

2nd January 2019

Dear Mr Rees-Mogg,

May I wish you a very Happy and – I have absolutely no doubt – an extremely Prosperous New Year. I imagine that anything with the word “new” appended to it must automatically be rather dispiriting for you, and to be required to look forward to enduring 365 days of it in a row must be downright depressing. But be of good cheer, Sir: new years are always over so quickly, God be thanked, the old asserts itself again and Man’s customary malevolence swiftly reclaims its – and your – appointed place in the world!

Ah, New Year’s Eve! Up to what did you get? A Canadian friend from Alberta wrote to me that, as the church bells struck twelve and after a sumptuous meal lovingly prepared for ten close friends, she and they went out into the cold, silent, pine-freshened air to watch the fireworks illuminate the mighty Rockies and hear the echoes of their seasonal laughter dance among the mighty, ice-clad peaks. She said that it all made her feel very Canadian. I wrote back to say that that I too went outside at midnight and smashed my head repeatedly against a tree, which made me feel very British. Do you, like me, sometimes find Canadians annoyingly wholesome?

But enough of that! Why quibble about any disasters yet to happen 2019 when one can just be glad that 2018 is over, a rotting carcass we can now shun and allow future historians and your no doubt many biographers to dissect to their hearts’ delight? And anyway, I’m so happy! I’ve just had a poem published at last and it’s all thanks to you! Thanks to the Good Lord too that Edward Lear’s too dead to sue. That’s certainly more than can be said for some people, you twice-eaten Devil’s dinner!

Here it is. You may find that I mention you once – but I think I got away with it:

The Jumblies

by P.J. Roberts

With many apologies to Edward Lear, on account of the swearing; and none whatsoever to Jacob Rees-Mogg, despite it.

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter’s morn, on a stormy day,
In a Sieve they went to sea!
And when the Sieve span round and round,
And everyone cried, ‘You’ll all be drowned!’
They called aloud, ‘Our Sieve ain’t a duck,
But we don’t give a button! We don’t give a fuck!
In a Sieve we’re off to sea!’
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their brains are small, and their tongues are blue,

And they went to sea in a Sieve.

They sailed away in a Sieve, they did,
In that Sieve they sailed so slow,
With only a beautiful Union Jack
Tied upside-down with their cack-handed knack,
And so small that their Sieve wouldn't go;
And every one said, who saw the winds blow,
'O won't they be soon upset, you know!
For the sky is so dark and that Sieve is a slum,
And happen what may, it's so blatantly dumb
In a Sieve to sail so slow!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their brains are small, and their tongues are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

The water it soon came in, it did,
The water it soon came in;
So to keep them dry they wrapped their feet
In The Daily Mail all folded neat,
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed each night more and more on the piss,
And each of them screamed, 'Who to blame now for this?
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
So it must be the Muslims or ... er ... um ... yes, the Swiss!
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their brains are small, and their tongues are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

And all night long they sailed away;
And when the sun went down,
They drunkenly warbled a lunatic's song
To the echoing sound of a funeral gong,
And never their spirits sank down!
'O Jacob Rees-Mogg! How happy we are,
That we live in a sieve and we are what we are,
While all night long in the moonlight pale,
We sink away with a flag for a sail,
In the stench of our effluent brown!'
Far and few, far and few,

Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their brains are small, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

They sailed o'er the Western Sea, they did,
For the land where the Money Tree grows.
But they took with them nowt but a Horse and a Cart,
And many such things (as much use as a Fart),
And they gained but a Luminous Nose.
For they'd mortgaged their House, and they'd sold their In-laws:
And they'd shared out stale memories of football and wars,
Over forty bottles of what came to hand,
And a packet of Doritos.
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their brains are small, and their tongues are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

And in twenty years they all came back,
In twenty years or more,
And everyone said, 'How small they've grown!'
For they've been to the States, and the Horrible Zone,
And they've seen the American maw!'
But they drank to their health, and gave them a feast
Of mussels from Belgium and fruits from the East;
And everyone said, 'As long as we live,
We never will go off to sea in a Sieve,—
But just dance by it forever more!'

Oh far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies lived;
For their brains were so small that their tongues fell out,
And they sold their souls for a Sieve.

Anyway, let's get back to business. One of the things that most caught my eye between Christmas and New Year – what a sensibly discreet time to launch it, by the way! – was the Government's plan requiring EU citizens who have lived in the UK for more than five years to apply and pay for "settled status" after March 2020 unless, like the ill-fated and thoroughly done-over 'Windrush Generation', they can provide documents to prove they already have it. Adults will have to pay £65 each and kids £32.50. Since many of them clog up the jobs we won't do – or, let's face it and even more frighteningly, we can't do – I don't imagine the plan will bother you all that much, at least until, Mrs May drops it like the rest of her biannual cast-iron pledges. Assuming Her Majesty's newly-designated vassals pay up, of course (and I suspect we haven't an end of that one: I bloody wouldn't!), you may even be glad that a few hundred million quid will be available to plug some of the holes in the UK's dreadful public services or, better still,

hand out in trickle-down corporate tax give-aways (delete as appropriate). Truth be told, I don't know your views about this little swindle and I'm not going to complicate my life or yours any further by asking you for them, but I imagine we both agree that the Prime Minister would try to justify fleecing foreigners as "delivering what the people voted for" or some similar resolute-sounding but infinitely negotiable – piece of verbal posturing. Remember what I said about trusting people who insist on pronouncing every single consonant? How anyone can manage to run a country while doing it just defeats me: it's a full-time bloody job. Remembering to pronounce every consonant, I mean. Sod the country.

In saying this, Mrs May would be wrong, of course. The Home Office's new system is *not* what "the people voted for". On 1st June 2016, Vote Leave, the official Leave campaign, posted on its website a statement by Michael Gove, Boris Johnson, Priti Patel and that strange (though not stupid) woman Gisela Stuart – who I imagine is your favourite German since the exemplary left-footed monarchist Franz von Papen not only smoothed Adolf Hitler's path to the chancellorship but within months had convinced the Pope to turn a blind eye to a whole bunch of other little shenanigans too.

Vote Leave's statement, its consonants all rigidly and most Gove-ishly nailed in place, was soothingly entitled 'Restoring public trust in immigration policy – a points-based non-discriminatory immigration system.' Among other things it said,

There will be no change for EU citizens already lawfully resident in the UK. These EU citizens will automatically be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK and will be treated no less favourably than they are at present.

Ah. So let's get this right. There was nothing in it about resident EU citizens having to apply to settle here, which implies possible refusal, for indefinite residence "will automatically be granted". And there was nothing about them having to pay for the privilege of continuing to benefit our nation through their expertise and their hard work – or about another little matter I'll come to in a minute.

But what has this got to do with you, Mr Rees-Mogg? You who can otherwise bide your time while the Government drags our country so far down with it so that you may all the more easily make it yours? Well, a month ago – on 3rd December – your excellent chain-mail codpiece Leave Means Leave posted a video on its Twitter page. It showed you rather smugly "grilling" the latest Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay – who, when I last looked, was still there! – about the "backstop" appended to the Prime Minister's hard-fought Brexit deal with the EU. With that haughtily polite and understated menace that public schools so effortlessly inculcate in their little charges, you stated this rhetorical question:

"When previously has the UK allowed for taxation without representation?"

I'll tell you when: on Thursday 8th June 2017 in the UK's last general election and, a year before that on Thursday 23rd June 2016 in the European Union Referendum! Millions of EU citizens in the UK who have paid taxes to the UK Treasury, many for decades, were not allowed to vote in either poll. Without which, by the way, you wouldn't

now be in a position even to contemplate the damage you plan to wreak upon the very fools you tricked into your confidence. You know that as well as I do, you dishonest hypocrite!

“No taxation without representation”! – from a man who pays others good money to minimise the amount he has to pay and crows about it too! I would that we could reduce your representation accordingly and hand it to those who have done more for this country than you ever have, will or could, you loathsome and irredeemable hypocrite!

Sod Burke for this week – I can hear his weeping all the way from Beaconsfield Church. Though admittedly it’s only three miles from here. I really must visit it some time.

Yours entrenchedly,

Peter