

[WATCH: Sir Tim Barrow arrives at the Europa building with the Article 50 letter](#)

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Arrival (European Council building) of Sir Tim Barrow, UK's Permanent Representative to the EU – [#Article50](#) [#Brexit](#) [#BrexitDay](#)
pic.twitter.com/8sgEtSjmIT

– Pablo Pérez (@PabloPerezA) [29 March 2017](#)

[Article 50](#) [Brexit](#) [Brussels](#) [EU](#) [Sir Tim Barrow](#)

[The Government must urgently provide assurances about the future of Moorside – Rebecca Long-Bailey](#)

Rebecca Long-Bailey, Shadow Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, commenting on the bankruptcy of Westinghouse said:

“This announcement throws into doubt the Moorside new nuclear plant that could create 20,000 jobs in Cumbria.

“Questions have been raised over Toshiba's role in Moorside for some time.

“When Westinghouse's viability was first called into question, Labour said the Government should step in to underwrite the company's investment if the project was at significant risk of collapsing. Unfortunately, the Government dragged its heels.

“The Government must now urgently provide assurances about the future of Moorside. Relying on the private sector alone, in absence of a robust contractual legal structure, has failed.

“If this government is at all serious about delivering its industrial strategy, it must act swiftly to ensure the security of our energy supply and guarantee the creation of thousands of highly-skilled and well-paid jobs that communities in Cumbria need and deserve.”

[Yuanwang fleet to carry out 19 space tracking tasks](#)

Yuanwang space tracking ships, which follows the progress of satellites and other space-bound craft, will carry out 19 maritime space monitoring missions in 2017, according to the maritime satellite measurement and control authority on Wednesday.

Yuanwang-5 left port Wednesday and Yuanwang-6 started its journey Monday.

Yuanwang-7 and the rocket transporting fleet will set sail in April.

In 2016, Yuanwang ships completed 14 major scientific research and experiment tasks, including maiden flights of the Long March-7 and the Long March-5, and space journeys of the Tiangong-2 space lab and the Shenzhou-11 manned spacecraft.

[News story: Bravery of 3 World War 2 soldiers shot for escaping from a POW camp finally recognised after nearly 75 years](#)

A rededication service for Private (Pte) Lionel Brown, 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment and Ptes Daniel Hollingsworth and Thomas White, 1st Battalion The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) has taken place almost 75 years after they were shot near Ponte Del Diavolo, Italy after escaping from a prisoner of war (POW) camp.

They were given a dignified service on Tuesday 28 March 2017 at the

Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Ancona War Cemetery in Italy. The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services was conducted by The Reverend Jonathon Daniel CF (UB) Royal Army Chaplain's Branch.

Sue Raftree, JCCC said:

These brave men were prisoners of war and being transported by the Germans when they were killed. The service today was to honour all 3 and to enable their families to have closure after over 70 years.

It has been a privilege for the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre to organise this service.

Reverend Jonathon Daniel CF(UB) said:

In our act of rededication we finally, after many years, complete our duty to correctly mark the place where our brothers in arms are buried. Today we honour and remember our 3 comrades whose lives were taken so cruelly and so unnecessarily. May their story serve to harden our resolve to cherish human life and do all that we can to live peacefully with one another.



The Reverend Jonathon Daniel CF (UB) Royal Army Chaplain's Branch delivers

the rededication service, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Some 6 months after escaping Camp 53 at the time of the Italian Armistice in September 1943, Pte Brown was joined by Ptes Hollingsworth and White on 5 March 1944 who were hiding in a nearby farm. En-route to Perchia they were accompanied by another man who they met known only to them as Adriano, thought also to be an escaped prisoner of war. Arriving at Perchia they made enquiries concerning the next expedition through enemy lines but no information was available so they went to a nearby farm for the night. Adriano left them stating he was going to sleep at another farm nearby but it later transpired Adriano was a German soldier.

At approximately 5am the next morning a party of German soldiers raided the farm where they were hiding and all 3 were arrested. Immediately afterwards a neighbouring farm was raided and Sergeant Mario Mottes from a Belgian parachute regiment, was also arrested. The prisoners were then marched to a German post where they were questioned and finally placed under guard. On 10 March 1944 all 4 were being transported when their lorry was stopped at Ponte Del Diavolo and they were shot.

Family members who paid their respects included Alan Austin, nephew of Pte Brown. He said:

The uncertainty over the final resting place of our uncle Lionel is something that has troubled our family for many years.

It is comforting to know that his sacrifice for our country has been recognised with a full and moving military ceremony, and that we now have a point of focus for our remembrance.

Commander Neil Thompson OBE RN the Naval and Air Attaché from the British Embassy and representatives of the Parachute Regiment, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and the Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) also attended and paid their respects.

Commander (Cdr) Neil Thompson, Naval and Air Attaché British Embassy said:

I am proud and honoured to be representing the British Embassy at the rededication ceremony of 3 soldiers who lost their lives during the Italian Campaign under such tragic and dramatic circumstances in 1944. These 3 soldiers' dedication to duty by escaping from POW camps and trying to make their way back to fight again is indicative of the kind of war-winning spirit and courage found right across our great nation in the dark days of the Second World War.

It was really good to meet the families represented here today and I hope that we have given some comfort and closure to them. But above all, we have been able to give the soldiers themselves an identity and a lasting memory as they lie here in their final resting place just outside Ancona.

Three new headstones bearing each of the soldier's names have been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for their final resting place in perpetuity.

[Henry Hill: Brokenshire threatens direct rule if no deal reached in Ulster](#)

Government gives Ulster parties more time to reach a deal

Today will mark the first day that senior civil servants in Northern Ireland will take direct control of provincial budgets, [according to the News Letter](#).

[The Belfast Telegraph reports](#) that James Brokenshire, the Northern Irish Secretary, has warned that there is only a small window to salvage devolved government after Monday's deadline for forming an Executive passed without agreement.

Under the devolution model in Northern Ireland, the largest party from each of the two principal communities must agree to form a coalition to share the Executive, along with any other party of sufficient size which chooses to take part.

As Sam McBride points out, the road from civil service auto-pilot to 'direct rule' – effectively administration by the Northern Ireland Office – is a short one, for all that Sinn Fein posture that it is 'not an option'.

Michelle O'Neill, their 'northern leader', insists that Brokenshire's only recourse [is another election](#). It's hard to judge the extent to which this is a bluff: the last election certainly went very well for them, but it's not clear how financially equipped any of the parties are for another go.

Yet despite that fact Brokenshire seems to be playing down the prospect of another poll, whilst making clear that the Government is willing [to reintroduce direct rule](#) if required. After all, there must be somebody politically accountable for the Northern Irish civil service.

If that happens the long-term future of the current arrangements is unclear. The DUP are warning that Sinn Fein have [run out of patience with devolution](#),

focusing instead on bolstering their position in the Republic and trying to exploit Brexit. It certainly seems as if the death of Martin McGuinness has coincided with a change in the party's strategy regarding Stormont – although it bears remembering that he did collapse the last administration.

One final option the Secretary of State might consider has been floated by the *News Letter*: should MLAs [stop being paid](#) if the legislature collapses? It would certainly incentivise them to strike a deal.

Meanwhile the Ulster Unionists have crowned Robin Swann [their new leader](#). Mike Nesbitt, his predecessor, had to step down after a very disappointing set of election results. Swann seems likely to be a more traditional figure than his predecessor, which will probably help the party to stabilise.

May stalls Sturgeon as unionists start trying to build campaign

The Prime Minister has declined to open negotiations with the Scottish Government on a second independence referendum after the Scottish Parliament voted to ask for one, [the Scotsman reports](#).

This sort of boldness is a marked change from the typical unionist strategy of the previous two decades – giving in – but the Prime Minister has at several reasons to play for time.

First, the Government won't want the distraction of an existential struggle for the territorial integrity of the nation in the midst of the Brexit negotiations. The Government only has so much bandwidth.

Second, as [James Forsyth points out](#), neither Theresa May nor the Scottish Conservatives seem to believe that a second independence is inevitable. This absence of unionism's usual fatalism likely explains the unexpectedly bold strategy: they believe that if a referendum can be pushed back beyond the next Scottish elections in 2021, it may not happen at all.

After all, pressure on the SNP's domestic agenda is already mounting, and both [Ruth Davidson](#) and [David Mundell](#) have

Indeed with the exception of a finance bill needed to keep the lights on it's now been more than a year since the Scottish Parliament actually passed a law.

Third, should such optimism be misplaced then unionists need space to build and road-test the next pro-Britain campaign. Because one of the few things veterans of Better Together seem to agree on is that it should be nothing like Better Together.

The [Spectator](#) has some news on this front, although it isn't heartening: apparently the skeletal campaign has the interim name 'New Direction', and is considering hiring Andrew Cooper as its pollster.

With Labour determined not to get involved in the main cross-party campaign (they'll probably float around on the fringes advocating whatever split-the-difference panacea is calling itself 'federalism' that year), it's almost a

certainty that the net campaign will be dominated by Tories.

That's not the handicap it was – both May and Davidson poll well in Scotland – but it will [take time to build a campaign](#) around such new and unexpected foundations as a large and relatively popular Conservative opposition in Holyrood.

It would be a fatal error, however, simply to recreate an ersatz *Stronger In*. All the Scottish unionist leaders may have campaigned for it, but that's still no reason to copy a loser.

Welsh Labour MP renounces devolution

Ann Clwyd, the long-serving MP for Cynon Valley, has declared that her long-standing support for devolution to Wales “was wrong”, [according to ITV](#).

In her new autobiography, *Rebel with a Cause*, she claims to have been “bitterly disappointed” by the Welsh Assembly's record – despite Labour having run it either alone or in coalition since its inception.

Clwyd points out something that we have previously [highlighted in this column](#): how the devolved government is so thin-skinned that it tries to present criticism of its record as an insult against Wales, thereby preventing the spread of good ideas that was meant to be one of devolution's boons.

Her complaints about the Welsh party's dismissive treatment of critical MPs also sheds a new light on Carwyn Jones' comments of last week about [how little UK Labour 'interferes' with him](#).