

## BUSINESS EYE

EMAIL [editorial@bucksheald.co.uk](mailto:editorial@bucksheald.co.uk) / FIND US ON FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/bucksheald](https://www.facebook.com/bucksheald) / FOLLOW @bucks\_heald

# Looking into my crystal ball...

WRITTEN BY

ALEX PRATT



Founder of Serious Readers and chairman of IoD South Region.

www.bucksheald.co.uk  
@bucks\_heald

**T**his column has a tradition of making a complete fool out of me as I rashly go into print with what I think, believe and feel is going to happen during the year ahead.

Only an idiot would do this. So, there you have it. You are reading the musings of an idiot. My advice is to stop reading now. It could be contagious.

This time last year, I suggested that we were rapidly losing the tolerance, kindness and acceptance that has in the past made Britain Great, and were replacing it with an angry culture of needing to

be right, lying and cheating. On this score I'm going to give myself top marks, not least because the prime minister himself prorogued Parliament, defied the Law Lords and lied to the Queen in a desperate attempt to 'Get Brexit Done' by October 31. Full marks.

I also predicted that last year we were going to drift into an economic war by mistake. In practice the experience of the past year has been much about global trade difficulties depressing economic growth, particularly between the USA and China. On the money again Alex. Seven out of 10.

Nostradamus himself would have been seriously proud of my prediction that we would 'enjoy' a General Election triggered by the Brexit fiasco. I wish I was this good at the lottery numbers. I predicted that Theresa May would not last the Brexit vote and I think I can fairly claim that one. Full marks again!

We did see the major power cut I foresaw when in August

a million homes were cut off and we came within minutes of another five million being plunged into darkness. I predict the situation will continue to get more precarious in 2020 and that we will find ourselves unable to take constantly available electricity for granted. More full marks.

Sadly, I was also right to suggest that Europeans who have lived and contributed so much to our society for many years would begin to feel unwelcome and start to go home, to our immense cost. I could get an A\*!

So, what for the year ahead?

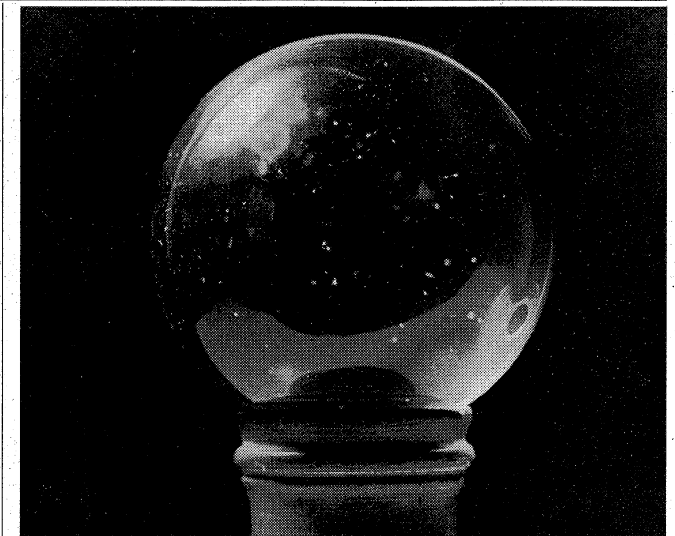
Well, it feels that Brexit will remain with us but at a less intense fever-pitch in the national discourse. We might have time to start dealing with the environmental, terrorist and knife crises that threaten our lives, not to mention the housing, NHS waiting list and collapse of the United Kingdom.

We will achieve a basic

trade deal with the EU, and we will not drop out with a 'No deal' but rest assured there will be lots and lots not sorted out for several years. The 2020 trade deal will, therefore, be thin and less than comprehensive, but we will have one because it is in both sides' interests to do so.

Our economy has taken a huge hit financially and we are going to start to feel the terrible economic effects this year from the massive cuts in investment we have experienced already, just as Boris wants to start to spend 'Upp North' to try and keep hold of those 'lent' Labour votes. Taxes will rise and our global credit rating as a nation will get worse, meaning the £50 billion we already pay in servicing the national debt each year will rise.

Re-arranging Whitehall while trying to get lots of really important things done is, on the face of it, a strange policy so we will either get nothing serious done or the changes



Alex makes his predictions for the year ahead. Photo by Lambert/Getty Images

won't be that draconian. I'm going for limited change and less getting done.

Government is slow and inefficient. Expect lots of disappointment Liverpool and Manchester.

Interest rates will be cut, the value of the pound against

the dollar will rise back to circa \$1.40, the Euro will come under serious pressure as the EU weakens without our membership income, and we definitely won't need visas to travel to Paris, Potsdam or Prague.

Time will tell.