said he would not survive a hard border being reintroduced, a sheep farmer who said his business could be set back 25 years, a professor of human geography who said the real borders would be in the UK, and Bertie Ahern, who said that although it would be tough, strong efforts would be made to resolve the border difficulties because trade was vital.

May 11

Bulletins: it was said that the Labour manifesto claimed that the idea of leaving the EU without a deal was not viable.

NR, broadcasting from Leeds, had Chris Morris with him. CM asked whether the Brexit bill would be £60 bn, or even more and said the trade that went from the UK to Europe was 240 billion and so was 'incredibly important'. He said if tariffs were slapped on 'business plans change massively'. Brexit could also affect the financial services companies in Leeds. He said Brexit was the biggest determinate of financial health over the next five years.

James Landale talked about a conference about Somalia. It would, he said, be an opportunity for the UK to say it was not withdrawing from the world stage because of Brexit. 'It will be accused of doing so'.

Theresa May has made it very, very clear that she is not going to go down that route, but I think there is a sense that she wants to make sure that wherever it can, the UK has a role on the global stage. So, for example, earlier last month, there was some concern about whether or not the UK would remain committed to its decision to spend 0.7% of its national income on international aid, well, there was a big debate in the government about that, in the end they decided to carry on doing that, because they felt that if they withdrew from that commitment, again they would be accused of, you know, Brexit – UK sticking its head in the sand, it's withdrawing from the world, and they want to counter that view.

Business news. DOC, noting a statement from Mark Carney about the economy, said that he had been thought in the referendum to be too overtly political.

At 6.36, Nick Robinson, surveyed with Richard Edwards voting prospects in West Yorkshire. It was noted that Wakefield had a Labour majority of 2,000, and had voted leave, but that the local MP was against the triggering of Article 50. NR said that the role that Brexit might or might not have in the election made it intriguing. RE said it was massive issue, there'd been a massive turnout and people wanted to leave with no compromises. But Leeds itself had voted remain by the skin of its teeth.

At 6.39am Kamal Ahmad previewed MC's statement. He said it was a chance for MC to stand back amid the rows about Brexit. He said that the biggest problem over the next two years there could be problems over economic growth (implied because of Brexit).

At 6.52am NR said that the election, according to TM, was about who would led the 'tough negotiations' with Brussels. But it was striking how little of the detail of this was being discussed. Three way with UKIP, Paul Latham, and Greens. UKIP said it was now waiting for negotiations to get under way. NR said voters were tempted to vote Tory and to trust TM. PL replied that there was strong local support. NR suggested to the Green that the policies were not important to electors in this election. He replied at length they were. NR asked if the EU issue stood on top of all other issues. NR suggested that the real issues of the day – such as whether there would be tariffs on exports, or whether immigration would be allowed – were not being addressed. PL said it was unlikely that punitive tariffs would be introduced and the fall in the pound had helped industry. NR said that it was bad news if you were an importer. PL said it also made the area better for tourism. NR asked if these important issues weren't at the centre of the election debate. Green said the tragedy was that important issues such as the NHS weren't being considered.

At 7.12am in a survey of the potential appeal of Labour, Dr Victoria Honeyman said a lot of the working class had voted Leave and wanted that to be driven through, with money coming back from Europe and improvements in local areas, in job prospects. NR said that of course, they didn't only care about the EU, which is why Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn had visited. NR said though that Brexit was never far away. NR said Labour did not want it to be seen as the Brexit election. There were vox pops for an against JC's likely handling of Brexit.

There was a set up in Halifax (Ipsos Mori) with voters who had all voted leave. One voter wanted out and was worried about under Labour there would be a second election. Another said she was certain that brexit would go ahead even if there was a second referendum. Voters were determined. Someone else did not trust TM, she was leading a merry dance. Someone else thought NF was staying in Brussels to give them some real pasty. Another wanted someone who did not exist at the moment to give realism and backbone to the negotiations. Someone else said that JC spoke for the working man. Someone said they were not sure whether they would vote Labour at all. Another was undecided JC v TM because both annoyed him. One said TM was alright. Others thought she was not strong or stable. Someone said she had backed down on immigration. Someone else said Brexit must be got on with. Others said backbone was needed.

At 8.24am, NR spoke to the finance director of Winder power, a spokesman for Redmayne Bentley an investment firm and Chris Morris of the BBC.

Winder said prospects were uncertain because they did not know what was happening, with regard to tariffs. Redmayne said that the finance sector in Leeds was domestic focused and so there was not as much concern about Brexit. NR said if London suffered there was bound to be a knock-on effect. Chris Morris said:

Barely featured in this election, and part of the reason is, and here's a phrase we are going to hear a lot over the next year, it depends on what gets negotiated. I think for a company like Andy's I guess the big fear is a no Brexit deal emerged, either because the Article 50 negotiations which are about to begin break down, or at the last minute, a proposed deal gets voted down by one party or one parliament or another. And in that event you would suddenly be faced with tariffs on goods, on all the stuff the £7 million-worth they import from Europe. And we had a look at that, and we reckon, we looked at the tariff schedule, that on imports of copper and wire, there would be what you call about tariff of 3.7%, and on components and parts, transformers, probably 1.7% - not that high, because in general tariffs on industrial goods are low. But you take things like agriculture, other things that are important in this, in this part of the world – 20% and more tariffs.

At 8.43am, NR hosted a discussion between Hilary Benn, Kevin Hollinrake (Tory) and Greg Mullholland (LD). HB did not want a hard Brexit. KH said TM was the only one who could negotiate Brexit. NR said that people had no idea what the deal was going to be, and contended that in Halifax, no-one had heard of strong and stable and did not trust the PM. KH disagreed. GM said that the LD policy resonated because people were unsure about the impact of Brexit. HB said at the end that a hard Brexit must be avoided at all costs. KH said the Labour and LD approach would lead to a bad deal for the UK.

May 12

6.13am Brexit and Ireland – Chris Page report about Michel Barnier addressing a meeting of the European People's Party (members included Fine Gael) meeting in Wicklow. He said MB would visit a food processing business near the border which would be hit if there were tariffs, and if there was any disruption to trade. John Humphrys suggested that the border could be a serious stumbling block (to the Brexit negotiations). CP replied:

Well, that's right. Yesterday, in his speech, Mr Barnier looked at the customs conundrum which is really at the centre of all the border issues, he said he wanted to avoid a hard border, avoid any new border controls on the Irish border, but he also said that Customs management is part of the EU's border controls, so the fact is, if you have the UK outside of the European customs union, and we know that is going to be the case, and Ireland inside the customs union, well it looks likely there will have to be some kind of customs enforcement, some kind of customs controls. Officials are looking at some kind of electronic monitoring system for goods, rather than physical vehicle checks, but it's not clear exactly what sort of system could be designed. So that is, I think, going to be the trickiest issue facing the negotiators, in terms of the Irish dimension to Brexit.

Business News looked at the low value of the pound and Rob Young asked James Bevan from CCLA Investment if it was a disadvantage in relation to Brexit. The answer was yes and no. RY also asked a gin maker what Brexit meant. He replied in the short term it was better prices for exports, but raw material costs were up. RY asked about tariffs. The gin-maker wanted to be free of them.

AT 6.44am, there was brief discussion of the likely effect of support for Brexit in Derbyshire with a Jeremy Corbyn, Remain supporting candidate, and a UKIP candidate, who denied the party was finished.

At 8.10am, John Humphrys, discussing Mark Carney's statement, said:

In truth, Mr Carney was doing little more than underlining what's been apparent for a while: prices are going up, most incomes are not. People are getting poorer. And the backdrop to this whole election campaign is whether Brexit will make us poorer still, and what the new government can do about it. Well, let's ask a couple of leading economists, Andrew Lilico is the executive director of Europe Economics, Professor Ngaire Woods is Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University. Professor Woods, are we going to keep getting poorer, and even poorer because of Brexit?

Ngaire Woods replied that this would depend on what sort of a deal the UK got and whether there was a smooth transition to new trade agreements. JH said that already prices were going up. NW warned of a sharp decrease investment, a cut in jobs and poor living standards. Andrew Lilico claimed that Britain was getting richer. JH interrupted to say living standards hadn't increased. AL said falls were due to more people being in the labour market. JH asked if that meant poorer. AL said not necessarily. JH repeated that wages had not been going up for those in regular jobs and shop prices had been going up. AL said this was not true. Prices were up but Sterling had turned round since October. JH said it had fallen off a cliff. AL said inflation would go up by 0.4% but that would be the end of it. JH said everything would be much worse according to NW. AL said it depended how Brexit went. JH pushed that we would get poorer. AL said it was possible in the short term, but not for long. JH put it to NW

that he was overcooking it. NW said everything depended on getting a good deal, but it would take 10 years. She said:

Er, that, so, everything Andrew has said depends on whether Britain secures a good trade deal with Europe and good trade deals with the rest of the world, and that's the challenge. Now, I'm optimistic that Britain can secure a free trade agreement with Europe, but it will take at least 10 years. Now, why do I say that, because every major European trading partner has taken much longer than that, so Japan has been negotiating with the European Union for 15 years, three years ago they said they were just a couple of months away from concluding that, they're still not finished their free trade agreement. Switzerland took 14 years, so, so Britain can do the free trade agreement, but it will take at least 10 years, and I think we've got to be pragmatic and realistic that for those 10 years, Britain will have to continue, for all intents and purposes to act like a member of the European Union to accept European Court of Justice judgements, to pay into European contributions. And of course, that's, and that's one part of what Britain has to do. Now, the advantage of taking 10 years is that Britain has to build a customs processing capacity during that time.

There was no capacity to process what came across borders. JH mentioned the Japanese investment in Softbank as a good sign of things to come. NW said it wasn't and investors were actually pulling out. JH put it to AL that prospects were gloomy for ten years. He said the UK would not accept ECJ jurisdiction for 10 years. NW said:

So, so, but if we take that, what you just said, Andrew, if we, if we don't accept that, then the day after Brexit, you have – and this is from the Leave Means Leave report, which John Longworth has written, which is excellent, which talks about what will it take to have frictionless borders, in other words, how are we going to stop two, two days after Brexit there being 30-mile long queues of trucks trying to get into Britain, because they need customs clearance? That, you know, they propose, the Leave Means Leave campaign propose that we start immediately building huge warehouses inland in Britain, and export processing zones. You know, good on them for having a creative try at a solution, but do you realistically think we can do that in two years?

AL thought a deal was possible in two years, talking of 10 was not realistic. NW insisted that trade deals took 10 years. AL said the UK was not starting from scratch. JH said we would not longer be in the single market or the customs union. JH asked both if average people would be poorer. Both agreed that they would. AL said the UK would grow better in the 2020s – NW said it would not be until 2030.

8.48am The Election Week (Extracts)

NICK ROBINSON: Now, every Friday during the election campaign, we're going to be hearing from the Guardian's Rafael Behr and his fellow political columnist Matthew D'Ancona, and they're going to be looking back at the week that was. Here's the first in the series.

May 13

At 7.14am, the SNP candidate in Edinburgh SW said the electorate wanted an MP who would scrutinise the government on issues such as Brexit. The Liberal Democrat candidate contended that the UK should remain at the heart of the EU.

In the 8am bulletin, Steve Rosenberg said about the Eurovision song contest:

In recent years it's been hard enough for the United Kingdom to get points from our European neighbours when we've been on speaking terms with them. But now that we are leaving the EU, in an atmosphere of entente-not-very-cordial, with Brexit condemned the UK to nil points in Eurovision? Hopefully not.

Mishal Husain (8.33am) observed that 16 Labour candidates from London had said the UK should remain in the single market and the customs union. She said that this was seemingly at odds with the leaked Labour manifesto that Labour would seek to retain the benefits of the single market. MH asked

Chuka Umunna which vision of Brexit the country would get. CU said there was no difference, but they had gone a step further by saying that what was wanted could not be achieved unless the UK remained a member of both the customs union and the single market. In a lively sequence, MH said the leadership had hitherto avoided saying the the UK should stay as a member of the single market. CU said:

Well it, well it, well it actually hasn't ruled that out, and in terms of the actual detail of how you make that principle real, the detail hasn't been given. We're saying from the point of view of London, where you've got over 600,000 jobs that are linked to our membership of the single market, and look, whether you voted to Remain or Leave you didn't vote to be poorer. Our membership of the single market was not on the ballot as it were during that EU referendum campaign, we're saying that yes you can be outside of the European Union and be in the customs union, like Turkey for example, you can be outside the European Union and in the single market like Norway . . .

MH said the UK would have to accept freedom of movement. CU claimed it could be reformed – people who came here and could not find work after three months would be forced to leave. MH then asked Michael Gove when he had changed his mind about the single market – in 2015 he had approved of it. MG responded:

When it became clear that the European Union would not change during the negotiations that David Cameron was conducting with the European Union, it became clear to me that the best course was to leave. Now, one of the problems with Chuka's position is that until now we've been worried that Jeremy Corbyn, if he became Prime Minister would be presiding over a coalition of chaos, now we understand that Labour is itself a coalition of chaos. On the one hand, you have people like Jeremy Corbyn and Kier Starmer who want us outside the single market, on the other hand Chuka and his friend who want us inside, if we remain inside the single market, we have no control over who comes here, we have no control over our laws, and we continue to pay into the European Union. Now, the three basic principles on which the referendum was one was control of our borders, control of our laws and control of our money. So Chuka really just wants to revisit the referendum result and turn the clock back

CU said that MG should not be allowed to get away with such claims. His campaign had pledged £350m a week for the NHS which was not going to materialise. It had weakened the UK, generated threats of war over Gibraltar. MG said he sympathised with his discomfort and wondered what it was like being in a divided and chaotic party. CU asked again when the £350m would appear. MG said the Conservatives were now the most effective party in Scotland because Labour had failed to make the case for the union there. MH claimed that Mark Carney had said that Britain was getting poorer through inflation triggered because the value of the pound had fallen. She said:

you look at what Mark Carney said yesterday, essentially, what he's saying is we are already getting poorer because of what the value of the pound has done to inflation and that that is outstripping wage growth in this country. Is becoming poorer a price worth paying for your vision of what we need to be?

MG said this was a misreading:

He actually pointed out that we would be growing as an economy and growing fast in 2018 into 2019, and outside the single market and outside the customs union we can forge our own trade deals with countries like America and China and India, the fastest growing economies in the world. We can also ensure that the money we save as members of the European Union goes to support those technologies and industries and those educational advances that will power us into the 21st Century. Being outside the European Union makes us wealthier...

MH asked for CU's reaction. He said Britain was getting poorer, the last quarterly GDP figure was only 0.3%, people were paying more in the shops and industrial output was down.

May 15

Bulletins said that a report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development echoed a similar warning from the Bank of England last week in warning that workers would see their living standards fall because of inflation. Theo Leggett said:

The survey of one thousand businesses suggests that their employees can expect average pay rises of just 1% this year. Prices, meanwhile, are increasing more quickly. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index was 2.3% in March. It's expected to climb further as the effects of falls in the value of the pound since the Brexit referendum last June push up the cost of imported goods. As a result, the CIPD says a significant number of workers could see their living standards fall.

At 6.32am, Norman Smith, discussing Theresa May's proposed expansion of workers' rights, said he thought she viewed Brexit not just as a call to leave the EU but almost as our howl of outrage by ordinary people against the bankers, against austerity, against business as usual, in the sense that they were having to bear all the pain. He noted that the TUC had described the proposed measures as 'promising'.

At 6.40am, Paul Bartrop, from Bath, said that Liberal Democrats had 'undoubtedly' received a boost from the EU referendum, because although the country had voted Leave, they had attached their banner to the 48% who wanted Remain. He observed that this approach would not work everywhere but it did in Bath and Bristol (whoops from the audience), where the Remain vote was 'very big'. Yet in former Liberal Democrat territory further west down to Yeovil, the Leave vote was bigger. So the party was in a dilemma.

At 6.45am, Justin Webb spoke in front of their live Bath audience to Ian Kealey from UKIP and Molly Scott Cato from the Green party. He put it to MSC that the 'progressive alliance' meant that there were some places where the Greens were not standing, with the result that some members were not happy. MSC congratulated the audience for being there (greeted with cheers) and said they were trying to stop an 'overwhelming pro-Brexit' Tory landslide by working with other parties, but they had not been so co-operative. JW suggested some in her party did not like it. MSC said it was a short term remedy because the election was so focused on Brexit. The Liberal Democrats had been very disparaging. The electoral system was not fair, it took a million votes to get one Green MP.

JW then asked why UKIP candidates were not standing in all seats. IK replied that this was in seats where there were strong Brexiteers. JW suggested that this didn't apply in Bath – there was a Remain Tory and they weren't standing. IK said:

If you're lucky enough to have a UKIP candidate in your area (*laughter and jeering from audience*) it's vital . . . Congratulations to the BBC on a lovely balanced audience again. (*laughter from audience*)

JW: I think they're making an important point though, aren't they, that, that why is it that UKIP isn't able to stand in quite a few of these places. (*someone shouts from audience, inaudible, possibly 'because you're broke'?*)

IK: (*short laugh*) We don't, we don't have the union backing, we don't have big (*fragment of word, unclear*) big companies making fantastic donations, like the other parties. However, listen, it is vital . . . (*shouting from audience*)

JW: Let him speak (*words unclear due to speaking over*)

IK: (*speaking over*) Just remember, just remember, I think what's getting forgotten is that 17.4 million people had the wisdom to vote for Brexit, it was UKIP that delivered that, and UKIP has got an awful lot more to deliver for the country. And what is in peril at this election is that Mrs Remainer May will get a landslide, a landslide will be followed by a backslide, and the benefits of Brexit, and we can see benefits rolling in all the time, (*laughter and jeers from audience*) Yes, yes, yes, yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Name one, one benefit!

JW: No, let him, let him have his say, let him have his say.

IK: We've got £15 billion of foreign direct investment which has been announced since the referendum, Sir.

IK also made the point that £15bn of new investment coming into the country, for example from China, would benefit young people tremendously – they involved recruiting construction engineers and building new homes.

The 7am bulletin included details of Emmanuel Macron's visit to Germany. Hugh Schofield said:

Later, it's to Berlin and talks with Angela Merkel which, given Emanuel Macron's strong pro-European leanings promised to be more than cordial. The President's ambition is to relaunch the EU with France undertaking the structural reforms that Germany wants and Germany agreeing to French ideas about greater euro zone integration.

The 7.30am bulletin noted that the Conservative promises on workers' rights included a promise to keep EU workers' rights.

At 8.38am, there was a second sequence from Bath. Rose Ingram, an audience member, asked a general question to the panel (of Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour figures) what steps would be taken to maintain environmental standards following Brexit without the external pressure of the European Union. Mark Harper (Con) said his party would not get rid of 'important controls' and would protect workers' rights and the countryside. He added:

The big advantage we're going to have is that we can design environmental rules to fit our circumstances, make an agricultural system that fits our circumstances and environmental rules that fit our circumstances and the control will be at Westminster, and actually for the first time, voters will be able to ask politicians who are getting elected to the Westminster Parliament questions about these issues, we'll be setting the rules, and you'll be able . . . *(someone heckles in audience, words unclear)* and you'll be able to hold us to account if you don't think we've performed properly.

Karyn Smith, for Labour said the right-wing part of the Tories would undermine environmental benefits. JW interrupted to say that David Cameron said that a vote for Theresa May would give her power against 'the Europeans' and 'those people in her own party'. KS said that DC had walked away from the whole problem so (to applause) should be ignored. MH said that TM had been very clear about retaining environmental protections. JW then said:

Paddy Ashdown, not only address that issue of the rights and duties that we could still choose to have, but also how we enforce them, and in turn, if we do completely separate ourselves from the European Court of Justice, it's not that easy is it?

PADDY ASHDOWN: No it's not, and the, you know, the arbiter that will stand behind governments who want to relax these regulations, because they find them inconvenient at the time will have gone. Let me address that, you know, whenever I hear a politician saying as Mark did, 'let me be very clear', I know they're just about to be anything but clear. And the truth is that *(heckle from audience, unclear)* this government, the truth is that, the truth is that this government has retreated from all the environmental safeguards, laws that were put in, including the green deal that was set up during the coalition period, it has abandoned all of those, and we know perfectly well, as Karin has rightly said, that there are voices, powerful ones in the Conservative Party who want to throw this out altogether. You know, this is one of the . . . if you're really interested in maintaining the environmental protections and the

environmental advances that we've had do not give this government a larger majority because they will overturn those overnight.

JW: But you are (*applause from audience*) committed, Mark Harper, to that, to that not happening?

MH: Yeah, the, the, look, this election is a choice between Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn, she speaks (*heckling from audience unclear*) for the Conservative Party and she's being very clear about protecting the environment if the Conservative government is re-elected. And I'm very happy with that choice.

JW: Look it has (*shouting from audience*) wooah, we have proper heckling but we're going to bring it to an end, we have a really energised and energetic audience, I'm enormously grateful to them for turning out so early here at the University of Bath.

May 16

6.13am Nick Servini, Wales political editor, said the Plaid Cymru manifesto was about protecting the Welsh economy, Welsh identity and the Welsh Assembly during the Brexit process and 'the Conservative power grab'. He added:

This is familiar territory for Plaid, in relation to the repatriation of powers after Brexit, and they feel areas, particularly covering rural affairs for example, instead of coming to Cardiff will end up in Westminster and it's something that they will fight against. I think we will see, to some extent a bit of a gearchange in relation to Brexit, because they are now talking in terms of seizing opportunities. And the word 'opportunity' and the word 'Brexit' is certainly something that . . . two words that have not come together in terms of the way Plaid have described things. Now, they're not changing their mind in relation to Brexit, but behind the scenes what they believe is that there is now no point talking about the intricacies of, for example, the Norway model with the European Economic Area, and even language like hard and soft Brexit, because they believe Theresa May is on course to win a big majority and, in other words, they believe a hard Brexit is going to happen in their own words, so it's an acknowledgement of the reality and they feel that they need to reflect that, so they'll talk about things like free trade deal shield, which is how they describe a way for all parts of the UK to give their endorsement to any future free trade deals. And I think to some extent, Sarah, it might be a reflection of the kinds of seats that they are targeting.

Sarah Montague noted that the PC broadcast had been brutal about the Tories. NS confirmed they were using the 'prism of Brexit' to do so. He summarised their message:

Plaid is the only party whose entire goal is the protection of Welsh interests and identities in the Brexit process.

In Business News, Mike Amey of Pimco said that markets had so far not been hit by Brexit, they had recovered from what negatives there had been.

In the 7am bulletin, it was said that Plaid Cymru's manifesto promised to make the best of Brexit. The report said:

The party wants the Welsh government to have a say on any future UK trade deal and says it won't rest until every single penny of lost EU funding is replaced.

At 7.50am, NR spoke to Sylvie Bermann, the French ambassador to the UK, and Peter Ammon, her German counterpart, about the meeting between Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron. NR opened:

'A magic dwells in each beginning', so said Germany's Chancellor Merkel, quoting the writer Herman Hesse, after her first meeting with the new president of France on his first full day in

office. The new partnership between Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel has been dubbed 'Merkcron' in the German press, it's a reminder of the enduring strength of the relationship between the two countries which has been there ever since Europe's club of nations was founded after the war.

NR asked if the meeting felt 'magic' to the French. SB said it did, it was a new start. PA said there was magic in the air for the new start. NR suggested that the Eurozone wasn't doing well, there was a migrant crisis and high unemployment, so what would happen to change 'Europe'. SB said EM wanted to transform France and then reconstruct 'Europe'. NR wondered what that meant. SB replied:

In Europe I think it would be the strengthening and deepening of the EU construction, it will be the EU as such, but also the eurozone, it means also more convergence, first between France and Germany. And we think that France and Germany should play the role of the engine for, for the EU.

NR suggested that Germany had previously opposed treaty change and the idea of the Eurozone having its own finance minister, rules and parliament. PA said the problems of France could not be solved in Germany, but Germany wanted improved Eurozone governance. He claimed the Eurozone economy was now doing better than the US. NR noted confidence was returning then asked about borders. SB said border security had been improved but it was a work in progress. NR suggested would be pushing the Anglo-French border from Calais back to Dover. SB confirmed that Macron had said that, but it remained to be seen what happened. NR asked OPA if 'Europe' would take a tougher approach to borders. PA said there was a conflict between disorderly inflow and a humanitarian mission that would not go away overnight. There needed to be a 'common solution'. NR said:

Now, if you are tougher on borders, there may be some British people listening who think, 'My goodness me, this is what David Cameron asked for, why didn't you do it before? Maybe Brexit could have been avoided?'

SB said free movement could not be stopped, what was being discussed here was external borders of the EU. NR asked if France and Germany now had a common approach to Brexit. PA replied:

I think we will . . . we both share the objective to . . . come up with a . . . positive relationship with Britain once it's a third country. It's not so that we are in a zero sum game, where your loss is our gain.

NR: But a positive relationship, Sylvia Bermann surely means that you got to accept Britain won't promise you lots of money until it knows what the future relationship is, and any negotiator would be mad to agree to that?

SB: Well, it's not a question of n — negotiating, or wanting money from the UK, the fact it's a technical negotiations, about assets and liabilities, it's not political.

NR: Yeah, well it's not going to be easy, which is why there's a job for diplomats and ambassadors.

At 8.38am, Leanne Wood of Plaid Cymru, stressed the manifesto message about incorporating the interests of Wales into the Brexit process. Sarah Montague noted that PC had changed its tune on Brexit, having favoured Remain. LW said that PC wanted to stay in the single market, to have tariff-free access to it, to defend Welsh jobs. She added:

...There have been limits on procurement due to European Union rules and laws, there are opportunities, potentially, as we leave the European Union, as long as we do it properly, and as long as we don't do it in the most extreme way, there are opportunities, potentially for increased procurement to local firms, that's just one example. But our manifesto today is all about ensuring that we protect our public sector . . .

Bulletins said that a second referendum on Brexit was a feature of the Liberal Democrat manifesto. This was fleshed out at 7am Vicki Young said:

The Liberal Democrats see this general election as a chance to change Britain's future. Their message is clearly aimed at those who voted Remaining last year's referendum, and the party has promised to fight what it calls an extreme version of Brexit. Tim Farron believes voters should have another say on Brexit once any deal on the European Union has been finalised. And if people don't like it, they should be able to reject it and keep the UK in the EU. Mr Farron has admitted that his party isn't going to win this election, and says his aim is to replace Labour and be an effective opposition to the Conservatives.

At 6.10am, John Humphrys said that scientists were getting worried about the implications of Brexit, for them and scientific research. Science correspondent Tom Feilden said:

...it matters, because we're not going to, to compete in the world by winning a race to the bottom. We're going to flourish only if we win a race to the top, and that means, you know, building a high-tech knowledge economy around the life sciences, the pharmaceutical sector, engineering, computing, innovation, that means we're going to need a thriving science space with strong universities, great research institutes, and that's not really playing in the election so far.... Can they come here, will it be an attractive place to come? And that means is pharma going to want to invest here, because they know they can attract the talent from all over the world, including Europe. And, I mean, for instance, we're going to hear from Mene Pangalos from AstraZeneca later today on the programme, they've just spent £500 million building a new research and development centre, a high-tech sort of state-of-the-art centre, and their global HQ in Cambridge, big vote of confidence in Cambridge, but obviously those decisions . . . because it might have gone to Boston, it might have gone to San Francisco, but they chose to come here, but that decision was obviously taken before we voted to leave the EU.

JH asked if companies might now have second thoughts. TF replied that Pfizer's decision to pull out of Sandwich in 2010 was hard nosed and cold-blooded. They would go to other places if they decided they could not 'make it here'.

In business news, Dominic O'Connell, noting the annual meeting of the CBI, said they were planning to set up a task force to deal with Brexit. CBI president Paul Dreschler said it was vital to get the best out of Brexit. DOC observed that this suggested that they weren't currently getting the best out of it. PD said it was important to get the best team engaged to ensure 'we get something' and insurances that businesses could grow. DOC asked whether it was going to be a hard or soft Brexit. PD replied:

I think we're definitely going to have a lot of conversations on that theme for the next twelve months or so, but the bottom line is, as in any negotiation, at this stage we've no idea what the outcome could be, it could be a very bad outcome, and if politics really dominates and relationships fall down, that's one end of the spectrum. But we're all focused on the other end of the spectrum, and I was with my opposite numbers from 27 countries in Europe in Malta last week, and we are absolutely united in our view that there is a win-win, positive, pragmatic outcome possible from all of this. So it's about the will to win, and that we create a future for the next generation which is rich in economic growth, which creates jobs not only in the major cities but right across the nations and the creation of jobs and growth is the only way we can address many of the other issues.

At 6.35am, Norman Smith said the main point of the one-issue Liberal Democrat manifesto was 'vote LD to get TM to concede a second Brexit referendum'. He added that they were calculating that 48% of people had voted Remain. He added that so far it didn't seem to have worked because opinion polls were showing support had stalled at around 9%. He added:

it seems that they are struggling to win back in their old heartlands in the South West because that is Brexit country, and they haven't really been able to so far Hoover up those Labour voters

in urban metropolitan seats, who they hoped might switch because of Labour's stance on the referendum.

At 6.41am, Sarah Montague said that the Observer had found that Leave referendum campaigners had spent £3.5m with a tech company called Aggregate IQ, a 'huge percentage of their spend'.

She asked media correspondent Amol Rajan if there were concerns about this in terms of transparency. AR responded:

There's no requirement to declare it. And there's a lot of controversy over what exactly Vote Leave did or didn't spend, whether or not they used a firm called Cambridge Analytica that have acquired some notoriety. Cambridge Analytica say that they did no work, paid or unpaid for Vote Leave. So there's a lot of controversy around there. But we do know that very, very rich people, including the US billionaire, Robert Mercer have tried to influence elections in other countries including the election of Donald Trump last year. And the point is we simply don't have clear regulations that require people to be transparent. And the implication is that there might be foreign forces, there might be very wealthy individuals who are having a material impact on elections in Western or non-Western democracies, and we simply don't know about it. And it seems pretty obvious that if we regulate political advertising in other spheres, we need to think very hard about the impact of political advertising online too.

At 6.45am, John Humphrys said:

One of the key election battles in Northern Ireland is North Belfast. The DUP's Westminster leader Nigel Dodds is defending a majority of more than five thousand, but Sinn Fein took ground in the recent Stormont election and their candidate is a newcomer to politics: he's John Finucan, and his father Pat was the victim of one of the most notorious murders of the Troubles. The DUP and other parties are attacking Sinn Fein's policy of not taking their seats in the House of Commons. Our Ireland correspondent Chris Page reports.

There was a clip from John Finucan, who said that Northern Ireland had not signed up to Brexit and 'wanted rights for everyone'. CP said the DUP supported Brexit, but a narrow majority in the DUP's Nigel Dodds' constituency had voted remain. ND said he was fighting for his constituents' interests, and discounted the Sinn Fein challenge. CP noted that to help the DUP's prospects, no candidate was standing for the UUP. The Alliance party candidate said it was positive and pro-Europe, and the SDLP candidate claimed that Theresa May was strong-arming the area into a hard-Brexit, and only the SDLP could fight that.

At 7.15, Sir Ed Davey was interviewed. He asserted:

It's not about the Liberal Democrats being happy, it's about the British people. Because at the referendum we had, no one could tell you what Brexit meant. And today, nobody can tell you what Brexit meant (*sic*) we've never actually had a referendum on Brexit because there's been no Brexit deal. So, so the Liberal Democrats . . .

Sarah Montague asked if there was any deal the party would be happy with. He replied:

I think it's unlikely, but erm, we think that pulling out of the single market, the extreme Brexit that Theresa May Nigel Farage both support, that extreme Brexit is, er, would be a disaster, and that looks the most likely. Erm, but what we're saying, whatever the deal is, that British people will not have had a chance to vote on that deal, because no one knew what Brexit meant. And that's a democratic issue here, and it's (*fragment of word, unclear*) bizarre that, you know, Labour's (*sic*) and Corbyn are backing Theresa May's extreme Brexit, they are not arguing for the British people to have a choice and have a vote. And the Liberal Democrats say, look, there's a positive alternative here, we don't have to go along with this, we can have the negotiations we must, because that's what the referendum that has happened requires, but when we know the result of those negotiations, then it has to be the Democratic thing to

let the people decide, is that the Brexit they want or would they rather remain in the European Union?

SM replied that if anything the polls 'seemed to suggest' that Remainers 'are coming round to the idea that we are out'. ED said that was because no party had given them hope of an alternative. He added:

Politics at the moment, let's face it, has been pretty depressing with Donald Trump, with Brexit, with the shift to the right wing, with populist nationalist parties, and I think people have lost a bit of hope. And what Liberal Democrats are saying is that you can have a different future, you can change things, and we will start with giving you a choice on, on Brexit, but we'll do more than that, we'll give you a choice on funding of public services. . . .

SM asked what difference voting Liberal Democrat would make when they had so few MPs. He replied:

...I think when we've gone through these Brexit negotiations, when it's clear that the extreme Brexit that Theresa May and Nigel Farage want would be bad for jobs, bad for the future of young people, bad for Britain's influence in the world, then when people see that that's the deal on offer, they'll say, 'Hold on a minute, we'd really like to have a chance to vote on that deal, because we never had that chance.'

At 7.22am, John Humphrys, in a future about the future of the life sciences in the UK, said they contributed hundreds of millions of pounds to the economy and employed almost 2m people. He said the sector:

depends on a fine blend of pump-priming government funding, the nurturing of expertise in universities attracting investment from globetrotting multinational corporations. And Brexit has fundamentally changed the mix.

Tom Fielden, after explaining the huge success of such businesses, said:

Pfizer's decision to close its research facilities at Sandwich in Kent in 2010 was a salutary lesson. Just a few weeks earlier the then newly-appointed Prime Minister David Cameron had been talking up the possibility of the company expanding its UK operations. AstraZeneca's decision to invest in Cambridge was made when the UK's continued membership of the European Union seemed unassailable, but the playing field changed dramatically with Brexit.

The President of the Royal Society, Professor Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, said:

Britain stands at a crossroads, and in going forward we have to ask what sort of country are we going to be? We cannot win a race to the bottom. If we are to flourish, especially outside the EU, we have to win a race to the top, and a race to the top is won by excelling in science, technology and innovation.

UNNAMED REMAIN CAMPAIGNER (*archive*) We've got these leaflets, and you've got the five positive reasons . . .

TF: It has to be said, the scientific community was overwhelmingly in favour of remaining in the EU. But in the months since the referendum, Venkatraman Ramakrishnan says, the focus has shifted to what's needed to maintain the UK's preeminent position, and that comes down to money and the ability to attract the best scientists, wherever they happen to have been born.

VR: Money isn't enough. We have to make sure that as we exit the EU we solve the mobility problem, and that means we need to be able to attract the best talent without putting up unnecessary barriers. We need both investment and skills.

THERESA MAY: We're ambitious for Britain, to become the global go-to place for scientists, innovators and tech-investors . . .

TF: Judging from the Prime Minister's speech to the CBI last November, that message is getting through. And the promise of an additional £2 billion a year for research and development has been broadly welcomed.

TM: . . . to help put post-Brexit Britain at the cutting edge of science and tech.

TF: But ultimately, the terms of a deal on the free movement of research scientists may have a greater impact on the future investment decisions of footloose global multinationals like AstraZeneca.

At 7.52am, Sarah Montague noted that in the 2015 General Election, the Conservatives had spent £1.2m on Facebook campaigns and in the Referendum, Leave campaigners £3.5m with a company called Aggregate IQ. Vote Leave had said this allowed them to target swing voters online more effectively. She said the relevant rules were struggling to keep pace. SM asked Claire Bassett of the Electoral Commission how big a problem this lack of transparency was. CB said the existing rules were good but could be improved, for example those around imprints, which needed to be more explicit in terms of where they had originated. The rules did not currently extend to social media.

SM said that Carole Cadwalladr of *The Observer* had suggested that overseas governments such as Russia could interfere, and people would not know. CB said that there were clear rules about spending and overseas donations. SM asked if they had the tools to do that online. CB suggested they did. SM said:

...But what if it's not another party, (*fragments of words, unclear*) what if it is an individual or another government who is influencing our election by paying for data analytics companies to target certain individuals and groups of individuals?

CB said they could issue stop notices and quite clear rules on non-party campaigner rules that could stop them, but then suggested if something was happening 'outside the borders' of the UK, it was not covered by regulation. She added:

Yes, and this is an issue, for much more broadly than just elections, this is something that, you know, we, we are all struggling with that it is a world-wide web, and we, we work very hard to know what is going on, we don't have evidence that there is widespread activity along the lines that you've set out, and we haven't seen that. If we did see it we would immediately act, erm, and we would seek to work with the providers and companies if we could, but as I say, at the moment, we're not seeing any evidence of that, and we would monitor it closely, and we would work with other government agencies as appropriate to make sure of that.

At 8.34am, Sarah Montague said that AstraZeneca had almost finished building a £500m new facility at Cambridge. She added:

But it's one that was decided before last year's referendum, and there is some concern among pharma companies about what Brexit will mean for the UK and for drug development and spending here.

SM suggested to Dr Mene Pangalos, head scientist at AstraZeneca, that 'certain things' would change as a result of Brexit and wondered whether he was concerned they could be damaging. He first said that Life sciences contributed over 200,000 jobs in the UK and £30 billion worth of exports, so making sure the UK was one of the best places in the world to do life sciences, to do research and development was very, very important. He added that it was vital to be able to recruit the best people from round the world and also that the UK had a regulatory drugs regime allied to the European Medical Agency. An opportunity post-Brexit was to take the lead in easy medical trials.

SM said:

The EMA – The European Medicines Agency – which approves drugs, which has been headquartered in the UK, the expectation is that it will leave, we will leave its jurisdiction because we are also, the Prime Minister has made clear, no longer subject to decisions of the European Court of Justice, and that adjudicates on the EMA, there are some people who say that's going to be hugely damaging, not least to drugs companies like yours. Do you think that could be the case?

MP: The MHRA has been hugely innovative, the UK version . . .

SM: (*speaking over*) This is the UK regulatory authority.

MP: Yes, exactly, has been both influential and important in terms of its role in European regulation, and I think it needs to continue to be innovative and influential. But we also need to have that alignment with a European body, because ultimately we need to get our drugs approved across Europe.

SM said that shadow health secretary Jonathan Ashworth had described the idea of leaving the EMA as reckless and unbelievable and would lead to the loss of jobs and wealth. She asked if he was wrong. MP suggested there was no reason why the MHRA could not be aligned with European bodies, allowing the UK to run clinical trials and approving new medicines. He said that the NICE approving drugs for the NHS was a separate, domestic issue. SM asked if he was happy with the way NICE operated. MP suggested there were issues in that respect, though it was an important body. He claimed that an issue was that the UK did not spend enough on cancer care. SM suggested that as a drug seller, he would say that. MP replied:

I want to see a vibrant life sciences sector in the UK, I think it's good for the country, and it will create growth for the country. Our industry has the potential to be one of the future growth-drivers for the United Kingdom.

SM: Are you utterly committed to the UK, or could the way that, what happens with Brexit, affect that?

MP: No, we're an Anglo-Swedish company, and very proud to be so. What we do want to see is a UK that is putting itself in a position to be a leader in the life sciences. I think we will work with the future government to make sure we influence and shape our post-Brexit world in a way that ensures that the life science sector can remain competitive in the UK.

SM: But that depends on what? The government investing more in the NHS?

MP: Investing more in health care, it means investing more in basic research, creating an environment where scientific and clinical talent, from wherever it may come from can come into the UK in a welcoming way, and it means having a regulatory body that is aligned with a major body such as the EMEA. But I think there are some opportunities that could make, again, the UK even more attractive in a post-Brexit world.

At 8.40am, commentator Camilla Cavendish said:

Phil Hammond has obviously pushed, out, as Owen said, he's pushed out the deadline for balancing the books, which is quite sensible, because the big looming issue here is Brexit, right, I mean, we've got Brexit, huge uncertainty for businesses, we need to create jobs, we need to keep investment here, huge uncertainty, we need flexibility of the public finances, which I think is the main problem really with Labour's manifesto, is it doesn't seem to take any account of that elephant in the room.... Effectively, I think the underlying issues for business are very, very important and what we have to do is make sure that we do not scare away the people like AstraZeneca you were talking about earlier in the programme, with yes, maybe small, but nevertheless sort of meddlesome bureaucratic things just at the moment when we're trying

to leave a rather meddlesome, bureaucratic EU, and we're not quite sure what the future holds.

May 18

In business news, Katie Prescott said to Russ Mould, a stockbroker:

Talking about issues closer to home, we have the Conservative manifesto out later today. We note they plan to push ahead with strict rules on immigration – that's probably not going to go down that well with the business community?

RUSS MOULD: It doesn't generally, and if you look at what drives GDP growth, it's the number of people working multiplied by their productivity and the amount they're producing per hour. So if you're sort of slowing down the potential population growth, then there is a potential knock-on effect on the overall economy yes.

The 6.30am bulletin said if the Conservative manifesto:

Theresa May will also reiterate her commitment to cut net migration below 100,000 a year, she'll propose extra costs for firms employing skilled workers from outside the EU.

At 6.49am, Mishal Husain noted that the Conservative manifesto could pledge to take the UK out of the jurisdiction of the ECJ. She added that Sir Konrad Schiemann, who was a British judge at the court for eight years, had written to Conservative MPs and Peers to urge care in the way they refer to its role after Brexit. KS said that extracting the UK was so complicated that 'it is impossible to foresee all the difficulties that might arise', and so recommended that things should be kept 'as vague as possible' in the manifesto. He repeated that things should be vague. MH said Theresa May had said she wanted to end the ECJ's jurisdiction – what did he say to her? Would it mean, for example, that the ECJ would have a say over the UK's exit deal? KS replied:

Well, it'll certainly have a role in the minds of the European institutions, who will not want to do something which is contrary, or not compatible with the treaty. So it'll be in the background all the time. Whether the European court is actually asked to rule remains to be seen.

MH suggested that this meant the ECJ would continue have a role in our lives. KS replied:

Yes, I think probably the broad picture is the harder the Brexit, if I can use that phrase, the less of a role the ECJ will have to play, and the softer the Brexit, the more advantages we want to keep from our existing relationship with the member states than the greater will be the necessary involvement of the ECJ.

MH: It has become, over the years, the European Court of Justice, and the European Court of Human Rights, you know, symbolic for many people of what's wrong with the EU (*sic ECHR is a Council of Europe institution*) and its . . . the sweep of its powers being too great, and, and not right for Britain. As someone who spent many years working there, what, what do you think? Can you understand where they're coming from?

KS: I don't actually see really what the problem is in most people's eyes. There are a vast number of cases, several brought by Great Britain for instance, the one against France when they were keeping our beef products out, and various others which Britain has successfully one. I can't, actually, of my head, recall a single case in the 10 years that I was there where the Court ruled in a way which I felt was going to cause serious problems in this country. I mean, it has no powers, apart from the ones that have been agreed to by this country. So long as this country agrees to the matter, it will have those powers.

At 6.53am, Nick Robinson explained he had been sampling Thai cooking with some Remain voters in Bedford.

One said the most important issue was getting a good Brexit deal because his job depended on it. Another (James) said he would vote in the election for the ones offering the best Brexit deal. All the participants confirmed they had voted Remain. Another (Maria) said she was depressed for the next generation. Ira feared children would no longer be able to get jobs in the EU or go travelling there. Alastair wanted a vote on the settlement, he feared whoever won in the election would not be allowed a vote. NR asked whether the availability of another vote could influence the way he would vote. Alastair and Maria agreed that it could.

In the 7am bulletin, Norman Smith said that although Brexit was a dominating theme of the Conservative manifesto contained another agenda linked to Theresa May's 'ambitious' plans based on her distinctive brand of social justice Conservatism.

In business news update, the CEO of Mothercare said that Brexit-linked inflation would not hit the company because of the range of their international operations.

At 7.18am, James Naughtie reported from North-east Scotland on voting intentions. A fisherman in Peterhead said he and his fishing colleagues had no option but to vote Conservative, especially in Scotland. JN this had been strong SNP territory, but now some were changing their voting habits., The fisherman said:

Well, I have to be honest, I mean, I have voted SNP all my life. But I mean, I think with the stance they're taking with the common fisheries policy, and I think all crew'll be voting Conservative like.

JN: If the Tories' Scottish revival is real, this is where you'll see it on June 8. And here, at Peterhead fish market, you'll learn why.

BERTIE ARMSTRONG: It's not a constitutional matter, it's a matter of fishing business. How do we become, like Norway, like Iceland, with this wonderful resource, a world leader in seafood. Well, your answer is you're out of the common fisheries policy.

JN: Bertie Armstrong, of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation says the SNP promise to take an independent Scotland back into the EU after Brexit has turned the fishing community against it.

BA: The community has decided it wants to grab this sea of opportunity, it does not want it traded away, diluted, or put in a queue to change.

JN: And the fishermen lead you to the question that insinuates itself into every election argument here, and marks the great divide. The SNP promise to try to get a second referendum on independence, because of Brexit. The opposition to the Nationalists, led now by the Conservatives is distilled into one word: No. I've got a Conservative leaflet here and you'd think to read it that Theresa May had called the vote on this very issue, although she didn't.

JN added that after the avalanche of 2015, the SNP now acknowledged that some voters would abandon ship. Bruce Faid, of SNP, said:

Probably under a bit more scrutiny than they were last time, which was always going to happen because we did so well last time, but it's going reasonably well I think yeah.

JN: But what about those sceptical fishermen whose lives are so embedded in the spirit of this place?

BF: Some people may not want to go back the whole hog, that's current SNP policy, that's party policy, but there are people within the SNP that don't favour full membership of the EU, so, I don't know if it would come to that.

JN suggested that the two questions of Europe and independence had 'complicated everything'. He added:

what do you do if you're a nationalist who supported independence in that referendum, and then supported Brexit? Now there may be up to half a million of them across Scotland, according to surveys. Or if you're an antinationalist, who likes the SNP policy of staying in the EU?

JN then spoke to a beef farmer who was not keen on the idea of another referendum. He asserted:

There are so many conflicting interests here, obviously there are people who were pro-Brexit but who are not pro-independence, plus all the other combinations. And it's very difficult, actually to work out, out of all of that just which way people will jump.

JN added that, against this, the SNP had built a formidable fighting machine and had persuaded voters to give them 'loyalty that sticks'. He added that it had been a long time since a Conservative had won 'in these parts'.

At 7.34am, there was a second item on voters in Bedford. NR first noted that the Liberal Democrats had offered a second referendum 'but there were few signs the strategy was working'. Ira suggested that the need was now to put faith in the leader who would get the best deal for Britain. James agreed that the need was to get on with things. Lekla wondered how many referendums there might have to be before the point was reached where it was decided 'enough'. Alastair was worried that no-one knew what Theresa May's 'good deal' actually looked like. Lela said she believed that whoever was in government would get the best deal in the interests of the economy and there would be then a need to look to the wider world. NR summarised that Jen, Maria and Alastair wanted a say in the deal, and maybe another referendum, and Jen had not heard anyone promising that. Jen said the Greens were and that was potentially where she would vote. Maria said she might vote Liberal Democrat. She said TM was perhaps tough but charmless. Ira did not know the name of the leader of the Liberal Democrats. Lela said again she did not want another referendum. James agreed.

At 8.10am, Jeremy Hunt was interviewed. He said that the manifesto aimed to bring society together after the Brexit vote based on fairness. NR asked why there was a promise to bring immigration down again when there had been a repeated failure to do so. He suggested the promise was 'insulting people's intelligence'. JH said they were listening to what had been said in the referendum vote about control of borders. NR interrupted to say that George Osborne had contended that in private, ministers did not support the pledge, and he added that he (NR) knew from his own experience that he had never found a minister who thought this was a good idea. JH said this was not true and that the Cabinet was united in supporting the pledge. NR said that 'businesses' had warned that doubling the cost of hiring workers from abroad would prevent them from finding the skills they needed. JH replied:

Well, this comes down to fairness and what people say, everybody recognises the incredibly important role that immigration has in our society, of course I recognise it, particularly in the NHS, where we have brilliant work done by workers from the EU and other overseas countries. But what is not fair is if you bring in these workers from overseas, but then you don't train up your own people and give them the skills such that they can do some of these higher paid jobs, and what we're saying to businesses is that we all have a social responsibility here, and if you are benefiting by bringing in workers from overseas, then you also need to help pay to train people in this country so that they can access those higher paid jobs and that is . . .

He added that the capitalist market system had to be seen to be fair to everyone.

In business update at 8.35am, Katie Prescott said that the European Competition Commission had fined Facebook £95m for sharing personal data with its recent purchase, WhatsApp.

At 8.41am, Edwin Morgan from the Institute of Directors – reacting to the Conservative manifesto pledge to reduce immigration by increasing the cost of employing immigrants – said it was accepted that there was a need to train more people from the UK.

At 8.50am, Geoffrey Boycott said MPs were too focused on London. People had voted for Brexit all over the country and that is what they wanted. NR said:

I'm not sure they *all* voted for Brexit, but some of them did. Now, look, when I talk about . . .

GB insisted that most had. He added:

No, I think she's realised that you have to get out to the people, I think Brexit told everybody that. All the polls were expecting a majority vote to stay into (sic) Europe, and it shocked everybody. I've always been for Out of Europe, but I was shocked that actually people, yeah, people are different, and I think she's realised, you see some of her statements since she's been Prime Minister, she is said we have to get out to the North, didn't she.

May 19

At 6.10am, there was an extract from the ITV leaders' debate. Paul Nuttall of UKIP said that he wanted to reduce immigration to zero nett by having a points-based one in/one out system. Nicola Sturgeon replied that these were human beings that were being talked about.

At 6.13am, John Humphrys and Chris Morris talked immigration numbers. CM stressed that 163,000 have come in from outside the EU, the same as from the EU. CM ruled out a magic answer, acknowledged that numbers started to go up sharply in 2004. He warned that if the UK started restricting EU numbers, Germany was likely to do the same. He stressed that the Tory government had got nowhere near its 100,000 target, and added:

Bringing it down, you know, potentially has a huge cost for the economy as well, because if you have less migrants of working age, you have a smaller tax take, you have a bigger proportion of non-working people in the population. So it's a lot more complicated than just going for that headline number.

Business News was in Nottingham. The boss of the Cluny Lace-making factory warned that Brexit would hit their exports hard. It's a horrendous disaster. Malcolm Hall of Hal-fast tech company (selling by internet). Nothing about Brexit. Richard Munyard of a plastics company said he needed immigrant labour. He stressed that Poles were hard-working, and the response of UK nationals to jobs was poor. He said:

I personally, like a lot of my, my close associates are business people, and we take a view that, quite literally, Brexit, what's going to realistically happen? When we sit down at our dinner table and eat our food, there's a fair chance that you're eating some food that has been produced in France. Are they going to want to stop trading with us? I doubt it. And I wouldn't mind betting that one of us is driving a German-made vehicle, and are they going to want to stop trading? No they're not.

Chris Hobson of the east Midlands Chamber of Commerce said he echoed Munyard's views, business relied on immigration – without their labour, 'they would really struggle'.

At 6.50pm, John Bickley of UKIP was interviewed. He argued it was vital to bring numbers of immigrants down, attacked the Tories for being vague on the point, and said 4m had come to Britain since the Tories took power. JH suggested they were needed. JB said a five-year freeze was needed. Those essential to the economy would be allowed in, but a pause for breath was needed.

At 7.09am, Sir David Greenaway, vice chancellor of Nottingham University, argued that immigrants were vital to the university and to diversity and cohesion. He said £90m of the university budget came from overseas students and they were vital. JH asked what would happen if there were cuts in numbers, SDG argued it would damage the university and the local economy badly. Students made a £23bn contribution to the UK economy.

At 7.18am, DOC spoke to *Sir John Peace*. He said immigration was vital to the region but it had to be viewed in the context of concerns expressed in the referendum, and therefore more training in the UK was required. DOC suggested the business vote counted for nothing in this election. JP said it did not

bother him, but he needed a roadmap. DOC asked if the business voice was being heard in the Brexit negotiations. JP said they were being heard.

At 7.32am, there was a piece by John Humphrys about Shirebrook 'in the frontline of immigration'. Vox pops confirmed that it was on negative lines. JH walked the streets with Mark Church, a local policeman, who said that there had been violent incidents and Poles were drinking in the street. They had stopped that with fixed penalties and it was now down to one or two a fortnight. JH visited a man who protested about the influx but wasn't any more. Next was a school where there was no budget for language tuition but was nonetheless providing it. The head boy was a Pole who had not spoken English when he arrived. There were quotes from the boy. There were more vox pops in which a man whose wife had been assaulted was said to be racist, and he was forced to defend himself. A resident claimed it was hard to get a doctor's appointment. A local doctor disagreed.

At 8.36am, JH interviewed Kenneth Clarke. Before that CM, with more 'reality checks' warned that this was a very difficult subject. He said if there were visa restrictions, the 27 would apply reciprocal checks. It would be businesses in the front line doing due diligence on passports. KC claimed the UK had sovereign borders and could decide who came in. JH suggested that without immigrants, who brought in huge amounts of money, the UK would be in economic difficulty. KC said he wholly agreed and did not have hang-ups about living in a multi-ethnic community. The UK could not take in the world's poor, and there was a need for UK's skills training. He blamed NF for stoking up issues against immigrants.

May 20

At 8.52am, Mishal Husain presented an Election Panel with designer Katherine Hamnett, entrepreneur Luke Johnson, and Crossbench peer Victor Adebawale. MH first asked LJ 'a prominent Leave campaigner' if what other parties called 'extreme Brexit' would be bad for his businesses. LJ replied:

It depends how it carried out. I think that the EU is undemocratic, it's bureaucratic and it's wasteful. And I think if we can examine the tens of thousands of regulations that I think help stifle our economy thanks to the EU and liberalise business and create a more enterprise-focused economy then I think it will be good for us, and I think if we have a more balanced immigration policy, such that we are open to the entire world rather than just EU citizens, then I think that will be helpful too.

KH said it as appalling that TM was considering cutting immigration. VA said that immigration had been a net positive to the country and must be acknowledged as such. MH asked if the idea of a target was pointless. VA said the truth about immigration was rewarding. MH suggested to LJ that a lot of his workers came from outside the UK. LJ said he was also in favour of immigration, but it should be controlled. MH asked to what. LJ said it was biased exclusively to EU citizens and that was wrong. MH asked what level he would choose. LJ said he was not a politician and it was for them to decide, but said the current system clearly was not working because people had voted to leave the EU. MH asked KH

If, as a Remainer, she thought Labour had 'enough of an answer' to how the Brexit process should take place. She replied:

Well, I don't think anybody fully understands how the Brexit process will take place, I mean certainly, Antonio Tajani said that the (*fragments of words, unclear*) they would veto any change to the existing rights of citizens in the EU. Erm, so that I don't think that Theresa May or anybody really understands the troubles ahead in negotiating leaving the European Union, because it's . . .

MH: (*speaking over*) (*fragments of words, unclear*)

KH: . . . got to be passed by 27 countries.

MH: (*speaking over*) Yeah, I can't help noticing that you're wearing a t-shirt with a slogan, of course, you've been known over the years for t-shirts, there are new ones coming out for this election are there?

KH: Well, we're saying vote tactically, because you know, anything is better than a Conservative government and I support Gina Miller's Best for Britain, where she's saying to people that they should be voting for anybody erm, who is against the hard Brexit, who is going to negotiate in favour of better conditions for the . . .

MH stopped the interviewing at this point.

May 22

At 6.11am, Kevin Connolly explained that the EU's General Affairs Council - 'a sort of gathering of Europe ministers, foreign ministers, deputy prime ministers from the various countries' - was going to be 'a sort of gatekeeper' for the Brexit talks. It was a moribund body that was being revived to avoid the need for the European Council's heads of state body to be involved. He added:

...the point of today is, it's going to feel like we're being told again something we've been told before, that Europe wants progress on citizens' rights on size of any divorce bill and on the Irish border before it moves on to trade talks. But the problem for the UK side I think is going to be that once it's completed this sort of arduous and seemingly never-ending process, that negotiating mandate will be set in stone, it will be a legally mandated position, so if Britain comes into the talks say look, we want to talk about trade at the same time as at those other three issues, the European side's response might well be to say, 'We don't have that flexibility, our, our negotiating schedule, our timetable is enshrined in law.'

Justin Webb said that David Davis had said he would walk away from the talks if they were not held in a manner that was acceptable. Was the EU adopting the same position? KC replied:

I don't think the European side thinks that it is going to be the one to walk away, but of course people can see the problem, you know, when David Davis says, perfectly reasonably, from a British point of view, 'How can you talk about future arrangements on the Irish border unless you are talking about future trade arrangements at the same time?' There are people who recognise the logic of the British position, but as I say, the European side is going to argue that it simply doesn't have the flexibility to start changing the way those talks are phased or timetabled and that is where the problem is going to be. So I think any walkout, the expectation would be, might be done by the UK side, the problem then, of course, is once you've walked out you need a major concession to get you back in to talks and, what sort of major concession might that be?

In business news, Dominic O'Connell spoke to Michael Spencer. A former Conservative Party treasurer. He asserted:

Does it not concern that you that those policies which might have sounded like, you know, strictly Labour Party policies now seem to be, not so much just for the Conservatives, but seem to be entering the mainstream, and are perhaps part of an anti-business feeling which also perhaps contributed to the Brexit referendum. Is business any good at selling itself to people?

MS did not answer directly.

At 6.32am, Norman Smith said that Theresa May had accused Jeremy Corbyn of not being trustworthy in the EU negotiations.

James Naughtie (6.36am), discussing the launch of the Sinn Féin manifesto noted that there were for the first time more nationalists than unionists in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and at the heart of the battle was the border after Brexit – the nationalists wanted a poll on its future. JW wondered what would happen if Sinn Féin did well. JN suggested that both sides favoured (for complex reasons) the continuation of direct rule. He added:

...the key thing, in the Brexit negotiations, when you get to the whole question, not just of a hard or soft border, but all kinds of questions involving the Republic, what it does is it puts the border back at the heart of Northern Ireland politics, and that, of course, is a very big deal indeed. So there's a sense of expectation here, but it's not so much a sense of expectation about what happens on June 8, it's an expectation of what happens afterwards, and that's what gives the election in Northern Ireland quite different from any you'll find anywhere else in the UK.

7am bulletins noted that the fall in the pound of the US dollar had led to a surge of US tourists (up 13% by rail from Europe), but also that fewer Britons were visiting the US.

At 7.09am, Justin Webb, in a sequence about voter registration, noted that, despite an 'urban myth' to the contrary, young people had voted in EU referendum the same proportions as other sections of the population.

In business news update (7.15am), Dominic O'Connell spoke to former Conservative party treasurer Michael Spencer. Justin Webb introduced the sequence by noting that the question of whether Brexit would be bad for the City had been discussed 'a few times over the last year or so'. DOC said he had asked him if he was worried about the consequences of Brexit for the City. He replied that logic dictated that it was in the EU's interests to reach a sensible agreement over financial services, but some 'Europeans' felt they could be plundered. He added that damaging London would damage Europe and therefore it made sense to leave the City alone. DOC said that France and Germany regarded euro clearing as something that was theirs, rather than 'plundering'. MS replied:

. . . no, there is a fallacy in this argument that nobody has shared or discussed. Euro clearing takes place in the States today, okay, not a lot, but it does. I haven't heard the Europeans saying that they're unhappy about euro clearing taking place in the United States. I haven't heard them say at any point, 'We're going to tell those Americans we are going to take it back', and you know why they're not going to do that? Because they know if they do the Americans will take contrary action against them. So, I invite you to consider that. Furthermore, let me remind you that London clears derivative instruments not just in euro but in dollars, in yen, in Singapore dollars, Australian dollars, New Zealand dollars, the South African rand, and 19 different currencies. I, I haven't heard the Japanese phone up and say, 'We're not having yen cleared in London' or the Australians phoning up and saying, 'enough of us clearing our Aussie, we are having that back.' So really, this proposal by certain people in Europe to repatriate euro clearing to the eurozone is nothing more than a real nasty piece of economic nationalism and protectionism.

DOC asked him if he had voted remain 'in the end'. He replied:

I voted Remain, but I'm now fully signed up to the fact that the nation has voted, I believe in democracy, therefore I absolutely and with the democratic decision of our country, that we are going to leave the EU. I think the country, by the way, I think the process of separating the UK from the EU is going to be, obviously, a difficult one as we already know, it's going to take time, it's not going to be easy, obviously, but actually, at the end of it, the UK can absolutely prosper and move forward outside, not being a member of the EU, absolutely we can do that, and I'm signed up to that objective.

At 7.18am, James Naughtie noted that there was a clash in Northern Ireland over the status of Gaelic. He said it had been sharpened by Brexit 'because the border is centre-stage again'. Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan, pro-Vice Chancellor of Ulster University, said:

The interesting thing about Northern Ireland in the context of the EU is that the border question was effectively taken out of Irish politics for 20 years, and the Brexit result and the Brexit negotiations have put the border question back at the heart of Irish politics.

A DUP spokesman, Gavin Robertson, attacked the Sinn Fein stance on the Irish Assembly, then Michelle O'Neill, a Sinn Fein spokeswoman said:

Brexit is bad for our economy, it undermines our peace process, our economy and it denies the wish of the people who voted to remain within the European Union, and it will create a hard border.

JN noted that in 2015, unionist candidates had secured 11 of the 18 seats in Northern Ireland, then that three in Belfast were now in play, which might tilt the balance further towards the nationalists. Alison Morris, of the nationalist Irish News, said:

Sinn Fein view this as almost a second Brexit referendum. And also, if they can manage to get the vote out en masse, they'll use that as justification for a border poll, to the reunification of Ireland, and that is what their eye is on at the minute.

JN said the result of the last Assembly had been remarkable, and AM said this was a 10-year stomp towards a united Ireland. JN said:

A long game. You could look at this election as a proxy contest – the Conservatives and the Labour after all play almost no formal role here. With Brexit as it heart.

AM: As far as Brexit goes, yeah, I would be for Brexit, although I know most people in Northern Ireland are against it. My family would be for Brexit. We can see opportunities in the future and less control from the European courts and so on, so we would be for it from that point of view. We think Theresa May's doing a good job – I personally do anyway, and I think she's got a big task in front of her, but she's able.

JN: The curious thing about this contest is that many nationalists who maybe produced the Remain majority now see political advantages in Brexit. It makes everything constitutional again. They may be tired of voting here, but as Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan points out, with a collapsed power-sharing agreement, the aftermath is bound to wake everyone up.

CGH: The main parties know that they will have to go into negotiations again immediately after 8 June, regardless of the outcome and they have about three weeks before the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will have to decide whether to call a second Assembly election for Northern Ireland, or whether to reintroduce direct rule or some measure of direct rule.

JN: Whichever tune you march to here, there's a strange feeling about this election that it's a preliminary to something even more serious.

At 7.51, Justin Webb interviewed John O'Dowd of Sinn Fein. He asked what the EU-designated special status for Northern Ireland meant. He explained that NI was coming out of conflict, and the EU 'brought in a role in removing the border' (the economic border) from the island of Ireland. He added:

The peace process removed the military aspects of the border, so what we're seeing is continued representation in the European Parliament, under the North-South Ministerial Council, which is a joint council between the Assembly in the North and Parliament in the south, that our ministers would be still able to access council meetings, that will be still able to access European funding which has been strategic in developing the peace process, both in terms of communities and the infrastructure around our society. So those are the broad frameworks of what we are seeking going into the future.

JW said:

to make it clear, we'll get onto the referendum issue in a second, but just to make it clear that the status that you're seeking wouldn't, wouldn't give the EU sovereignty over Northern Ireland, and it wouldn't mean that Northern Ireland would be part of the EU, but it would,

would be a framework into which it could, could join in order to make sure that there didn't have to be a border?

JO denied that the EU had sovereignty over the North, or any part of Britain. JW said it had a say via the ECJ and it would lose that under his proposal. JO said the ECJ had been important in solving hotly contested issues and would be part of the deal he wanted. JW wondered how he would sell that to unionists. JO said it would be through debate, adding (to the suggestion from JW that this might be threatening) that the majority had voted to stay in the EU, and the vote was across Unionism and Nationalism – some sections of Unionism were having a debate about Brexit and the future role of the EU. JW said that a poll in 2016 had shown that only 22% supported a united Ireland. JO said we had learned to be very wary of polls, and said he wanted an independence referendum. JW suggested that having a mature debate would include Sinn Féin taking up its Westminster seats. JO said persuasion had not worked, for example over Brexit. Irish nationalists had never been able to influence the programme at Westminster.

At 8.10am, Nick Clegg, discussing voter registration, said youngsters had not absented themselves from voting in the EU referendum, and the result meant they had been ignored...it was a 'grotesquely unfair act of generational theft'. John Humphrys said that they had voted and they were in a minority. NC said:

they voted in large numbers for a different future and they've been ignored. What mature democracy tells millions of young people, 'Thank you, you've told us in overwhelming numbers that you want this future, and we're now going to ignore you altogether?'

JH asked Mark Easton if it Nick Clegg was correct. ME said that many people felt disconnected and forgotten. He asserted:

I think, actually, more than anything else that, there is that sentiment that drove the Brexit vote, a feeling that millions, a feeling among millions that decisions that change their lives are being, or being made in a faceless office in Whitehall or, you know, even worse, a mirrored-glass building in Brussels. And resentment at the EU is often matched by that resentment at London, in one of the most centralised countries in the Western world I think taking back control is really a desire to have more say over the character of your country, the destiny of your town, the future of your family, your job and someone. It is an existential challenge, perhaps for this government of the United Kingdom to convince the citizenry that power will be returned to them.

JH returned to NC, and he claimed:

And back to young people, they voted last year's, last year, for one future, and they were told by their masters in Westminster, 'Sorry you're going to have the diametrically opposite future', no wonder they feel cynical now.

Mark Easton then said that both Conservatives and Labour wanted to decentralise elements of government away from London. He noted that the Conservatives wanted to set up (from Brussels money) a prosperity fund that would be a way of ensuring money coming back from Europe is spread to reduce equality across the nations and regions.

At 8.45am, James Naughtie reported from Northern Ireland again. He put it to Robin Swann, of the Ulster Unionist party, that Brexit had brought border back into politics for the first time in 20 years. He replied that he did not know why – no party wanted a hard border and there would not be one. The main aim was to get as many unionist MPs elected as possible on June 8. Claire Hanna of the SDLP said that Brexit was undoubtedly the main issue of the election because Northern Ireland would be disproportionately elected. Local issues also mattered. James Naughtie reminded the audience that 56% of Northern Ireland had voted Remain. Claire Hanna said the vote had put a united Ireland into sharper focus and was the biggest economic and political problem ever faced in the province. Nobody wanted a return to borders but no-one had explained how that would be facilitated.

May 23

No mentions – aftermath of Manchester bombing

May 24

Katya Adler, discussing the visit of Donald Trump to Brussels and NATO HQ said that Trump on the stump had sneering words for NATO, championed Brexit, predicted the break-up of the EU and described the city as a 'hell-hole'. She added:

But he has toned down that rhetoric since then, and also the EU and European members of NATO have toned down their off-the-record sneering tones when it comes to President Trump as well. And mainly that's out of concern for what is administration could really mean. And first and foremost, I would say, those are fears for security because, you know, Europe's post-World War II order has centred around the US which helped build of NATO and the EU, but as we know, President's erratic and unpredictable, so even in those few minutes that NATO leaders and EU leaders can snatch with him this week, they don't know that any promises made or any understandings made this week would even carry on into next.

Sarah Montague asked what the expectation was of what could be achieved. KA said the bar was 'extremely low', and added that an EU source that if Trump left with the idea that the EU was in some way useful, that would be regarded as a result. She said:

what, what everybody is particularly worried about in Europe is what's going to happen in Syria, Libya, what's going to happen with the Iran nuclear deal, intelligence sharing, Russia's sanctions, climate change deals, what about America First and pledges of trade protectionism, that would be a disaster for the EU. So, for example, on climate change, erm, the EU leaders are going to try to persuade President Trump that improving the climate doesn't mean a disaster for the American economy, they're going to focus on his business credentials and say there could be lots of new jobs in renewable energy. They're going to emphasise the importance to stick together in NATO, and point out in NATO that the only time that Article 5 was invoked, the article of NATO where it's all for one and one for all, an attack on one is an attack against all, was after the attacks on the World Trade Centre, and they're hoping to give him a nudge with that.

At 8.45am, there was an item about Brexit and science. Sarah Montague said that the four national academies - the Academy of Medical Sciences, the British Academy, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society – had warned about the funding 'that would be lost' as a result of Brexit. Professor Dame Helen Wallace suggested the money would be lost unless a different agreement was reached with the EU or a substitution by British funding. She added:

...the sums are big, but what's important about the sums is that they show the enormous success of British researchers in winning tough international competition. And the European rules are much more harsh, much more competitive than the UK rules. And the European funding enables British-based researchers to play a leading role in important fields of science.

SM asked if this meant that the EU arrangement 'made for better science' HW agreed it did. SM wondered if the sum involved was about £600m. HW said she did not want to get into detail but the money would go if the UK wasn't part of the EU. It meant that Britain's leading edge in research was also at stake here. SM said:

Why, so say we were to replace the money, because many people would say, look, if it is so important then surely we can replace the sums of money, because we won't be paying so much into the EU, and we can just improve the, effectively, the tendering process of going after British government money as it would be.

HW: But we would need then to commit to enabling the world's best scientists to come to the UK in the way that they currently do to work on European Union funded projects, which

has all kinds of implications for our visa and migration policy, and we would need to commit to the collaborative work that's such an important part of European programmes.

HW said the in future there was a danger that the world's best would not longer be attracted to the UK. SM asked if the UK might still be able to compete for EU funding. HW suggested that this might happen if the UK stayed linked to European Research Council. SM asked if that could be possible. HW replied:

I think it's possible but difficult. I think we have to recognise that erm, the fact that funding is so competitive means people from other countries in Europe might be quite glad to take up the share left by and the position left by the UK, because we've performed this proportionately well. And there's in this sense a bit of jealousy. On the other hand, because the UK, the UK has very important universities in terms of league tables, the UK is amongst the highest, is the highest-performing European country in University league tables, taking the UK out of the European research system leaves a big void, which I think people are very worried about.

May 25

Bulletins said that Donald Trump was expected to be tough with NATO leaders, and also that he would be meeting EU officials. Kevin Connelly said that Mr Trump would meet leaders of the European Union, among them Jean-Claude Juncker, who had once complained that Mr Trump's election meant that two years would be wasted educating the new president about a world he does not know.

At 6.39am, it was said that the UKIP manifesto was described as 'uncompromising'. Norman Smith said that beyond Brexit, leader Paul Nuttall wanted to present his party as proud, patriotic and plain-speaking, prepared to confront areas other parties would not deal with, such as immigration and integration. He said:

I expect they will point to the Manchester atrocity as evidence of what can happen when these problems aren't confronted. And in policy terms, you know, so, on integration they will suggest banning the Burka in public places, ending sharia law, a moratorium on Islamic faith schools and on immigration, actually a much tougher line than any party has ever proposed, they are suggesting that net migration should be zero. Now, that is more than Nigel Farage, for example, suggested, he suggested a 50,000 cap, they are suggesting zero and a complete halt to all unskilled immigration in this country. The difficulty is that almost whatever they put in their manifesto seems likely to be trumped by the Brexit factor – in other words many, many former UKIP voters appear to be deserting the party in droves because, they believe, Mrs May is the most likely vehicle to deliver Brexit and Brexit still matters more to them more than anything else.

John Humphrys suggested they had a tough fight. NS said it was 'almost existential', and their survival depended 'on Mrs May's failure'. He said:

They need Mrs May to fail on Brexit. And so, for that reason, they are also seeking to raise the Brexit bar, so they are suggesting that Mrs May must ensure there is no divorce settlement, we're not going to hand over any money, she must reclaim the fishing rights, there cannot be a transitional period, we've got to be out by the end of 2019, and if it comes to pass that Mrs May struggles, cannot secure, you know, that sort of deal or a deal that satisfies the British public, then maybe, maybe there is a future for UKIP. But beyond that, it's very, very difficult to see how they flourish, maybe even survive in this post-Brexit world.

6.46am, Ross Hawkins reported from Rotherham about calls from within UKIP to make Paul Nuttall stand down. RH said UKIP had known victories in the past but 'many in this party sound gloomy now'. Party member Allen Cowles said changes would have to be made. He asserted:

I think it's very difficult to believe that someone can have the kind of car crash that happened in Stoke and then be expected to erm, carry on.

RH: Allen Cowles who heads UKIP's councillors here as the party's candidate in Rotherham is unimpressed by his leaders failed attempt win the by-election in Stoke-on-Trent earlier this year.

AC: It needed somebody to come along after the squabbling and infighting and, if only [to] provide a safe pair of hands and steady-as-you-go. Unfortunately he only added to the chaos.

RH: And while he thinks UKIP can win, campaigning while others do not we won't bring victory the neighbouring seat of Wentworth and Dearn, they got a quarter of the vote last time and now don't even have a candidate. And some activists have just walked away. In a home on the edge of Rotherham, where I'm met by the family dog, I sit down with the people who used to run the party locally.

STEVE WEBSTER: It was as though UKIP's finished, you know, that's the sort of message we're getting, 'Well, what is UKIP for now?' Because, don't forget, it's right from Brexit, nobody was talking about UKIP.

RH: Former vice chairman Steve Webster who alongside three of his colleagues resigned a few weeks ago, the former treasurer Maureen Vines says this of Paul Nuttall:

MAUREEN VINES: He just comes across like an idiot. You know, I mean, we've often wondered if he came to up here, whether he'd wear a flat cap, you know, a white scarf and have a whippet beside him.

CAVAN VINES: Personally, if it carries on like it is, I don't think there'll be a UKIP.

RH: Maureen's husband Cavan, who was the local party chairman and how couldn't stand for parliament himself as he's bankrupt, after being sued for libel by two Labour MPs. And this is more than a little local difficulty. Jane Green from the British Election Study.

JANE GREEN: So in the recent local elections and also in by-elections before that, we have seen UKIP in decline. Our own British Election Study data, where we track the same people over time, we see a shift away from UKIP, towards the Conservatives that the majority of that shift, and we see a proportion of UKIP supporters also saying they're not sure who they're going to vote for.

RH: Of course, polls can be wrong. Former store wants to. But the party that restarts its campaign today that had no sitting MPs when the election was called but lost more than 140 councillors this month is fighting not just for votes, but for relevance. Just listen to Cavan Vines explaining why he quit.

CV: You know, I'm not an idiot. You bang your head against a brick wall and eventually, when it starts really hurting, you stop if you got any sense.

At 7.37am, John Humphrys interviewed Paul Nuttall. He asked if he could have waited another day; whether his campaign was a 'bit of a suicide mission'; that party unity was haunting him; that Allen Cowles believed his leadership was a car crash after what had happened in Stoke; that this man was in one of the party's target seats; that he was stopping immigration; that such people brought wealth with them, want so what could be done 'about all the money we will not have'; his policies sounded 'simply racist':

You don't like Muslims, you'd rather they weren't here, and if they are here, they should behave differently, (*fragments of words, or words unclear*) they shouldn't wear face veils, and so on.

The questioning was that UKIP would not allow the wearing of veils and things like that; (in response) that the UK wasn't France or Belgium; the was reality that the party had lost its purpose and was now simply a pressure group; numbers were heavily down from the party's 'heyday'; that acting as 'guard dogs to Brexit' was ineffectual when the party did not have any MPs; UKIP would not attain 'hundreds of members of Parliament', so in practice, what could the party do; (putting pressure on the government) was simply acting as a pressure group, not a true political party.

In the 8am bulletin, a quote from Paul Nuttall. It was said that he believed his launch was 'an act of defiance' against Manchester. He said:

In this election, we're the only party going in with a clear commitment to cutting immigration, clear commitment to cutting foreign aid, we cannot continue to allow this many people to come into the country a year, because it's not just bad in terms of working class communities, it's also bad for community cohesion, because we're becoming a more divided society than we've ever been before.

May 26:

At 8.38, Nick Robinson asked Arlene Foster of the DUP if the General Election could help solve any of the problems facing the province. AF replied:

Well, I think this is an election about a couple of things. First of all, Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom, it's also around getting the best deal for Northern Ireland in EU exit negotiations, and making sure we have a strong team to do that. And of course, it's about the restoration of devolution as well.

NR observed that in the recent Northern Ireland elections, Sinn Fein had come close to the DUP and was now talking about a border poll. Could the new vote make a difference to that? AF said that different issues had been at stake, and the General Election was now an opportunity for those who valued Northern Ireland's place within the Union to have a say. It would be about the number of seats that were won. NR asked if she was saying 'hold your nose' and vote for me. AF replied:

Well, I hope they won't have to hold their noses, but we are setting out a very clear stall in terms of our place within the union. And actually, instead of just saying the union is important to take that further and to announce why it is important in terms of, yes, culturally, politically and socially, but of course in economic terms as well the union that matters for Northern Ireland is the United Kingdom, it's the single market that's most important to us, in terms of the goods that we sell . . .

NR: *(speaking over)* It's . . . it's very ironic to hear you talking about the single market . . .

AF: *(speaking over)* Sure!

NR: . . . and the DUP . . .

AF: *(laughter in voice)* Well I *(word or words unclear)* it up on purpose *(laughs)*

NR: *(short laugh)* against the majority of people in Northern Ireland, that the UK should leave the EU. You are reaping what you sewn, aren't you? You helped get Britain out, and now that is fuelling republicanism again?

AF: No, I don't think that's right, I think that the UK's position after we leave the European Union, yes, of course there will be short-term challenges, will be stronger nation, the most important market for us in Northern Ireland is the rest of the United Kingdom. 67% of our goods are sold within the United Kingdom.

NR: But you have said that you don't want a hard border between the North . . .

AF: (speaking over) absolutely, yeah.

NR: . . . and the South, if you've got Britain with new immigration policies . . .

AF: Hmm.

NR: . . . with new policies on trade and tariffs, there will have to be a proper border won't there? With customs officials, border officials and the like, and that is not good for the peace process?

AF: Look, nobody wants a hard border and that's been said by the Dublin government, the London government, ourselves in Belfast and indeed the European Union of also recognised that there are unique circumstances in Northern Ireland. So I think as long as people are innovative we can find a solution to this issue of the border.

NR: 'Innovative' do you effectively that technology is the answer, you can tag goods electronically, or people can have passports and so on that are recognised on both sides of the border?

AF: I certainly think it's part of the solution, yes, and using new technology, I mean there are many, many private sector companies who do the sorts of things all over the world. And just yesterday, I was talking to somebody from Norway and we were talking about the soft border that exists in their country . . .

NR: This is between Norway and Sweden.

AF: Yeah, yeah, in mainland Europe. I'm not saying that we copy what goes on there, but I am saying there are already examples.

NR: But of course, in one sense, if you're right, you may be causing yourself a problem mightn't you? If you are right that Britain outside the EU can trade perfectly easily with the rest of the EU, or what remains of the EU, if you are right that there can be a soft-ish border with the South, why not have a united Ireland? Perhaps people over time will just say, 'it no longer matters'?

AF: Well, you know, as I've said, it is about culture, it is about who we are. I am a British citizen just as anybody else living in the mainland is a British citizen. So it's about much more than economics, but I think economics is very clearly a very sound argument to start from, especially those people who perhaps are nationalist but see the benefits of living within the United Kingdom.

Moves on to discuss devolution, and the inquiry into her and her behaviour and Sinn Fein saying they will not share power with them.

AF: For our part, we would like to see devolution back tomorrow, we want to see devolution working, because, not least, we need a voice in relation to EU exit so we can articulate what is different about Northern Ireland and why we need to have our voice around the table. So, I want devolution back as quickly as possible. After the general election, we go into a series of talks and we have a very short window there where we need to get a solution and I very much hope we find it.

NF: Now, we know, finally, that without Brexit we wouldn't be having this general election, there would not be the possibility of another referendum on Scottish independence, there would not be the talk, I think, of a border poll in Ireland to bring about a united Ireland. How confident are you that in your lifetime there will not be such a poll and indeed, your countrymen will not vote for unity.

AF: Oh, I'm very confident about that. You see, one of the difficulties with Brexit is the fact that people are superimposing Brexit on another issue, which, of course, in Scotland is

independent and in Northern Ireland a united Ireland, there are many unionists who voted to remain within the European Union, but if they were asked the question around staying in the United Kingdom or going into a united Ireland they would very firmly say that they wanted to stay within the United Kingdom for all of the reasons I have spoken about.

NF: It won't happen you're saying.

AF: (*speaking over*) It won't happen.

May 27

7.32am SNP and the Election (Extract)

Nicola Sturgeon has said a proper debate is required on terrorism and foreign policy, also discussion of university tuition fees and lowering the voting age. Interview with Stephen Gethins, SNP's Europe Spokesman

STEPHEN GETHINS We're in a situation where universities are facing a very significant funding challenge through the UK's decision to leave the European Union, and also the challenges that that presents for funding and for opportunities for young people as well. Because let's not forget, in this next parliament big decisions will have to be made, you know, on jobs, on the economy, on the relationship with Europe, but also, critically, and this is why the SNP's got its youth manifesto, about opportunities for young people, engaging young people in the political process, and in terms of education protect that free education as well.

May 29

Bulletins reported that the Liberal Democrats had warned Britain would lose a vital source of security information if Theresa May was to withdraw the UK from the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, and that Nick Clegg had claimed that the UK's defences had been weakened.

In business news, Michelle McGrade of TD Direct Investing noted that Starbucks had blamed Brexit for a 60% fall in profits, whereas Valerie Patisserie had registered a 16% hike in profits. She said:

So that little example just shows you that actually, it's not Brexit what it is that people prefer to have their coffee in Valerie Patisserie (*sic*) rather than in Starbuck's. And this is this whole thing about survival of the fittest, and are you making your products that customers want to buy?

At 6.34am, Eleanor Garnier said that the Conservative party was getting back to the country needing a strong leader to get the country through Brexit. She added that the Conservatives had described as nonsense the Liberal Democrat claims about security and defence being compromised by Brexit.

At 6.44am, John Humphrys said that More United crowdfunding campaign to bankroll mostly Labour and Liberal Democrat candidates opposed to Brexit had raised £500,000. Ross Hawkins reported that the group was backing more than 40 candidates 'from five different parties' and had reached in small donations a sum equivalent to 'millionaire' donors. There was a quote from an organiser:

A way of influencing politics that doesn't require you to join a party and sign up lock stock and barrel to one of the main tribes gives you a way of influencing politics across all different parties and getting good people elected.

RH explained that the group insisted that it was not 'about Brexit' but a way of providing money to those who wanted a closer relationship with the EU. He added that it was co-founded by ex-Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown and former MP for the party, Bess Mayhew. She claimed the group was non-partisan. RH suggested to Rosena Allin-Khan that it was strange to be taking money from a

group that elsewhere was paying to defeat Labour candidates. RAK suggested the money she was receiving was going nowhere else but her constituency. There was a quote from an academic in which he claimed support for political parties by the electorate had fallen from 95% in 1964 to 79% in 2015. RH concluded:

We're less loyal to parties, so are some dissenting MPs. Could this group with its money and activists help them cause trouble after the election? Or is it perhaps just another way of fundraising for more of the same?

At 7.09am Sarah Montague interviewed Nick Clegg. She asked in what way the UK would be less safe if the UK lost access to the EU security database; then suggested that former MI6 director Sir Richard Dearlove had said that the UK was the leader in intelligence and security matters, so it was in the EU's interest to come to an information-sharing deal; that a deal could be reached; that it was 'a bit rich' of the Liberal Democrats to criticise the Conservatives over security when Lord Carlisle, a former Liberal Democrat peer had said he had left the party over what they had done in power in insisting that border control was weakened; what he said was that every control order was subject to automatic review by senior judges; that the EU system was accessed 16 times a second only because it was an automated system that took repeat shots of car number plates as they crossed borders.

Nick Clegg, in response, was virtually uninterrupted - the first sequence was almost 200 words. He was outline his view of the perceived strengths if the current system - which he said led to 53 detentions a day and 16 checks per second - and to claim the UK could not be part of it unless it as signed up to European data protection rules. He subsequently attacked Theresa May's plans for leaving the EU and claimed that the UK must in future be subject to rulings of the European Court of Justice. Finally, he attacked Alex Carlile and defended his approach to T-pims.

At 7.35am, John Humphrys interviewed Miranda Green, former press secretary to the Liberal Democrats, and Lord Maude, Conservative party strategist about the Conservative manifesto. MG said it was 'quite right' the party was going back to the original dull but effective strategy of Lynton Crosby. She claimed that, however, the past week had been a disaster, the horses had been scared by 'quite revolutionary measures'. She added:

You are now, whether you like it or not going to have to have a discussion on a whole bunch of policy issues which you yourselves have introduced into the discussion, when it's supposed to be the Brexit election, and I think that's hugely difficult. You know Ronald Reagan had this wonderful phrase: politics is simple. But it's not easy it's not going to be easy for them at all to get back onto a simple binary choice between May and Corbyn.

Finally she said:

I think this line about 'give me a strong mandate so I can negotiate with Brussels' was always a cover story for 'give me a large majority so I can negotiate with my own backbenchers over Brexit, and the problem is that actually the election campaign is introduced doubts about her leadership, and those will be shared on the backbenches by incoming MPs who've had to argue about social care on the doorstep over the last week, and have wondered about their own party leadership.

At 7.52am, Sarah Montague said that Emmanuel Macron had made a 'game-changer' appointment of Christian Noyer to tempt financial institutions away from London to Paris. France had already had success in this and Mr Noyer was 'very business oriented' so that would give Paris the edge. CN repeated that Mr Macron was business oriented and was now adapting regulation and the tax system. SM asked if companies were now saying they wanted to relocate. CN said they were negotiating with 20 important institutions throughout the world, all of them from London. SM asked if this meant 20 companies were thinking of relocating because of Brexit. He replied:

Oh yes. Oh yes. I'm thinking only of, of that kind of institution. Some are, er, American-based, Japanese-based, Swiss-based, et cetera et cetera, but they are all very present in London, they have important activities there, they serve, most of them serve their clients throughout the EU from London, although most of them have some er, offices in Paris already. Er, but they will have to relocate part of that activities, not all their activities, but part of it, because of Brexit.

SM said that Moody's had observed that they thought the impact would be limited because most banks (for example) would be able to still operate from London. CN replied:

Well, most institutions erm, consider that they will have to relocate something like 15 to 20% of their present activities in London, so you're right, it's the majority of the business may remain in London, but 15 to 20% is not insignificant and that is because there will need to be not only sales forces in the EU 27 to sell to clients, but also as the ECB as a supervisor has constantly repeated, that there will be a need to have erm, the trading activities, the risk control systems, the compliance systems, so it's not only a small office, that's true for banks, but the same should be true for insurance activities, erm, and, er, to a large extent asset management too.

SM asked if it was the intention of the EU to play hardball in exit negotiations to ensure that France got as much business as possible. CN said the issue should not be looked at in that way. He added:

I mean, there is a logic to the single market, by the way this logic was er . . . drawn up at the time with a strong import of the UK, which was very much in favour of the single market, and the logic is that there are three, there are four conditions to be part and to have full access to the single market for financial services in particular. The first one is that you must implement EU regulations, second you must accept the control of the ECJ, the European Court of Justice, third you must contribute significantly to the EU budget, never forget that er, Norway . . .

SM: *(speaking over)* We're out . . . we're out . . .

CN: . . . is contributing as, as much as, almost as much as the UK per capita, and finally the four freedoms.

At 8.10am, Amber Rudd was interviewed. John Humphrys noted that Angela Merkel had said that the UK could no longer rely on the UK, so Europeans must now fight for their own destiny. AR said that as exit negotiations started, it would be impressed on the other countries that the UK would stay a strong partner, in defence, security and trade. JH suggested that AM had already made up her mind and that the language she had used was powerful. He stressed that she had said the UK would no longer be part of the team. AR replied:

We can reassure Mrs Merkel that we want to have a deep and special partnership so that we can continue to maintain European-wide security to keep us all safe from the terrorists abroad and that are trying to be nurtured in our country.

JH noted that Nick Clegg had noted that the UK would no longer have access to security information. AR replied that access could be negotiated.

At 8.42am, Katya Adler commented on the AM remarks about no longer relying on the UK. She said that AM knew that with the UK leaving the EU, the EU would have only one major military power left, France. That meant that NATO assumed a great role in EU safety. SM wondered if the UK should not therefore be too concerned about the AM remarks. KA replied that AM was pragmatic, had a good relationship with Theresa May, and still relied on the UK. SM asked if this was the end of the post World War II 'consensus' – some were suggesting it was. KA said:

I think if you look at what happened after World War II in Europe, it was the United States that helped build the European Union, it was the United States that helped build the NATO alliance and now Europe can no longer rely on the United States. So, I mean, in that way yes, it is the end of World War II stability and security which is important to Europe. And Angela Merkel

feel that very much indeed, but she, but again, what I mean about pragmatism is, she can't turn her back on the UK or the US, because that would be folly. You have, in some quarters, in the European Union, those who say, 'We've just got to rely on ourselves', but you turn to Angela Merkel and she says, 'Listen, mate (*laughter in voice*) we can't be on ourselves (*sic?*) we just do not have the defence capabilities, we do not have the military might, you know, this is the world where we look to Russia, we look to China, we are too small on our own. So she talks tough for Europe and she believes that you must act closer together, like I said, pooling military resources, using military spending . . .

SM: (*speaking over*) Katya . . .

KA: . . . far more wisely than many countries do, but not giving up, and hoping that the US does not give up on them.

May 30

Bulletins said that Theresa May would turn the focus of the Conservatives' campaign towards Brexit. She would accuse European Union officials of adopting an aggressive negotiating position which would need to be met by strong leadership from the UK. Iain Watson said:

Theresa May will refer to two documents setting out the European Commission's approach to some of the key issues in the Brexit negotiations as proof that tough talks lie ahead and that someone of her experience needs to be at the negotiating table. In a clear attempt to attract Leave voters who may in the past of supported Labour, she'll describe the outcome of the EU referendum as a quiet revolution driven by those who felt let down or left behind.

It was also noted that in a leaders' debate, Theresa May had been challenged for her previous Remain stance, but had said she wanted to make a success of leaving the EU.

Later, an item on the SNP said that Nicola Sturgeon had called for Scotland to stay in the single market after Brexit and to be allowed to operate a separate immigration policy.

At 6.07am, there were extracts from the leaders' debate. Jeremy Corbyn, after being asked if there were too many immigrants in the UK, said they were needed to maintain the health service and much of industry. A sequence in which Theresa May had said she would be a tough negotiator, and that no deal was better than a bad deal, was also played. This was repeated, with strong emphasis, in later bulletins.

At 6.30am, Norman Smith said that Brexit was one of the reasons Theresa May was leading in the polls.

Mishal Husain (6.36am) asked Scottish correspondent Sarah Smith about the SNP's plans for Brexit. She said:

... they reckon if significant new powers were devolved to the Scottish parliament over business regulation, over immigration, things like that, it would be possible for Scotland to be a member of the EU single market and still be part of the UK as the rest of Britain has left the European Union. It would require Scotland to do some quite dramatic things, like run its own immigration policy so that freedom of movement still applied in Scotland, but not in the rest of Britain. It's probably very unlikely, it was completely ruled out by Theresa May and the Conservatives before they called the general election, but it's what the SNP will still argue for, along with saying they should have a seat at the Brexit negotiating table to represent Scotland's interests – something else Theresa May has completely ruled out, but they will keep making the case for.

At 7.09am, Misha Husain interviewed Angus Robertson of SNP asked what the party's immigration policy would look like. AR said that – like sections within Canada and Australia – Scotland wanted to manage its own immigration policy to allow people from the EU and around the world to work there

because they were hugely important to the economy. MH wondered what numbers above the 400,000 already in Scotland were envisaged. AR said all those people were needed, and new arrivals should not be turned away. He warned that because of uncertainty, EU nationals were leaving and he wanted to reverse that. MH pushed on whether he wanted more immigrants. AR said he wanted the opportunity for people to come and go and did not want a restrictive policy imposed by Westminster. MH again pressed for a number. AR said his party recognised the contribution immigrants were making and did not want to lose any.

In Business update, Dominic O'Connell suggested to Kenny Jacobs of Ryanair that, as a Remainer, he was worried about what would happen after March 2019. He replied:

Yes we are, we don't have any clarity in terms of what's going to happen. Article 50 has been triggered, which means the UK is going to leave Europe (*sic*) they have indicated they will leave the European Court of Justice, that is the European institution that governs Open Skies, so Britain is going to leave Open Skies as it now stands. We need to see clarity in terms of what is going to be the future of Open Skies, which will mean a new bilateral or not. If there isn't a new bilateral in place, then you may have very restricted or no flying between Europe and the UK for a period. I think it's clear where heading to a very, what looks to be a very ugly divorce at the moment. Our call on the government here is to please give us and other airlines clarity, every airline is saying the same, we want to continue doing what we do. You know, three quarters of British citizens go to Europe on their holidays, 80% of British business travel is to the continent of Europe so we need clarity so that we can continue to operate our business and ideally grow here.

DO: If it was the messiest of divorce is, is there a chance that Ryanair as an Irish airline, as an EU airline could be excluded from Britain altogether?

KJ: It's a very, very . . . that's very small possibility, and that's one that we're keen to avoid, you know, the UK has been the leading market across all of Europe in terms of low-cost airlines, we have 40 million passengers here in the UK, but yes, it's a possibility that there may be major disruption for us and other airlines unless Open Skies is sorted out. So we're calling for, you know, once the election is over that the government sort of move beyond the Yes Minister rhetoric and actually give clarity and have a clear agenda saying, 'Right, we want British citizens to be able to travel on their holidays, travel on business and vice versa. That's very important for us and I think very important for the, for the consumers in the UK, and that's the agency were looking for.

At 7.30am, Laura Kuenssberg commented about the leader's debate and claimed that there was no doubt that what Theresa May had said about Brexit were applauded, 'even though she's still giving hardly any detail about what she would actually like to do'. JH asked if social matters or Brexit would decide the election. LK said it would be a mixture. The Tories would major on it, but other subjects were also important.

At 7.52am, Mishal Husain spoke to Dan Mulhall, Irish ambassador to London who was taking up a post in Washington. MH asked what the Irish government's view of a frictionless border was. DM replied that the member states were committed to avoid any hardening of the border. It would take time to deal with the arrangements but that was the goal of all the parties involved. MH asked:

But isn't it inevitable that that border would have to function differently to how it does at present, so there would have to be some stopping and searching and checks of lorries, for example?

DM replied said that hardening the border would be very negative for people on both sides. It had been open for more than 20 years and was also an important part of the peace process. MH interrupted to ask if it could function exactly as at present. DM said the Article 50 had that as a goal. MH then stated:

Well, let's talk about the effect on people then, and particularly about British citizens who might have Irish ancestry, what have you seen at the embassy here in terms of applications for Irish citizenship?

DM said there had been a 70% increase in requests for Irish passports from people based in Britain. The numbers of applications through a grandparent had also gone up dramatically. MH asked if you had an Irish grandparent, you could apply for an Irish passport. DM confirmed this was the case and said the rise was 50,000 a year and was now 70,000. This was 'significant'. MH changed tack and noted that Arlene Foster had said there would be no poll on unification in her lifetime. DM replied that the matter was not connected with Brexit directly, but a poll could be called under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement when the secretary of State for Northern Ireland believed it could be a majority in favour of a united Ireland. MH asked if Brexit increased the 'chances of that circumstance'. DM replied:

Brexit complicates the situation for everyone in these islands. We would prefer if Britain were to remain in the European Union that would be the most straightforward way of maintaining the good situation we have between Britain and Ireland. And by the way, it's not just Northern Ireland we're concerned about, we have a huge trading relationship with Britain that benefits both countries, £1 billion in trade back and forth across the Irish Sea every week of the year, and that is something that we want to preserve, so we have huge interest in the border, but also in the trading relationship between Britain and Ireland and indeed in the status of the Irish community in Britain, which is uniquely established under British law which we want to see continue into the future as well, to the benefit of both countries.

At 8.10am, John Humphrys interviewed Angela Rayner. He observed that an election that had been expected to be dominated by Brexit had not been, despite that the negotiations would 'determine our future for generations to come'.

AR said everyone knew that Brexit was happening, but the election was also about domestic policy, and Labour was offering real choice. JH challenged that she had not spelled out what the Brexit policy was. AR said Brexit was happening and Labour wanted access to the single market 'and jobs came before everything else'. Labour had been clear on that from the start. Labour did not believe that a general election over Brexit was necessary. JH suggested that Labour wanted to stay in the single market but hadn't given a clue about how it would be achieved. AR said the party had NOT said it wanted to stay in the single market – it wanted tariff-free access to it. JH said no-one else had that. AR replied:

Well, because we do trade in business, they get benefits as well as we do. But we've been quite clear what our aims and targets are, that we want to see Britain having good jobs for British workers, we don't want to see our economy can tanking as a result of it, and that we . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Well, no, everybody . . . everybody wants that yeah.

AR: Well, no, because Theresa May has said that her priority is bringing down migration targets, when she's failed to do that in seven years . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Well, it is, it is one of her aspirations, that is absolutely true, but she wants precisely the same things as you want, that maybe though . . .

AR: *(speaking over)* Well . . .

JH: . . . she's being somewhat more realistic and saying, 'No, we're not going to get the sort . . .

AR: *(speaking over)* I don't think so, I don't think so John, she says no deal's, you know, better than a bad deal, well no deal . . .

JH: *(speaking over) (fragment of word, or word unclear)*

AR: . . . is a bad deal actually.

JH: *(speaking over)* Right, so you'd prefer to have a bad deal, would you?

AR: No, but being, saying you're going to be 'a bloodied difficult woman' right at the start of negotiations tends to make sure that you do get a bad deal, if I'm honest, rather than actually working with our partners across Europe . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Well it . . .

AR: . . . to get the best deal for Britain.

JH: So what would you do, roll over?

AR: Absolutely not, John, but you know, the negotiation is part of a dialogue between two, er, two parties and at the moment, unfortunately, Theresa May in the way that she is handled it has made us, made us look like, you know ogres across Europe. You know, if you see the pictures now, Theresa May's at the back of the queue whenever she's talking to the leaders in Europe. You know, we are a laughing stock across Europe . . .

JH: *(interrupting)* Well that's because we voted to leave the European Union . . .

AR: *(speaking over)* We don't need to be. I don't believe that's the case. I believe it's the way in which Theresa May has handled it so far. You've got Boris Johnson, and you know, David Davis, people like that that are on the world stage trying to negotiate it that laugh and smirk and think it's all one big laugh . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* Well would you . . .

AR: They made promises to the British people of £350 million a week to the NHS, and then say, 'Well that was just a pledge'.

JH: Well, would you like to give us some details then, for instance, you mentioned migration earlier, what, what does Jeremy Corbyn mean when he talks about a managed migration system?

AR: Well he talks about making sure that migration works for Britain across the board . . .

JH: That's a . . .

AR: So what he means . . .

JH: *(laughs)*

AR: John, let me finish, you're not letting me finish . . .

JH: Go on.

AR: What he means by that is that instead of undercutting wages like, you know, the last seven years the government has allowed that to happen, to undercut the wages of British workers, he's said he will stop that practice from happening. Overseas agencies that just recruit . . .

JH: *(speaking over)* How?

AR: Because we will bring in domestic legislation that prevents that from happening, and then we will enforce that legislation to ensure that doesn't happen.

JH: *(speaking over)* What has that to do with a managed migration system?

AR: Because we will make sure that migration has the benefits for Britain rather than just the disadvantages. We've made it absolutely clear, but we won't put arbitrary numbers on it,

because we recognise that actually migration to the UK has some very positive things for the UK .

JH at this point switched to asking about nursery education.

JH then interviewed David Davis, and first spoke about the Conservative party's apparent reduced lead in the polls. DD picked up AR's remarks about Brexit, and observed:

Well, it's going to happen, but *how* it happens is the issue. I mean they're just sort of assuming, 'Oh well it's going to happen and that's that', how it happens makes a big difference to whether or not you can afford social care, erm, social care improvements and so on. So Theresa in her speech today will make the point that Brexit is the underpinning, the foundation if you like of the economic strategy, a successful Brexit will give you the scope for a successful economic strategy, which will then give you the money to pay for good public services, whether it's childcare, education, healthcare, whatever and the point here is that what you heard there was an incredibly naive view of the way the Europeans are going to play this. And we've seen yesterday a couple of reports out on what they want. They want, if we read it right, I mean we just (*fragment of word, unclear due to speaking over*).

JH asked about several points: that the EU Commission had said that even if the UK left the EU in 2019, it would still be entangled in the EU's financial and legal systems for years (later said to be 'decades' after Brexit); that Theresa May had been 'misleading' in rebutting claims from the EU about the Downing Street dinner; that TM seemed less tough in rebutting the claims that the cost of Brexit could be 100 billion; that there was a difference between 'revealing hands' in advance of Brexit negotiations and being asked what the goals of the negotiations were; that Matthew Parris had made 'a very good point' about the electorate being infantilised through not being told basic positions in areas such as tariffs and the Northern Irish border; whether the UK would raise tariffs against countries which raised them against the UK; what would happen if the EU said no to a tariff-free deal.

At 8.35am, Mishal Husain interviewed Richard Walton, a former head of counter-terrorism at Scotland Yard, about whether Nick Clegg's claim that Brexit would undermine access to EU security databases. It was noted that Home Secretary Amber Rudd had said she was confident that the databases would be accessed after Brexit. RW said first that the databases involved did not contain information about terrorism. MH said:

(*speaking over*) Right, but say you arrested someone on suspicion of terrorism or any other offence, you would immediately be able to do a quick check on them, Europe-wide?

RW said they could be accessed without the UK being a member of the EU. MH said a question was the amount of access that would be allowed from outside the EU – there had to be 'something extra' if 'you were a member'. RW said he did not think there was. Norway used the SIS database and it was not a member if the EU and 14 different countries outside the EU could use Europol. He added:

So I'm afraid Europol is not necessarily an EU body, and it's not in the interests of the EU for us to pull away from the, the, these databases.

MH asked if he believed then that Brexit would not adversely affect security and terrorism, cooperation and the exchange of data in any way. RW said it would not.

At 8.44am, Sir Craig Oliver (former Cameron adviser) and Tom Baldwin (Labour adviser) were asked about the leaders' debate. CO said the prime minister's responses on Brexit had been positive, but not so on public spending.

May 31

Bulletins said:

A leading health charity has warned that tens of thousands of expat pensioners may return to Britain to use the NHS after Brexit, unless there's a deal to continue treating them in other EU countries. The Nuffield Trust says the extra cost for the NHS could be almost £1 billion a year, twice as much as Britain now reimburses other EU states for their care. More details from our health reporter, Michelle Roberts.

MICHELLE ROBERTS: Currently British pensioners can reside in any other EU member state and get the same healthcare rights as locals. It's part of a reciprocal scheme which the UK pays around £500 million a year for, to cover nearly 200,000 British expats who are living out their retirements in countries such as France and Spain. When Brexit happens, all this could change says the Nuffield Trust, unless a deal is struck it says pensioners would lose their free healthcare, and if they all return to Britain for treatment it could cost the NHS £1 billion a year

In a separate item, it was said the Conservatives would claim that Labour would jeopardise the NHS and investment in education by negotiating a bad Brexit deal.

In business news, it was said that the business lobby had been shunned in the lead-up to the election. Stephen Martin, of the IoD, said the election had focused on Brexit. Dominic O'Connell said:

And, of course, big business said 'vote Remain' and they were completely ignored.

SM: Big business did say that, but I say, like the general public, there's a lot of different views in business itself, it's not just big business, it's small business, medium-size business, but as you say, yes, that could have had a damaging impact.

Norman Smith (6.33am), after discussing Labour's plans, said that the response of the Conservatives was that nothing of their policies was achievable because they would fail to secure a 'decent Brexit deal'.

At 6.49am, Justin Webb said the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland had campaigned to stay in the EU and now wanted to 'mitigate' the impact of Brexit. Leader Naomi Long had said it was an issue which should transcend nationalist and unionist policies. She said:

The truth is that there are many unionists who voted to remain within the EU, and the danger of making this an orange-green issue is that they become disenfranchised. Just as those who voted to leave on the nationalist side will feel disenfranchised if it's seen to be a nationalist issue. There is, there is undoubtedly, I think, a new impetus that's been given around the border question because of the notion of a hard Brexit, what that border might look like. We have made it very clear as a party that what we want to see are practical ways of addressing the border issues, practical ways of addressing how we live our lives in Northern Ireland with the land border. So I think the Leave/Remain argument in some ways we're past that, we now need to look at the practicalities of what Brexit might look like. And I think it's important, and that's what we're standing for, that the public then get the opportunity to decide on the final deal.

NL claimed that the party was on course to win seats, and could deal with the relevant issues. She attacked Theresa May for not coming to the province before Article 50 was triggered and said there was an 'insensitivity' to local issues as well as a 'deafness' to Northern Ireland's needs.

At 7.13am, Sarah Montague interviewed Lord Kerslake of the NHS Foundation Trust who claimed that moving out of the EU would have a 'huge impact' on the trust's ability to recruit both nursing and medical staff.

Justin Webb said that the political parties were unwilling (especially David Davis who had been on the programme the day before) to talk about their Brexit plans, whereas the 'Europeans' were adopting 'the very opposite' approach. Katya Adler said:

Well we've just had to draft negotiating documents released on the exit bill that the UK is going to ask of the UK before it leaves, and also about citizens' rights, so the rights of EU citizens who

remain in the UK after Brexit, the rights of UK citizens who remain in the rest of the EU as well. And there's a lot of detail in those. And that's because the Commission says it wants to cover all bases now. So, to avoid thinking, 'Oh right, we've agreed that Brexit issue we can cross it off the list', and then someone saying, on the exit bill, for example, 'What about the salaries of native English speakers at EU schools that educate EU civil servants? What about the role of the European Court of Justice after Brexit?' Why are we being allowed to know all these details, why are they, knowledge? Well, that's because the EU has promised transparency in these negotiations, but really that's about trying to turn a weakness into a strength. So these draft negotiating documents that we've just seen our written by the Brexit team at the European Commission, but they need to be seen and approved by all 27 EU member states before they can become officially you negotiating positions. So, because they've got so many actors involved, they know they're going to be leaked, so they're thinking, 'Well, let's just make it all public from the off.'

KA added that although Michel Barnier had been given some instructions, it as also clear that he could not talk about trade or future relations, because they were not included. So no matter how hard the UK pushed when the talks began, he would not be allowed to cover 'those details'. She added:

...What he's being told in these documents, for example is, 'Oh well, he's allowed to talk about the European Court of Justice,' you know, which is the, the shackle that hardline Brexiteers have longed to free themselves from, it says that it should maintain full jurisdiction further ruling on disputes about the rights of EU citizens who stay in the UK even after Brexit. So those are the kind of details that Britain will know that he's been given by the EU side if they're approved.

In the 8am bulletin, it was said:

Elsewhere, Labour this morning sought to quash claims it is examining proposals to allow non-EU unskilled workers into the UK as part of its immigration reforms. Labour said the proposals contained in the discussion document for Mr Corbyn were not party policy. The paper also contained proposals to end the income threshold for EU spouses entering the UK, and the introduction of a US-style green card system. A Labour spokeswoman said the options were only considered at one meeting, and the paper was one of many put before Mr Corbyn.

At 8.33am, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt was interviewed. He said that Brexit mattered to the NHS because it would create a stronger economy and thereby facilitate funding. He said:

The question for us, looking forward is, in these Brexit negotiations who is going to protect those jobs, lock in that economic growth, is it a strong Theresa May who's doing that, or is it going to be Jeremy Corbyn who I'm afraid many people think would be totally incapable of doing that job?

Sarah Montague asked whether a good Brexit would also damage the NHS. He had voted Remain and had called for a second referendum. JH said he had changed his mind about that, and repeated the point about a strong economy. SM said:

The Times has this morning a survey suggesting 1 million more carers are needed to support our ageing population. It's difficult to see where they'll come from post-Brexit.

JH did not answer directly, but said improved social care was essential.

June 1

Bulletins spoke of an ill-tempered leaders' debate the evening before, and of criticism of Theresa May for not taking part. It said she would put Brexit at the core of the Conservative campaign that day. Vicki Young said:

Jeremy Corbyn's last minute appearance in this debate highlighted the prime minister's decision not to turn up, and her absence was a gift to the others who ridiculed her for it. This was a crowded field with 7 parties all trying to have their say and representing the party of government Amber Rudd came under sustained attack, skirmishing with the others over cuts to welfare, public services and pensioner benefits. She retaliated saying voters would hear many shiny promises from Labour but there was no magic money tree. Being in power meant taking difficult decisions she said. The parties clashed too over Brexit and immigration.

Matt McGrath reported that with Donald Trump likely to withdraw, Chinese and EU leaders were issuing a joint statement supporting the Paris climate change accord. It would pledge a high degree of commitment and would highlight perceived threats to stability and security.

Another bulletin item said that Europol had launched a new website aimed at tracing victims of child abuse.

At 6.13am, Jenny Hill reported on moves by Angela Merkel to move the 'hosting' of the European Banking Authority from London to Frankfurt. She said that AM believed the move was 'predestined' and had ramped up the rhetoric at a naming conference. JH added:

...she went on to reiterate what she's said before about the Brexit negotiations which will come up, of course, very soon – they'll be endlessly complex she said and, she repeated, they will, at a price for the UK. Mrs Merkel is on, I think, fighting form at the moment, not just when it comes to Britain. You'll remember a couple of days ago she made the point that Germany, Europe can no longer rely completely on its traditional allies, pointing the finger really at Donald Trump's administration in the US, but also, I think, at Brexit Britain. Mrs Merkel, I think, is increasingly fed up with the scenarios on both sides of the channel, but I think also being a pragmatist is now very much focusing on the future of the EU, and that's a future of course that will be without Britain.

JH added that this was against the background of the German election, but there was also a sadness at the UK's decision with recognition that they must now move on and start to reshape the EU. That was now possible, it was felt, with 'more abandon'. A forum was being held in Berlin which would consider the EU's finances without the UK.

In business news, Richard Jeffrey of Cazenove, responded to the Angela Merkel remarks. He said:

I think it's interesting in terms of the politics of the European Union, because you have a group of countries there who are linked together by a common currency, for that to be successful they have to come closer together, they have to federalise, but this I think is highlighting the fact that national interests are still paramount. And I think that is, in a sense, the paradox of the European Union, that national interests are still driving it, where they know they have to come closer together and they have to federalise, and this really is telling you that Germany thinks that it is the place where monetary systems should be run from.

At 6.37am, correspondent Daniel Davies said that the cost of living was an election issue in Wales. He added that Wales had received a 'huge amount of funding' from the EU and now there was competition between the parties to provide the best guarantee of a continuation. There was a feeling that EU funding hadn't been spent well because Wales had voted for Brexit.

At 7.33am, Justin Webb, in Cardiff, spoke to bakery workers about immigration. One said it had made him poorer, another that it was a good thing. There was a call for a minimum wage and the ending of pressure to be undercut. The pro-immigrant speaker maintained they got the same wage as others.

At 8.10am, Kamal Ahmed noted that there was a squeeze on earnings in the UK as a result of inflation but the UK was a trading nation and if others were doing well, the US, within the EU, it could be good for the UK.

In the related interview, Damian Green said a successful Brexit would lead to a stronger economy.

Justin Webb interviewed Neil Hamilton of the Welsh UKIP group and asked if immigration was 'something for him'. He replied:

Well, I hope it is, because . . .

JW: (*interrupting*) People here were balanced about it, they thought yes, it does reduce wages a bit, but they also noted that it helps the health service and other public services?

NH: Yeah, but, you know, an immigration policy post-Brexit is obviously going to accommodate doctors and nurses and other professionals who fills skills gaps in the British economy. What we don't want is uncontrolled, unskilled immigration, which pushes down wages at the bottom of the income scale. And the Bank of England has proved that this is a very important factor in the labour market. For many people today the minimum wage is the maximum wage . . .

JW: Alright . . .

NH: That's the reason why we've got so much poverty.

June 2

Bulletins said the Conservatives had dismissed claims of internal disagreements over immigration policy.

In business news, Dominic O'Connell said that the UK's economy had grown quite strongly since the referendum, but Scotland's had shrunk in the last three months of the year. He asked Laura Lambie of Investec if fears of another referendum were responsible. LL replied that although Brexit had made business nervous, the direction of travel was known. But with independence there was more uncertainty. DOC suggested that uncertainties with Brexit and independence might be the reasons why Scotland's economy was faltering. DOC asked the next guest Stephen Boyle, of the RBS, if Brexit and the independence referendum could be hitting investment. SB said Scotland was still second (to the SE) in attracting inward investment so it was hard to see that argument. Stuart Patrick of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce said engineering and whisky was having increased export demand so there were signs of returning confidence. DO wondered about the weakness of sterling. SP said it was partly to do with that, but it wasn't the entire story. There was growth in tourism, too, so there was 'something peculiar going on'. DOC asked what was the biggest uncertainty members faced, Brexit or independence. He replied:

Depends which sector you're in, which one you'll choose. Brexit is an issue, we're a main city here in Glasgow, so there's a lot of concern about what the implications of Brexit will be, and yet Glasgow is actually slightly less exposed to European markets than perhaps the rest of the UK, traditionally the United States has been a more important market for our industries, marginally so, but skills is the issue that members are saying most about. It relates back to your point about growth in the working age population, we haven't seen the level of immigration over the last 15 years that the parts of the UK have had, and so you do, we're hearing from companies that have questions about 'what happens to our EU nationals' that you're hearing all around the UK, but alongside that saying that without that immigration pressure from the population view, should we have some differential immigration rules in Scotland that would allow us to deal with our skills shortages whilst maintaining some political balance with the rest of the population.

At 6.35am, Norman Smith said there was a question mark over whether it was desirable to bring immigration down in a short time frame because, as a result of Brexit, business was going through upheaval and would find it difficult to deal as well with a reduced amount of foreign labour – there would not be enough time to train up British workers to replace foreign ones.

Nick Robinson (6.44am) interviewed Willie Rennie, leader of the Scots Liberal Democrats. He suggested that his party was not seen as the first choice on Brexit. WR replied that his party had a good chance of being elected in some seats. NR observed that his party was calling for a second Brexit referendum, but

not another one for independence. WR replied that Brexit was such a monumental issue that the process should begin and end with a referendum, with the British people – not Theresa May – deciding. He said his party could not do a deal with Labour over Brexit because he backed the ‘hard’ option. The party would campaign to get a better Brexit deal, and to give the British people the final say.

At 7.13am, DOC, in an interview with Colin McLellan of Skyscanner, asked if Brexit was a cause if concern. He replied not – the company had a presence in 11 markets so it was insulated.

At 7.16am, Nick Robinson interviewed Blair McDougall, an anti-independence campaigner in Glasgow. BMD said people were tired of voting. Eileen Morton, the Liberal Democrat local candidate said her party wanted to stay in the EU.

At 7.32am, NR interviewed Ruth Davidson. He observed she had been a very prominent Remainer and that she had warned that the ‘Brexiters bastards’ would influence the prime minister. She denied having said that in public and wanted the PM to have sufficient a majority not to be held to ransom by either side of the aisle. NR asked if that meant she was worried about hard line Brexiters. She said not – wanted the PM to have maximum room to manoeuvre. She said:

I want the rest of the EU, as we approach these negotiations, to see a Prime Minister that has gone to the . . . gone to the public and got the mandate that her opponents challenged her to get. I want to see a Prime Minister that can sit down eyeball to eyeball with Angela Merkel and say look we are one Team UK and we want the best deal for our country and that’s what I’m supporting at this election.

NR asked whether Conservative policy was to cut immigration or (as she had said) to stay in the single market even if that meant keeping free movement. She had also said it after the referendum. RD replied that she would support the Prime Minister in securing a free trade agreement. She said the goal of the immigration policy was to bring numbers down in a system managed from the UK rather than Brussels. But the brightest and best could still be attracted from other parts of the world to fill gaps in the economy. NR said the truth was that she had given in to the Brexiters. He asserted:

You used to say, ‘we want to stay in the single market’ and you said it after the referendum, now you don’t. You used to say that you wanted free movement of people, you said that after the referendum, now you don’t. The truth is, you’ve given up the fight and the Brexiters you warned of, they’re already running the Conservative party and will if you win the next election?

RD said this was absolute nonsense. She added:

What we did was, as a country say that the decision over Brexit was so big, it was a decision that wasn’t going to be made by politicians alone. It was a decision that had to be made by each and every individual voter and whoever, whatever the result was, it would be respected. Now, I fought hard for my side, I put the points across, I made the argument for Remain and the country voted to leave. Now we have a really strong example in Scotland of a Nationalist First Minister who’s had a referendum again where we said the decision was so big that it had to go to the country and not just politicians and she said that she would respect the result and she hasn’t and she’s tried to replay it again and again and again until she gets the result she wants (*words unclear due to speaking over*)

NR: (*speaking over*) And I will be talking to her at 8.10.

RD: I’m sure you will but I stand full square for the . . .

NR: Ruth Davidson . . .

RD: . . . decision we made. It would not be right or proper for me to then say in this other referendum where the country made a decision for us not to say that decision should be respected.

At 8.10, NR interviewed Nicola Sturgeon. NR suggested the Tories had ignored her in forming the Brexit strategy. Before she could answer, he added that Labour had said the UK would not stay in the single market. NS said not. NR said that was their logic. NS said they did not want to. She added that Jeremy Corbyn wanted to end free movement and accepted the UK would come out of the single market. She then maintained that Theresa May had not listened to the SNP over compromise proposals to keep Scotland in the single market. A vote for SNP would strengthen her hand in securing arrangement that did not put tens of thousands of Scottish jobs on the line. She said later that at the end of the Brexit process, people in Scotland should have a choice about the future, they should not have to accept economic damage.

Sarah Smith said in the UK this was the Brexit election, but in Scotland it was about the independence vote. She said that the referendum was a battle between the SNP and Tories over independence.

At 8.34am, James Naughtie reported from Scotland. Charlie Jeffrey from Edinburgh University said that powers over agriculture and fisheries could to some extent be devolved, and Nicola Sturgeon wanted powers over immigration. Jamie Kerr (a Labour lawyer) said the Brexit vote had laid out a democratic deficit in Scotland because it was about to be taken out of the EU against its will. There was thus a need for greater devolution.

June 3

A bulletin item about the Question Time leader specials said that Theresa May had said a fresh mandate was necessary to deliver a successful Brexit. Jeremy Corbyn had responded that his team would be able to handle the Brexit negotiations and had plans for immediate legislation to protect the rights of EU nationals in the UK. He had also said that the UK would not necessarily be poorer as a result of leaving the EU.

At 7.12am, Katrina Renton, looking forward to a second QT special edition, in Scotland, said the Greens would stand against 'a hard Brexit'. She added:

Now UKIP, you'll also not see so much across the mainstream campaign, they're only running in 10 seats that's down from 41 at the last general election, they have no representation at Holyrood, they have one member of the European Parliament, their leader in Scotland, David Coburn. Now, bear in mind they got 1.6% of the vote in 2015, now their manifesto pledges are to ensure that Brexit means *exit* they claim UKIP is the only party which would act as a true opposition to the SNP would cut all ties with the EU. And also there against Scottish independence backing a strong Scotland and a strong United Kingdom.

At 7.19am, Mishal Husain interviewed the outgoing Irish Taoiseach, John Bruton. She said the new PM's most pressing decisions related to Brexit and its impact. JB replied that Leo Varadkar would work within EU structures to get the best deal for the EU and for Ireland – the only country with a land border with a country leaving the EU. MH asked if the UK could ask for anything special from Ireland, or would they act purely as one of the 27. JB replied:

Well, Ireland would have preferred if Britain had decided to go for a softer Brexit, by either accepting the European Economic Area option, or the customs union option, or accepting some limited jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice. But the British government after the referendum, after the referendum, decided to throw aside those options and is going for a hard Brexit. And obviously, the harder the Brexit, the harder the border in Ireland, and the more disruptive the Brexit will be for the Irish economy and for Irish people. We deeply regret that, but there's nothing we can do about it.

At 7.32am, John Humphrys observed that immigration had not been as prominent in the election as had been expected. He noted that Theresa May had promised to bring it down to tens of thousands and UKIP to zero. Lord Green of Migration Watch suggested this might be because the Conservatives had a record that was difficult to defend. Joe Owen of the Institute for Government said both manifestos were committed to ending free movement but did not say how. He added:

The Conservatives, as you say, they recommitted to their top down target of this tens of thousands. Labour have promised to, well they focused more on labour market abuse and sort of a bottom up approach but actually they're very light on detail, both manifestos, so there's nothing on actually what will the post-Brexit immigration system be under each party, who will be let in, who won't be let in, when will changes happen. Neither recognise really the administrative scale of the task that they're approaching and the challenging time lines they have in which to put them in place.

Lord Green agreed that the time factor was critical especially because at existing levels there as a population increase the size of Birmingham every two years and one new household was needed every five minutes. JH said that if you chopped immigration, the experts said that the economy would suffer. LG said:

Well we don't agree with that, though of course there would be a transition period but what we've said is that the way to tackle this (*fragments of words, unclear*) the reality is that Brexit is a major opportunity in this context. The way to tackle it is to bring work permits into effect for EU migrants in the same way as for non-EU, that would reduce net migration by 100,000 a year from recent levels.

JH: In other words make it more difficult for EU citizens to come to this country?

LG: You'd have the people who are highly qualified as we do from the rest of the world. You would not have low paid workers coming from mainly Eastern Europe, that's where the numbers lie, you could cut 100,000 for starters. A lot more to be done but this is an opportunity and the government need to grab it.

JO said that restrictions on medium skilled immigrants such as teachers and carpenters would be unpopular with businesses and smaller-scale employers. LG replied that there was nothing easy about getting it not done. The issues raised by JO could be dealt with through issuing temporary work permits. LG added:

. . . two or three years for each person. I mean, the real stress has to be surely on training British workers to do these jobs. Historically we've never had massive immigration in this country until 1997 it was seldom more than 50,000 a year and sometimes negative until 2000. In the 10 years before 2000 European migration averaged about 20,000 a year, peanuts. So we've got into a situation since 1997 when for a variety of reasons, immigration has gone up and up and up. Now that adds value but it is counterbalanced in our view by the massive impact on population and so on.

JO said an important point was that the changes were not going to happen until 2019 – past reforms had taken years to implement and the same would be true going forward. LG said:

It's important not to get lost in the detail though, the . . . there are things that are difficult, it's a big advantage to wrap things into an existing system of course, but one of the difficulties is that we haven't yet had our negotiation with the European Union. So there's no agreement, for example, on whether there is going to be visa-free access for tourists and students and so on which we recommend. We think we should try to keep all the connections that we have with Europe except for people who want to come and work. So that would get the numbers down in terms of people who stay but you'd still keep . . . I mean Boris Johnson I think said we're leaving the EU, we're not leaving Europe. It's a soundbite but it's a rather important point.

At 7.52am, Nigel Farage was interviewed about his connections with Russia. He said the whole topic was 'hysteria'.

At 8.09am there was a brief item about reaction to the QT leaders' programme in which Conservative and Labour voters disagreed over whether the 52% vote for Leave was the 'country' or simply 'voters'. The Conservative said that if someone did not vote, they could not have an opinion.

Caroline Lucas was interviewed by John Humphrys at 8.42am. JH noted that the Green party had said if the automatic right of EU citizens to come to the UK was stopped, it would pose a real risk to public services. He asked CL why. She replied that 55,000 EU nationals were in the NHS alone and free movement had been a 'wonderful gift'. The right to come here should be expanded not reduced. CL said she also wanted the UK to stay in the single market. JH said that Brexit had to happen because people had voted for it. CL replied:

I'm simply saying that the Green Party would much prefer that we were not about to leave the EU. Our policy is to say that once the negotiations have been finished that final settlement should be put back to the British people in a ratification referendum to make sure that people are still happy with what the small print says. If they are of course, then that means we leave the EU. If they're not then that means that they should have a right, we believe, to stay inside the EU.

She added that more and more information would come to light about false promises such as the £350m that would not go to the NHS, and not keeping the same economic benefits outside the EU. JH said that both sides had said things that were controversial during the referendum campaign. CL responded:

Well I think it's far more democratic to go *back* to the people. It was the people who set off this process back on 23 June, I think it's right that they have the final sign-off because that referendum on the 23 June clearly said, yes a small majority were in favour of leaving the EU but it doesn't give us any clarity at all about what kind of settlement they wanted, that's very different, for example, from the Scottish referendum over independence where whichever side you were on, at least there was a manifesto set out which would have explained what independent looked like. The Leave campaign . . .

CL added that the Leave campaign did not set out what Leave would look like and did not want to end environmental protection. JH said that many had voted to limit immigration, and yet she was advocating letting anybody from the EU who wanted to come here to be allowed to do so. Would people support that? CL said that people had been lead to believe that public services were suffering because of immigration and this was not true, it was a lack of investment. A migrant was far more likely to be treating you as a doctor than being ahead of you in a queue. She added that there would be serious shortages of labour if free movement was ended and the government agreed. Free movement had been incredibly important for the economy. JH said that some believed that standards of living had been eroded by immigrants and wages had been reduced. CL said the answer was to have minimum wages.

June 5

At 8.38am, Katya Adler said the rest of the EU wanted to get the Brexit process on track and 'over and done with', She said the timing of talks would depend on how quickly the new government sorted the role of chief Brexit negotiator. She added:

the very first meetings are going to be as simple as this: how often are we going to meet, where are we going to meet, what are we going to discuss and in which order. And it's right bang then that the first huge splits appear because of course the new British government will be under huge time pressure. The Brexit, the divorce agreement has to be signed, sealed and agreed on by March 2019 at the latest never mind a new trade deal and so they're going to want to talk about the future relationship at the start and the EU says absolutely not.

Justin Webb asked what would happen if Labour won. KA said the EU was not under time pressure, and were smug. She declared:

When I walk past the Commission building, there is a definite aura, sorry, of smugness that comes out of that because from their perspective, while the UK seem to tear itself apart after the referendum between Leavers and Remainers and now recently with politics and the press are very caught up in General Election fever, the EU has been quietly getting its Brexit ducks in a row and while we've heard Theresa May's government saying it has a Brexit plan, we haven't heard any details about it . . .

JW: (*speaking over*) Simon, is there . . .

KA: . . . and in contrast the Commission has been trotting out very detailed draft negotiating papers.

JW then asked Simon Jack what the business view was of the talks. He replied that business does not trust a government if any stripe and feared they would bungle the negotiation. They were offering a task force to help. They wanted a decisive result but the polls weren't pointing to that. JW echoed that the result was 'wide open'. Laura Kuenssberg said the position was volatile, and there was no clear line from any party over how they would cope with Brexit. She said:

Now, that's partly because they, whoever wins, will be entering into a negotiating period, they don't, as we've heard Theresa May say again and again, want to give away their hand, but also there is a sense that they haven't really decided, because these issues are so complicated and that the parties themselves have not been able to get far further forward than agreeing the broad principles. The other thing of course they do know and they're realistic about this, is that no diplomatic plan survives its first contact with the enemy intact, you know, whoever wins is going to be outnumbered in the negotiating chamber.

June 6

Bulletins said the Conservative party was promising to revive the Board of Trade to help in the process of striking international deals post-Brexit. The Liberal Democrats had said the idea was outdated.

Mishal Husain, introducing business news, said that there was a warning that the UK had a pervasive shortage of skills. A spokesman for the body which had conducted the survey said the shortage applied to numerous categories. Vicky Pryce, of the Centre of Economic and Business research, said that there was the amazing statistic that nursing applications from the EU had gone 92% since the referendum. Other shortages were building up for the future. Using immigrants educated and trained elsewhere had been an easy way of filling vacancies and that could not continue forever.

There was mention of the plans to resurrect the Board of Trade - said to be the application of a 17th century problem to a 21st century challenge. The guest said it was sensible to reach out to other markets.

At 6.37am, Norman Smith said that Theresa May was attempting to pull the agenda back to the issue of Brexit, but claimed it was almost a hopeless cause because of the London Bridge terror. She was trying to raise the Board of Trade but it would not be picked up. He said that for the Tories, security played into Mrs May's argument that she was the right person to lead Britain in difficult times, particularly related to Brexit.

Justin Webb observed at 6.45am that the North-east had been strongly Leave and the Conservatives were hoping to win over Leave voters with the promise that only Mrs May could secure the best Brexit deal. Zoe Conway reported from the Beamish industrial museum. There were vox pops – one from a woman who wanted to see Theresa May steering the Brexit process, another from someone who was voting Conservative because they did not trust Jeremy Corbyn and who wanted a hard Brexit 'which doesn't frighten me'. Three men dressed as soldiers were said to have voted Remain and claimed the current government had delivered nothing but austerity and wanted Labour to deliver change. One said his Remain vote was in the past and now wanted the post-Brexit world to be more liberal and not xenophobic. Another vox pop was concerned about changes in social policy.

In the 7am bulletin, Jonty Bloom said the Board of Trade revival would be to ensure the benefits of Brexit were spread around the country, and to facilitate overseas trade deals. He added:

New trade deals, however, normally take years to negotiate and many experts doubt whether the economic benefits of Brexit will outweigh the costs. The Lib Dems called the proposals something from the 17th Century that was probably written on parchment.

At 8.10am, Boris Johnson was interviewed. Mishal Husain asked what the opening approach would be in the EU talks. He replied that the outline was in the Lancaster House speech, and included free trade deals, exit from the single market and the customs union and intensified co-operation with EU partners. Free trade was vital and would include new deals with the rest of the world. MH asked if there would be a divorce bill. BJ said there was no case for paying huge sums of money. MH suggested 'some money'. BJ said that the Labour party would not be able to negotiate a settlement. Huge sums of money could be taken back – included the £10bn net contribution – and used to benefit the people of the UK. MH asked if he would be happy to see Michael Gove back in the Cabinet. BJ said he was campaigning for a Conservative government.

At 8.50am, Leanne Wood of Plaid Cymru was interviewed. MH said she had campaigned for reaching the best Brexit deal for Wales, and asked LW what that would look like. LW replied:

It's about the defence of the 200,000 jobs that rely on our tariff-free access to the single market. The defence of our agricultural industry, the defence of those jobs in the higher education sector and other sectors right throughout Wales that rely on the £680 million worth of funding Wales has got as a result of the redistribution of wealth from the European Union to some of our most deprived communities.

MH asked if she was asking for the same amount of money now coming to Wales from the EU. LW said it was essential, especially as Wales was 10% behind the UK average. MH suggested there was a contradiction between Wales standing on its own two feet and needing extra money. LW replied that it was about fighting for better conditions.

June 7

At 6.33am, Norman Smith said the election had lost much of its intensity, and disappointing in terms of the lack of detail from the main parties about Brexit. There was no clear indication how the Conservatives planned to reduce immigration. He added:

And likewise with Labour, certainly in terms of Brexit, they want tariff free access to the single market, no idea whether that means some sort of Norway or Switzerland-type deal, will we remain part of the customs union, what are they going to do about freedom of movement. Likewise on immigration, no real sense of what managed migration will mean. Now these are absolutely central, pivotal issues which voters will want to know about, and you have to say they have been remarkably parsimonious with detail.

6.37am, Mark Davenport, Northern Ireland correspondent, said Brexit had been on the front line because of the border issue. He said:

And in terms of what should be done about that, the discussion has been between Nationalists pushing Northern Ireland retaining some kind of special status within the EU and Unionists saying we've just got to get on with Brexit and that takes us into the whole business of the traditional divide between the British and Irish identity felt by people in Northern Ireland.

He added that there was frustration that many of the questions about Brexit had not been answered, people who crossed the border regularly wanted to know about practical terms.

Nick Servini, Wales, said there was the potential for the Conservatives to make gains because of the Leave vote. He said, though, that they were not as confident of winning gains as at the start of the campaign.

6.44am – Nick Clegg repeated that the UK would have restricted access to the EU's security database. He alleged someone involved in the London Bridge atrocity had been on the EU database but this had not been acted upon. JH asked what the Liberal Democrats would actually do. NC said they would ensure access. (long interview in which Nick Clegg was challenged, but NC repeated the same point several times).

6.54am, Mishal Husain said that UKIP had been talking about zero immigration and internment of terrorist suspects. The first section was about internment. MH suggested that the Burka was worn by only a minority of a minority, and that UKIP did not seem to have thought the details of internment through. On immigration, MH asked if Britain should become poorer to reach the goal of zero immigration. John Bickley of UKIP said this was a 'switch and bait' question – before Labour came to power in 1997 there were 22 years of balanced immigration in which the economy boomed. MH said the Office of Budget Responsibility said the UK would have to borrow to make up for reduced tax take as a result of less immigration. JB said this wasn't the case.

7.09am Ross Hawkins on the campaign trail. Theresa May said only the Conservatives could deal with Brexit. RH suggested her leadership had not been strong and stable. TM said she would provide it.

7.21am, Mishal Husain suggested to Damian Green that one of the London Bridge attackers should have been stopped at the border because he was on the Schengen database. DG said it was impossible to comment on individual cases.

7.34am. Gina Miller was interviewed along with John Longworth, who had campaigned for Leave. JL said:

The real debate that's been missing of course is around exactly what the economic outcome might be and the tragedy of it is that actually the Prime Minister's allowed the debate to be characterised around whether success or failure depends on a free trade arrangement and actually a free trade arrangement is just the cherry on the icing on the cake, the cake is much more important and is entirely in our own gift providing that we leave the single market and the customs union.

GM said Brexit would hit business, education, the legal system and would remove access to the ECJ. People did not still know what Brexit meant. JL disagreed. The UK needed to exit the CAP and the common fisheries policy and to use the UK's contribution to invest in business growth. Getting a Free Trade Agreement would be a mistake because it would produce tariffs. GM said:

I think that it's still fantasy land. It's so much more complex than as John says, a Free Trade Agreement. You know, it's about our Airways, our environment, how we are going to deal with the loss of skills in public services. You know, in the City, John will be aware that, you know, there's a huge number of people who come from the EU and without, and we're already seeing agencies that are complaining that there's a loss of people applying for jobs. You know . . . you know, there are something between 8,000 and 11,000 legal instruments that might be needed. This is so complicated.

JH said that more people who voted to stay in were now accepting pulling out. GM said she absolutely disagreed; their own research showed that only 21% of those who voted Leave wanted to do so now. JL said opinion polls said otherwise and those in the business community now saw opportunities and wanted to make the best of it. JH said that was less than enthusiastic. JL said:

I think there are those who are saying great opportunity and those who are dyed-in-the-wool Remainers are saying, 'let's make the best of it' and actually the best of it is going to be better than what we had before providing the government do the right things. What they really need

to do of course and what's not been said is they need to actually take back control of the time scale. The government needs to set themselves a target of Quarter 2 next year and if there's no progress on talks, they simply decide not to progress those talks and spend the remaining 12 months pulling the resources and intellectual capacity into crystallising those benefits.

GM said a transition period was essential; JL said not.

APPENDIX THREE: NEWS AT TEN RUNNING LOG

This section is colour-coded to indicate in overall terms the political tenor of each report. Those in blue emphasised the difficulties of Brexit or the benefits of Remain; those in amber were favourable towards Brexit policies or leaving the EU. Uncoloured points are judged to be 'neutral' in terms of such issues.

May 3

Theresa May responds to Brussels leaks about the negotiations, and accuses the Commission of interfering in the UK elections.

Laura Kuenssberg, BBC political editor, said it was 'quite an extraordinary attack' on her opponents in the Brexit negotiations. She said:

British Prime Minister after Prime Minister have enjoyed politically pointing the finger at unnamed forces in Brussels across the Channel.

Katya Adler, Europe editor, said things had got 'quite nasty'. The EU saw this as understandable politicking but said the atmosphere was souring. The EU was about consensual politics. The UK was now viewed as a 'difficult customer'. The mood was bad.

There was mention of Sainsbury's annual results – it was warning of challenging trading conditions and unpredictable value of the pound 'caused by Brexit'. The supermarket was trying not to pass on raised prices.

May 5

Local election results day.

UKIP had seen the reason for being challenged and had suffered the worst crash of the night. There was a quote from Nigel Farage saying UKIP was still needed as an insurance policy.

John Pienaar had vox pop in which a Labour man was switching to Conservative because he did not trust Jeremy Corbyn to deliver Brexit.

Later there was a dedicated item on UKIP. There were a series of vox pops in which participants said that the party was no longer needed. Reporter Alex Forsyth underlined that support had collapsed and suggested that some believed this was the beginning of the end for the party. Laura Kuenssberg commented that the right was coming back together in terms of attitudes towards the EU, and claimed that those who had voted UKIP had gone straight back to Theresa May.

May 7

It was noted that Emmanuel Macron, on the verge of being elected as French President, had said tough things about Brexit.

May 8

Katya Adler repeated the above and also that he had said he would tear up bilateral agreements allowing immigrants to stay on French soil on the way to the UK. He also wanted to lure banks from the City to France. Ms Adler said he would be a powerful voice in the EU, creating challenges in the Brexit process. She added that France was always a tricky negotiator. His election (in preference to

Marine Le Pen) meant that the EU was not in disarray and that would be good for the Brexit talks. He had been French trade minister for two years and would not say 'no' to a trade deal that worked in everyone's interests.

May 11

In a vox pop sequence, John Pienaar asked residents of York about their reaction to Labour's manifesto policy of not putting a 'clear limit on immigration'. One replied that immigrants had it too easy, another said that if they paid their way, it was fine.

At 10.17am, it was said that Bank of England Governor Mark Carney that longer-term economic prospects depended on the government securing a smooth exit from the EU. Economics editor Kamal Ahmed said the Bank of England was working on the premise that the EU deal would work out. He added that in the shorter term Mark Carney had warned of a challenging time. There was a sequence of vox pops in which participants expressed concern about inflation, the impact of Brexit – 'it will get worse (sic) when Brexit hits hard' – and another claiming that there was stability. Mr Ahmed said that prices would rise by 2.8% 'in sharp contrast to earnings' (2%). He repeated at the end that the Bank's targets would depend on achieving a smooth Brexit deal.

At 10.25am, it was said that Michel Barnier had warned there could be customs control between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic but he wanted to avoid a hard border. Fergal Keane reported first that Brexit left unionists uneasy because it had spurred demands for a referendum on Irish unity. A unionist cleric hoped 'defeatist' attitudes towards Brexit would be avoided. Mr Keane said that Brexit had 'complicated' the agreement on ending the Troubles. A South Armagh farmer recalled troops on the border. He added that the reintroduction of a border with customs posts would be costly and politically divisive. The farmer predicted 're-partitioning'. Mr Keane said Ireland's history was full of 'unintended consequences' and noted that Dublin had secured agreement for Ireland to remain in the EU if there was unification. He posed the question of whether in 'our lifetime' there would be a united Ireland. Southern Ireland politician Michael McDowell said there could be – the economic interests of the people of Ireland post-Brexit required unity. Mr Keane visited his home town of Cork, where, in vox pops, the locals appeared interested more in the local economy than Irish reunification. Mr Keane concluded that there was now uncertainty across Ireland, and claimed that 'protecting the gains of peace' was a great challenge in the Brexit negotiations.

May 12

Laura Kuenssberg, in a campaign report from the North-east, found a voter who was opting for the Conservative candidate for the first time. She said the reason was strong views on Brexit.

May 14

Mishal Husain asked whether a new kind of politics was emerging because of Brexit in that it cut across traditional political divides.

Mark Easton spoke to a Sunderland fisherman who wanted to be 'a proud Englishman', not 'a European'. Others in the area wanted Brexit to protect against globalisation and to ensure 'identity'.

Mr Easton speculated Brexit was now a battle between globalism and nationalism. He went to Liverpool and said that (in contrast to Sunderland), they were embracing globalisation as an opportunity. He asserted that Liverpool's prosperity was based on immigration and international trade. He saw a grass-roots globalisation movement and a vox pop contributor suggested that everyone in the city was the son or daughter of an immigrant. Mr Easton accepted there were different views in both cities but a new politics was beginning to emerge.

May 15

It was mentioned that the Conservative manifesto contained a commitment towards a big expansion of workers' rights including adoption of those in EU law.

Katya Adler reported that Emmanuel Macron had visited Angela Merkel and had talked about reforming the Eurozone. He shared a common 'true belief' with Angela Merkel in the EU. Ms Adler predicted a few bumps in the road, include concern about the EU being dominated by the pair; not always having the same vision; the danger of other states being bossed around; and the 'bruising Brexit process'.

Allan Little visited Hatfield colliery in South Yorkshire.

One of his interviewees was a former miner who had voted for Brexit. He claimed that immigrants were taking local jobs but insisted he was not prejudiced.

Mr Little said the old working class heart had gone from such communities, and with it organised labour – the new economy was more mobile and fluid. He also spoke to a pair of miners' wives who had kept a diary for the BBC in the 1980s during the miners' strike. One claimed politicians were puppets of the ruling class, and that there had been continual punishment since the pits closed. Mr Little claimed that the communities that once voted Labour had been dispersed along with the industries that had sustained them.

May 16

The Plaid Cymru manifesto was reported. It said that Wales needed a strong voice during Brexit so that Welsh industry and agriculture were protected. The party wanted to trade with the EU without costly barriers.

Correspondent Gavin Hewitt explored voting intentions in London. He said there had been strong support for Remain. The areas was now a mixture of those living well off the global economy and those left behind. 2m of the 5m workforce had been born abroad, and immigration (in large numbers from the EU) was the capital's lifeblood. Vox pops confirmed this assertion, and there was a supportive quote from the spokesperson from a London hotel. It was said that half its workforce came from the EU. Mr Hewitt said that London was asking politicians where its workforce would come from if immigration was reduced. He noted that 12% of the UK's tax receipts came from the City, and said banks were making plans to move abroad. There was a quote from the CEO of the business organisation London First to that effect, stating that 'uncertainty' was causing firms to build their contingency plans. Mr Hewitt added that 'inequalities' had boosted the Labour vote in London, and that the prospect of a 'hard' Brexit troubled those who had voted Remain. He stated: 'A city that depends on outsiders is less concerned with immigration', and then concluded that London was a capital with its own priorities.

May 17

It was said that the Conservative manifesto was expected to include extra measures to curb immigration and extra costs for employers who chose to put EU immigrants in skilled jobs. Laura Kuenssberg said the message about immigration from the Tories was uncompromising, and added that Theresa May would say that too high immigration had consequences for society. Ms Kuenssberg stressed that as home secretary, Mrs May had repeatedly missed the targets to reduce immigrant numbers.

Later newsreader Sophie Rayworth said the Liberal Democrats had pledged to hold a second referendum on the terms of the Brexit deal. There was a quote from Tim Farron to that effect. He added:

Certainly there are many people in this country lacking hope. They think that the only thing on the table is Theresa May's bleak vision of us leaving the European Union with a hard Brexit.

Reporter Vicky Young challenged him on that point and suggested that many who voted Remain now accepted the result, unlike Mr Farron. He responded that people should not be forced to accept a stitch-up between Brussels and London. Ms Young then presented a series of vox pops from South-West London, where she said, the Liberal Democrats were hoping for a come-back. One favoured Brexit, another said the fight against it would never stop, and a third wanted the best kind of Brexit. Tim Farron said the election was a chance to create a tolerant Britain by reversing the Brexit vote. Mark Easton said the Liberal Democrats were trying to attract the young vote. One interviewee in his report wanted a guarantee that his Portuguese parents would not be forced to leave the UK. Mr Easton pointed out that the Liberal Democrats wanted a much 'softer Brexit', including free movement. The vox pop respondent said their aspirations might be all talk.

May 18

It was said that the Conservative manifesto promised it would deliver a successful Brexit and would aim to reduce immigration to 100,000.

Laura Kuenssberg commented that Theresa May's manifesto plans depended on getting the 'mind-bendingly complex' Brexit negotiations right, but the detail of how this would be achieved was not included in the manifesto. Ms Kuenssberg suggested to Theresa May that her plans on immigration 'might cost the economy billions' and was part of 'quite a bleak picture'. Simon Jack, commenting on the manifesto, said that access to the right business skills was the top of many businesses' wish lists, and at a time of high employment, was in short supply. He added that the plans to make hiring overseas labour more expensive could make the economy suffer.

Businessman Richard Tice, who had voted to leave the EU, said that businesses needed a nudge to make them think about training local people more. John Pienaar then spoke to people in Halifax, who complained that immigrants were taking jobs. He said that 'Mayism' was about the state doing more with no more money, and claimed there had been no bigger choice in an election 'in decades'. Ms Kuenssberg concluded:

And of course, the complications of Brexit means whatever else she's promising could be derailed by that becoming extremely difficult, and not just hard to deliver but also potentially very nasty. So broadly though, as with any particular idea, a mainstream leader for the mainstream – easier to say than to prove.

May 22

It was said that the Green Party was campaigning for a referendum on the final Brexit deal while Sinn Féin rejected the need for Brexit.

May 25

Laura Kuenssberg, discussing the UKIP manifesto, said that the party had been struggling to keep pace since the previous year. They were 'challenging extremism'. She added that the day's figures showed immigration to be down, mainly due to EU citizens 'packing their bags' and the UK 'being on our way out of the EU'. She concluded that perhaps UKIP was 'just trying to keep up'.

May 29

An extract from a leader's debate exchange with Jeremy Paxman included observations that Theresa May had changed her mind over the EU and had supported Remain.

There was a quote from the debate in which Theresa May said the British people had voted to Leave and it was now politicians' duty to deliver their wish.

Reporter Ben Wright observed that Mrs May had refused to give a figure for the cost of leaving the EU and had reiterated that no deal would be better than a bad deal 'without explaining what no deal would look like'.

An interview of UKIP leader with Paul Nuttall's by Andrew Neil was mentioned and it was said that he had said he would not rule out internment for terror suspects. There was no mention of the EU or Brexit.

A report from Penzance looked at prospects for the Liberal Democrats.

One voter said he was going to vote for Theresa May because she needed a chance to show that 'England' could stand on its own two feet.

May 30

It was said that Theresa May had questioned Jeremy Corbyn's competence to lead the EU negotiations.

Labour had replied that the Conservatives had made the UK the laughing stock in Europe. A report from Laura Kuenssberg followed. Vox pops suggested that Mrs May should make her mind up and stick to it. There was a quote from the Prime Minister attacking Jeremy Corbyn's negotiating ability and claiming that she was prepared, while he was not. Ms Kuenssberg said that on the doorsteps in Birmingham, with the Tories trying to focus on Brexit, a 'wobble' (towards Labour) had been noticed. She concluded that both parties, with 10 days to go, were doubling down in their main messages. The Conservatives were saying 'trust me on Brexit', Labour was saying trust me, give me a chance, think of public services.

From Scotland, Sarah Smith said the SNP was trying to focus on Brexit, and there was a quote from Nicola Sturgeon said a vote for her party would strengthen Scotland's hand against an extreme Brexit.

Newsreader Huw Edwards reported from Cardiff about a leaders' debate there. He said it had been dominated by how Wales would fare outside the EU, with questions about the impact on the Welsh economy, and the extent to which the principality's voice would be heard. Ben Wright said that the Conservative participant Darren Miller, had noted that David Jones from Wales was a minister in the Brexit department.

He added that Plaid Cymru had claimed that the Tories would grab the wealth from the EU rather than redistributing it. BW said that PC's man election 'slog' was to defend Wales by 'standing up to Brexit'. He said the Liberal Democrat spokesman, Mark Williams claimed that only his party could do that and warned that those who had voted to Leave had not seen the likely impact on agriculture on small business or higher education.

For UKIP, Neil Hamilton, said his party would make Wales into a low tax haven. He added that it was also important that the powers repatriated from Brussels came back to Cardiff.

May 31

Extracts from the leaders' debate led the bulletin.

Paul Nuttall said that there was a need to get the population under control – if not the UK would reach 80m by 2050, and a new house would be needed every seven minutes.

Leanne Wood (PC) suggested he was 'whipping up hatred'. Angus Robertson (SNP) said immigrants made a positive contribution – demonising these people was unacceptable.

On the campaign trail, Laura Kuenssberg interviewed Theresa May, and suggested she was happy to criticise Labour but would not reveal her own plans for Brexit and the future immigration system. Theresa May replied that she had set out her 12 objectives for Brexit. Ms Kuenssberg claimed that

on the big issues she was saying 'I will get back to you'. There was a quote from Mrs May in which she said she was offering solutions. Ms Kuenssberg concluded that campaign trails were often less smooth for those who set out first.

10.25pm, Sophie Rayworth said the DUP manifesto promised to work for the best deal for Northern Ireland in the Brexit talks.

She added that the Alliance Party had also released its manifesto promising 'progressive pro-European politics'. Naomi Long, the leader, said she opposed a 'hard' Brexit and wanted to give the public the final say on the deal.

June 1

10.14pm – Huw Edwards said that Theresa May had claimed that Britain would be more prosperous outside the EU, while Jeremy Corbyn had accused her of creating a toxic environment for the Brexit talks. Laura Kuenssberg claimed the biggest job of the election winner would be taking the UK out of the EU and the biggest danger. A quote from Mrs May said she was confident in the task and that it would lead to a fairer and more prosperous Britain. Jeremy Corbyn said there was a need for serious negotiation, not hectoring and threats. Ms Kuenssberg said there was a lot that was not known about the approach of the various parties towards Brexit. She noted that Conservative and Labour said freedom of movement would come to an end. TM said that would lead to better control of borders and numbers. Mr Corbyn said that all those here would be told they could stay, they contributed a huge amount. Ms Kuenssberg added that both parties pledged to come out of the single market and negotiate a free trade deal instead. She said the SNP disagreed; leader Nicola Sturgeon said Scotland needed to stay in the single market. Ms Kuenssberg said that leaving the EU would require 'huge changes in the law and in who is in charge'. Theresa May had declared it was the UK Supreme Court and not the ECJ that would be in charge, but Labour had said these matters were open to discussion. The Liberal Democrats overall wanted a second referendum. Ms Kuenssberg said there would be no second vote under Labour but that they would not walk away from negotiations until they had a deal. The Tories, though, insisted that no deal was better than a bad one. She concluded that Theresa May was 'along way from closing the deal with you'.

Chris Morris then delivered a 'reality check'. He claimed that neither of the main parties provided details, and that was because Brexit was 'incredibly complex'. He said as a result, there were disagreements about the future role of the courts; and over what would happen to free movement and access to the single market (as Labour wanted). He noted that forecasts by the Office for Budget Responsibility, at odds with the promises of both parties, said that inflation was likely to be higher and growth lower for the next few years. He concluded that in an election called about Brexit, remarkably little was known about Brexit plans.

Laura Kuenssberg then said that Theresa May and David Davis had given conflicting accounts of when the Conservative target of an immigration number of 100,000 was reached. Mrs May had said by 2022, whereas Mr Davis had claimed it could not be promised within five years. Ms Kuenssberg said Tory sources were playing these apparent differences down, but it mattered because it was a huge issue for millions of voters – it felt like the Conservatives were having a 'choppy campaign'.

It was reported that the Ulster Unionists had rejected the idea of Northern Ireland being given a special status during the negotiations and had described attempts to do so as an effort to create a united Ireland by the back door.

June 2

At York in the aftermath of the May/Corbyn leaders' Question Time. A quote from Theresa May said she had called an election because of Brexit because she thought it was a really important moment for the country. An audience member said it was for the good of the Conservative party. Another audience member said they had been lied to in the first referendum and now needed to be able to vote again. Mrs May said the people had spoken and there was now a need to deliver on what they wanted. Another audience member said that if the EU knew that no deal was a bad deal, she had no

chance. Jeremy Corbyn said he would not be threatening the EU with the possibility of the UK becoming a low-tax regime for big corporations. He wanted a continued trading relationship.

June 5

It was said there had been a leaders' debate in Scotland which had fielded questions on Brexit.

June 6

Kamal Ahmed said that the Tories claimed that only they could provide a good Brexit deal, while Labour wanted a closer relationship with the EU.

Katya Adler said that Brexit was a huge issue for whoever won. She said:

The new Government will be under big time pressure because, because under EU rules, it only has until March 2019 to agree an exit deal, never mind a future relationship, trade or otherwise, between the UK and the EU. The larger parties differ considerably in their approach to Brexit. Theresa May promises to be "a bloody difficult woman." The Conservatives want out - out of the European single market and out of the customs union. Whereas Labour wants to retain the benefits of the single market and customs union though it wants to curb European immigration. The Liberal Democrats insist that the Brexit deal must be put to a popular vote. Whereas the SNP want a new independence referendum, so Scotland can stay inside the EU. And UKIP has been campaigning on a promise to hold the new Government to account over Brexit. Whatever happens in these elections, the new Prime Minister and Government will largely be judged on what kind of a Brexit deal they can get and what impact it has on lives here.

June 7

Huw Edwards said that Theresa May had said that only she could deliver a successful Brexit. There were passing mentions of the approach to Brexit in the reports that followed, but nothing of substance, apart from one featuring UKIP:

HE: Paul Nuttall - the UKIP leader - has spent the final day of campaigning visiting target seats along the east coast of England. He wants the Brexit process completed by 2019 without paying any exit fee and reducing net migration. Our political correspondent Alex Forsyth reports from the UKIP campaign trail in Essex.

ALEX FORSTYH: Confident smiles for the last push. UKIP's leader paid a visit to one of the party's strongholds. They're convinced they still have a role, even now the UK's voted to leave the EU. UKIP says it's the guard dog of Brexit.

PAUL NUTTALL: I think people are coming round to the idea that Theresa May won't give us the kind of Brexit that we really want.

AF: The party is pushing its broader policies, too. It has promised to cut immigration, improve security, put more money into the NHS by cutting back on foreign aid, protect British culture, and promote a fair democracy. The leader says they are prepared to talk about things other politicians don't.

PN: We've spoken openly about extremist Islamism within our society. I've called it a cancer, said it needs to be cut out, come up with a load of proposals how we could do that. The other parties wanted to ignore it.

AF: UKIP had its best ever results at the last general election. This time it's standing fewer candidates in fewer seats. And the party's trying to prove it is still relevant beyond Brexit. Supporters are convinced they've plenty to offer.

Then Christian Fraser said:

We're told this was a Brexit election, so let's take a quick look at Brexit. Conservatives say they will leave the single market and the customs union, seeking this deep and special relationship with the EU. But they've made it quite clear that no deal is better than a bad deal for the UK. Labour, well, that won't do for them, they would scrap the Brexit white paper and put the emphasis on the single market and the customs union, and remaining within it. And also, they want to immediately guarantee the rights of EU citizens living in Britain. The Liberal Democrats, pro-Remain, of course, would hold a referendum on the final Brexit deal, with that option in there to remain in the EU. And UKIP, they would quit the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, as well as the EU single market and the customs union. I can't go through all the policies and where the various party stand, but it is all there on the BBC website, do take a look, all the manifestos are there.

Laura Kuenssberg said:

But out there, above all the other issues, how will they take us out of the European Union? Whoever ends up in Number Ten will be the one negotiator up against 27 other countries. And the deal they get or don't get for this country will shape our future for decades to come. It is quite some task for whoever manages to win this campaign, and you cannot help wondering, as we heard one voter asked Theresa May today, why on earth would she really want the job?