

The contradiction of the Remain business case about Brexit

We often have the parade of those few Remain advocates claiming to speak for big businesses that want to stop Brexit. They frequently repeat themselves, going public to help the Remain cause. They argue more than one foolish contradiction.

The most obvious is their statement that leaving the EU without a very costly Withdrawal Agreement is plunging off a cliff, conjuring false images of sharp falls in output. They then follow this with their number one complaint that once out of the EU we will lose access to cheap labour from the continent which they say is needed to deal with the increased demand and expansion of business which they will be grappling with.

If they truly believed output will fall and stay lower as they imply, they would not bother to seek more labour. They would be planning an orderly reduction in the size of their workforce as people retired or left for other reasons. Their economic forecasts have been so bad for many years. The pro EU lobbyists wrongly wanted the Exchange Rate Mechanism, which did lead to a sharp fall in activity and business output and led many businesses to sack people without warning because they had failed to foresee the results of their ill judged lobbying for the ERM. They wrongly went along with or encouraged the Euro, which did considerable damage to UK export markets on the continent after the banking crash, when that was extended and worsened in the Euro area by the Euro crisis.

Next they wrongly forecast a fall in UK output in the months immediately after we voted to leave, which did not happen. Nor is there any no good reason to think that actually leaving should lead to that. Of course the UK needs to follow good positive domestic policies to thrive outside the EU, just as we needed to do that to grow or to offset harmful EU policies when in it. If we just get on with spending domestically all the money we save on leaving, the economy will perform well.

Let me reassure them again. UK output will not be damaged by leaving. It could expand more than currently if the government stopped its ever tightening monetary and fiscal squeeze. The correct thing to do would be to offer tax cuts and increased spending in this autumn's budget, covered by ending payments to the EU.

Business needs to turn its mind to productivity, and wean itself off the ever more cheap labour model. Together we need to build a world of higher pay, high skills and more computing and machine power to help people be more productive.

How did England win Trafalgar?

Most know that England defeated France at Trafalgar, though suffering the loss of Admiral Nelson. But did you know the French and Spanish allied fleet in that action had 45% more firepower than Nelson's force, with the ability to shoot 28.3 tonnes of cannon balls on a single firing if they fired all the guns? Several of the English ships were crippled without masts or rudders but fought on as massive floating batteries drifting in the sea. In the light winds Nelson's force was exposed to broadsides for around 30 minutes before they were in a position to fire back. So how did they manage to win?

Find out at the Swallowfield event on Saturday October 20th when I will be showing pictures of the action and telling the story of this amazing and decisive battle.

Tickets from Bob Hamer at dbobhamer@btinternet.com Tel 01189 733422

Why I want to leave the so called single market

I accepted the verdict of UK voters as a young man in 1975 when I was on the losing side of the referendum on staying in the EEC. I decided I had to make the best of it. When I entered Parliament I tried to limit the EEC/EU to what people voted for, a common market. My worry had always been it was a much mightier political project, but Remain always told us in the early years it was not a currency and political union in the making. Later of course it became obvious that it was a currency union, with a political union in the offing.

So what changed my mind about the common market part of it? It was being given the role of Single Market Minister in the 1990s, when the EU wished to "complete" the single market. That turned out to be a double lie. The EU did indeed have a massive legislative programme which it called the single market programme in those days, and did more or less complete the stated programme by 1992. It then went on to invent many more legislative programmes in the name of its new creation for many years afterwards, proving the single market was in its view no where near completed in 1992 despite the claims. It was also misleading, because as I discovered it was not primarily a programme to open and liberate a wider market. It was a huge power grab. It thrived on the doctrine of "the occupied field", pressing EU legislation into many new areas in the name of the single market to take powers away from national democracies and to place them in the hands of unelected Commissioners and European Court judges.

As I used to point out to the bureaucratic, legal and regulatory minds assembled, you only need one simple rule to have a common market. That rule, established in a famous European Court case, states that if a product is of merchandisable quality and has passed the tests to be offered for sale in one part of the common market, it should also be allowed for sale anywhere else in that market. It does not mean British people have to suddenly develop a passion for German sausage or French people need to learn to love English cheese. It does mean that as Germany tells us their sausage is fine for consumption their sausage makers should be allowed to offer it to British consumers to see if they want to buy it. It means each part of a common market has to trust each other part for their standards of safety, hygiene and the rest, or allow only limited specified national overrides for public health and safety but not much else to restrict the flow of goods.

Instead the EU embarked on a comprehensive legislative programme to superimpose EU law on top of member state law to govern everything from food standards to control of hazardous chemicals, and everything from labour rules to environmental protections, all in the name of the single market. The laws often told businesses how they were to make or design something. It was very clearly a programme to create a supranational government. It soon replicated all the main departments of national governments, with a foreign policy, a security and defence policy, an environment, transport and employment policy and much else.

The market part of it proceeded by the Commission working with the dominant companies of the day in each sector to draw up a set of rules which would be required of everyone. These rules were welcomed by the big business that helped inform them, because they already met them. They were opposed by some big businesses which had not been so successful in lobbying and drafting. They often acted as restraints on competition and innovation, as they prescribed the way firms were allowed to make and sell things. These rules were imposed in the name of cross border trading, but were also mandatory for the much larger flows of goods and commerce within each individual member state where they were not needed to assist international trade and might override perfectly good familiar national systems. Many smaller businesses found the extra cost of EU regulation, and greater prescription, made market entry and offering competitive product more difficult.

In the first ten years of our membership of the EEC our motor car output halved, unable to face the onslaught of German and French competition without tariffs and under EEC rules. Meanwhile in the areas where we were strong in services no similar market opening occurred, leaving us a growing and large balance of payments deficit which has persisted to this day. I came to the conclusion that the single market was not designed to help the UK, and we would be better off making our own rules and running our own global trade policy.

Visit to Costco, Reading

I visited Costco at Green Park Reading following their invitation. They wanted to show me their facilities and talk about their employees and their relationship with the local community.

They assured me they paid above the market average, liking to recruit and retain good people. Their retention rate is good. They have training programmes, and assist employees who wish to progress through internal promotions. I am a strong supporter of employers paying decent wages, understanding the ambitions of their staff and giving them help to move upwards in the organisation.

They told me of the work they do to raise money for charity, and the way they have some charities as members to take advantage of their prices and service for the wholesale trade. The main issue they raised for government was the question of taking more action to defeat smuggling of alcohol, which adversely affects businesses like them as they of course have to pay full duty on their alcoholic drinks ranges, and maintain a licence to sell such products. I agreed to follow up on this issue, which sees law abiding businesses and government on the same side seeking to enforce tax laws.

The EU has nothing we want that is worth £39bn

We must leave the single market and customs union when we leave the EU. That's about the only thing the official Leave and Remain campaigns agreed about, and is also the view of the EU itself.

We cannot stay half in the single market, and we should not want to.

The government has to accept the verdict of Salzburg, that the EU don't want Chequers either.

We should offer a good Free Trade Agreement. You do not pay to trade.

The EU is merely offering a Withdrawal Agreement. That is all take for them and no give to us. We should reject it.

We should not want to spend another 21 months in the EU in a so called transition. It would be a transition to nowhere, with 21 months of uncertainty and argument over what the future might bring.

If we just leave just look at the upside:

An end to business uncertainty, and proof that the stupid scare stories were as wrong as the Remain economic forecasts for 2016-17.

£39bn to spend on tax cuts and public service improvements over two years, giving a good boost to jobs and our economy

The right to settle our own migration policy, and to encourage more people settled in the UK into jobs with better wages

Taking back control of our fish to rebuild our damaged fishing industry

Setting out our own agriculture policy so we grow more at home again as we used to before we went into the EEC/EU

Deciding on our own tariff levels – with lower tariffs or no tariffs where we cannot grow or make the things concerned.

Signing trade deals with many countries that want even better trading relations with us.

The government says it is getting on with No deal planning. So bring on the fishing, farming, trading and spending policies that we need and want, to use our new won freedoms.