

BUSINESS EYE

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Brexit was just a confidence trick

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This week's words of trite tangential truisms come to you from the Hay Festival in Wales where I am joined with a large congregation of serious readers, thinkers and authors.

It is fair to say that most attendees seemed to be of a Remainer persuasion in the Brexit stakes, quietly debating with one another our impending departure from the European collective as we prepare to cut loose and set sail on a solo navigation of the world's choppy political trade waters.

I'm emboldened enough

myself to want to point out the nakedness of our Brexit Emperor. I do so in the context of remembering that it was a democracy that voted in the Nazi Party. And look where that got everyone.

I'm putting down a personal marker to state plainly and clearly for the history books that at least one of us was willing to stand up and be counted against a relentless unchecked momentum.

I used to think Brexit wouldn't matter too much, and then for a while I fell into the "let's just get on with it" camp, but I now realise we have been conned and we need to put this right.

We have been complicit in the biggest self-deception and con trick this country has ever seen. In October 2016 David Davis said: "There will be no downside to Brexit, only a considerable upside."

Oh, really?

At the time of the referendum, we were promised £350m a week for the NHS,

quick and easy trade deals with the EU and the rest of the world, an end to ECJ jurisdiction and free movement, plus British control of North Sea fishing, but none of this is coming to pass.

We were told that there would be no divorce bill but have since had to agree to pay 45 billion Euros.

We were told there would be no problem for Northern Ireland or for Scotland, and that the economy wouldn't suffer and yet we've moved from the fastest growing economy in the West to the slowest.

The pound would not crash, yet it did.

We also now know that the Leave campaign is alleged to have engaged with Cambridge Analytica to manipulate the vote.

And how many Leave voters were clear that their vote would lead to us leaving the Single Market, such a loss of jobs, and the biggest spike in racial hate crimes ever re-



Alex says we should be given a vote on the deal to leave the EU

corded? I certainly wasn't.

How much evidence will it take before we recognise this con trick for what it is?

I believe in democracy. I have considerable sympathy

with the Leave cause and am no lover of the European Union, but the only genuine democratic solution is to put any suggested deal to the people, once the terms are properly under-

stood. Anything else would be the perpetuation of a confidence trick against the British people.

"Project Fear" is looking increasingly like "Project Fact".