# Now! That's what I call Brexit. Delving into the Brexicon

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*The debate about Britain leaving the EU has given us a lexicon – or Brexicon – of new phrases, terms, puns and portmanteaux, the most famous of which is 'Brexit' itself. For our final post of 2016, **Tim Oliver** reviews the well known, less well known and plain absurd words and phrases that make up his Brexicon of Brexit.*

Like it or not, and there are many who dislike it intensely, 'Brexit' has become an established word in the English language. The word, however, is one of many coined to describe Britain's exit from the EU.

Brexit is an example of a portmanteau, a type of compound noun formed by fusing together two words. Useful examples include 'spork' and 'brunch'. Less helpful ones include 'chillax', and the truly awful 'Brangelina.'

For some English purists, Brexit is not much better and left such a bad taste in the mouth of one that they described it as 'a compound word so ugly it comes as a surprise that a German didn't come up with it.'

The Italian Academy of Language dates the term to 2012 and it has not passed unnoticed that Brexit is technically inaccurate given it is the UK (of which Great Britain is a part) that will be leaving the EU. Unfortunately for those on the other side of the Irish Sea, 'UKxit' (or 'UKsodoff') just doesn't cut it.

The 'Brexplosion' of Brexit words shows no signs of ending. Merely researching this article dragged up the very terms 'Brexicon', 'Brentry' which was Britain's 1973 entry into the then EEC, and 'Brexatom' which is Britain's exit from the European Atomic Energy Community – EURATOM.

So dazed and dazzled was I by all the new words that in November I began a Dictionary of Brexit. Below are some of its best and worst entries.

**Types of Brexit**

We've all grown familiar with the 'hard Brexit' versus 'soft Brexit' debate. 'In-Bretween' them lies a veritable rainbow of Brexits. And yes, the term 'Rainbow Brexit' has been used, as has the inevitable (and I must admit my own part in this) 'fifty shades of Brexit.'

There is Theresa May's own attempt to define Brexit as a ' Red, white and blue Brexit'. Instead, she may find that over a European Council working breakfast she's served up a 'Continental Brexit' with not a hint of the longed for bacon and eggs of a 'Full English Brexit'. Perhaps the most she can ask for is that the city gets its eggs done 'Brexit over easy.'

If she, or more likely her Eurosceptic Conservative backbenchers, can't stomach such a deal then we could be in for a 'Dirty Brexit.' Failure to reach an agreement could see it all go to a ' Cliff Edge Brexit', which would not be ideal if one wants a smart Brexit, or 'Smexit.'

Brexit Minister, David Davis's suggestion Britain could pay money to access the single market means Britain might have to 'Brexit through the gift shop.' And pity Larry the Downing Street cat if, as *the Economist* muses, we should be talking of 'Schrödinger's Brexit'.

If Davis and May fail then they could face 'Brecriminations' in a 'Bloody Brexit'. The blood might be theirs from the knives their Eurosceptic backbenchers will quickly stick in their backs if they capitulate to the EU. That would certainly help define 'Brexit wound.'

The fall of Theresa May could end in the U-turn of a 'Breturn', or perhaps give Jeremy Corbyn the break he needs to push for 'Lexit.' Meanwhile the rest of the EU might be tempted to inflict a ' Brexpulsion' in the hope

Britain, the spoilt child of European integration, will 'Bruck off.' One can only hope this doesn't lead Britain to jump into bed for 'unprotected Brexit' with Donald Trump's USA or any other countries its desperate to cosy up to.

It could all end in 'Brarmageddon' with lots of ' Bregret' and 'Bremorse'. The satirical site News Thump did us all a favour when they neatly summarised it all as people wishing for an Amazing technicolour Dreambrexit.



## Europe's Brexits

The Brexit debate has also spawned words for the possible exit of every other EU member state. There are the relatively straightforward – and therefore somewhat dull – offerings of 'Grexit', 'Spexit' or – the one we'll all be talking about in 2017 – 'Frexit'.

Thanks to Quartz, we have a host of more imaginative creations. The Czechs will 'Czech out', for Cypriots it's a case of 'Nicoseeya', Latvians will cry 'Lat-me-out', but not before little Malta shouts 'Maltavista' and Luxembourgers think to themselves 'Luxgetoutahere'. As for Germany – the member state whose leadership the EU lives and dies by – what more appropriate term could we have than 'Angeleave Merkel.'

Don't think for a moment the fun ends with Europe. 2016 also gave us ' American Brexit', AKA Donald Trump (his election was, in his own words, 'Brexit plus plus plus'). It has led some in the US to think of fleeing north, also known as a 'Canadexit'.

## People of Brexit

The fight against Brexit is being waged by an army of 'Bremainers', 'Bremoaners', 'Remoaners' and 'Remainiacs' who point to the 'Brexodus' that is causing 'Brevestation' to the UK economy. They are accused of suffering a 'Brexistential crisis' with, as Slate pointed out, them passing through the classic five stages of grief: Brenial, Branger, Brargaining, Brepression or Debression, Bracceptance or – it gets worse – Euukceptance.

Facing them are Brexiteers, who were left 'Brecstatic' by the referendum result and who are driven by 'Brexciting' dreams of 'Liberté, égalité, Brexité.' While some might now have 'Regrexit', others stick to impossible beliefs (no doubt as a result of being 'Brexperts') and probably believe they can trigger Article 50 by chanting 'Brexitjuice, Brexitjuice, Brexitjuice.' They stand accused of being in 'Brenial' at the impossibility of delivering on the things the 'Breleave' campaign promised. Nick Clegg labelled them 'Breniers', a term so bad that it swiftly led to calls for him to 'Bresign' and 'Brelete your account'.

We've yet to see Brexit embroiled in corruption, but it is only a matter of time before we hear of 'Brexitgate.' One thing Brexiteers want to avoid is the fate of former Conservative MP and fellow Brexiteer, Zac Goldsmith who

was humiliated by a crushing electoral defeat at the hands of the pro-EU Liberal Democrats and so made to suffer a 'Zaxit'.

**The Neverending Brexit**

I can't write a post like this without also dipping into all the Brexit film, music and book title adaptations. The list is endless because 'Brexit is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're gonna get .'

This year has certainly been '2016: A Brexit Odyssey' when we 'Brexited through the looking glass' to embrace that 'Crazy Little Thing Called Brexit' that takes us on a 'Magical Mystery Brexit Tour' which is 'Truly, Madly, Brexit'. For an explanation, you'll have to turn to 'Monty Python's The Meaning Of Brexit' or 'The Hitchhikers Guide to Brexit.'

To Bremoaners this was a 'Brexit Without a Cause', 'A Minority Brexit', 'A Brexit Too Far' and an ' Inglorious Brexit.' Surely, after all, it should be a case of ' No Brexit Please, We're British .' If they could have their way, they're 'Never Gonna Give You Brexit'.

The difficulties of working out what to do next means 'the Brexit Show' has turned into a farce akin to 'My Big Fat Greek Brexit'. 'The Man From Brexit' (David Davis) is accused of wanting to take Britain back to the 1950s. No surprise then that he wants to 'Carry on Brexit'. He'll be conscious of Brexiteers growing frustrations at 'Waiting for Brexit', their fears of 'Brexit Recall' and that they console themselves with, 'No Brexit No Cry.' Should Brexit end as a compromise then it will be 'A Tale of Two Brexits' (*It was the best of Brexit, it was the worst of Brexit…*).

For many, however, it is a case of 'Dr Strangelove, or  How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Brexit.' They'll just have to put up with, 'The Good the Bad and the Brexit' of life on ' Brexit Island', even if there will be 'The Nightmare Before Brexit'.

Finally, this wouldn't be the Great Britain I know and love if somebody didn't connect all this to James Bond (which they have).

Theresa May (00Brexit) has a 'Licence to Brexit', even if it means to ' Leave and let die'. Delays in negotiations, or a several year transition deal mean we could see claims she has chosen to 'Brexit another day'. For the time being she has her 'View to a Brexit', but will soon need to deliver up more than a 'Spectre' or 'Quantum of Brexit' to her MPs. If she fails to give them a Brexit they want they will tell her that 'The Brexit is not enough'.

If 'Breturn' happens then perhaps it is possible that ' You only Brexit twice'. Or will it be a case of ' Brexit is Forever', 'Brexit never dies' and 'From Brexit with Love'?

All in all, it's a complete 'dog's Brexit'. Is it any wonder the French want Brexit to mean English is  kicked out of the EU's list of official languages?

There are more words and phrases in my  Brexit dictionary. No doubt 2017 will deliver up its fair share of additional entries. If you've seen any I missed or think should be heard then please post them in the comments box below. If they're so awful they're good then I'll add them to my Brexicon.

# Merry Brexmas!

*The post gives the views of the author, not the position of LSE Brexit or the London School of Economics. Image credit: debikirksey / Creative Commons*

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