

Press release: Burglar jailed after Solicitor General's intervention

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A man who burgled 2 homes has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it for being too low.

Emmanuel Buckland, 44, took a number of items from 2 homes including personal items, a bicycle and money. Both properties were occupied on the night of the burglaries, including a child in one of the homes.

When arrested by police Buckland stated that although his memory was affected by drugs and alcohol he recalled entering both properties, and he later pleaded guilty to both burglaries.

Buckland was originally sentenced in January to 2 years imprisonment suspended for 2 years at Luton Crown Court. The Court of Appeal has now increased this to 2 years and 8 months immediate imprisonment.

Commenting on the increase, the Solicitor General said,

"Breaking into these homes while the victims were in caused them substantial anxiety and fear, and given that this is not the first time that Emmanuel Buckland has been convicted of burglary it seems appropriate that his sentence was increased to reflect that."

News story: April tax changes 2019: changes for you

Tax changes which come into effect in April will mean 32 million people in the UK see their income tax bill cut compared to 2015-16. This summary lets you know where you can find more information about each of the tax changes.

The National Living Wage is going up to £8.21 an hour

If you are aged 25 and over, and not in your first year of an apprenticeship, you are legally entitled to at least the National Living Wage. Those under 25 and apprentices also benefit from rises in the Minimum Wage. The National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates apply across the UK.

The Personal Allowance is going up to £12,500

You don't have to pay income tax on the income you earn below this amount. As a result of the change, a typical basic-rate taxpayer will take home £130 more than in 2018-19.

Fuel duty will remain frozen for the ninth year in a row

It will remain at 57.95 pence per litre across the UK. Fuel duty has been frozen for the ninth successive year, saving the average car driver £1,000.

Small retailers will get business rates relief

Small retailers will get one third off their business rates bills, this is part of more than £13 billion of rates relief since 2016.

From April, working parents and disabled people will be able to earn an extra £1,000 a year before their Universal Credit starts to reduce. This change will see 2.4 million families keep up to an extra £630 per year of what they earn.

New Enterprise Allowance has been extended

The New Enterprise Allowance provides mentoring, support and funding for benefit claimants to get their business ideas off the ground. Over 120,000 businesses have been launched through the NEA since 2011 and from April funding will continue for another 2 years with 30,000 new mentoring places available.

From 1 April 2019 people will be able to claim up to £59,200 annually through the Access to Work scheme to help pay for additional support that they may need in the workplace. This can include workplace adaptations, assistive technology, transport and interpreters.

News story: UK businesses embrace global demand for British produce

- UK exports grew faster to India (up 19.3%), Japan (7.9%), China (4.6%), and Canada (4.2%), than to the EU (3.6%) in 2018.
- UK exports continue to rise, increasing by 2.7% to 634.1bn in 2018.
- Share of UK exports to the EU over the past 10 years has declined by nearly 5 percentage points to 45.6% in 2018.

Data released today (29th March) by the ONS will give UK exporters a significant boost, as the latest figures confirm demand for UK goods and services is growing across the globe, with exports to India increasing at the fastest rate amongst the UK's top non-EU trading partners.

Figures released today show the export of goods and services to non-EU trading partners in 2018 reached a high of £345.1bn, demonstrating the growing appetite for British produce outside of the EU.

The latest figures show an increase in the share of exports going to the UK's top 3 non-EU trading partners, USA, China and Switzerland, increasing from 21.3% in 2000 to 25.4% in 2018. Contrastingly, the share of UK exports to the EU has decreased significantly from 54% to 45.6% over the same period.

Eurostat data also shows the UK was one of only two EU member states to export more goods to non-EU countries than within the EU in 2018, demonstrating the UK's increasing popularity in markets beyond the union.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Dr Liam Fox, said:

Even with an increasingly challenging global economic outlook, these latest figures show demand for UK exports across the globe continues to grow and there is clear appetite for British products all around the world. Now more than ever is the time for UK businesses to be exploring opportunities overseas.

My international economic department is focused on growing exports and boosting the UK economy through our Export Strategy, and putting the UK at the heart of the world's fastest growing markets through an independent trade policy.

The USA remains the UK's top destination for exports, increasing by 3.9% to 118.2bn in 2018.

Latest data also highlights the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for foreign investment as inwards stock has increased by 12.6% to a record high of £1,336.5bn in 2017. The USA is the UK's top investor, with investment stock increasing by 19.5% to 351bn.

There has been a growing demand from Asian investors in the UK, with inwards investment stock increasing by 201% since 2008, the highest growth rate of any continent. Furthermore, the share of inwards stock from Asia has increased from 6.8% to 9.6% between 2008 and 2017.

Notes to Editor

- Partner country data comes from ONS UK Economic Accounts 2018 Q4
 - Eurostat data comes from Intra-EU Trade in Goods – Recent Trends
 - Foreign direct investment data comes from ONS Foreign Direct Investment Involving UK Companies: 2017
 - Top 3 non-EU trading partners in 2018 were the USA, China and Switzerland
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Speech: Britain has been shaping the world for centuries. That won't change with Brexit: article by Jeremy Hunt

The 18th-century Scottish poet Robert Burns was perhaps the most gifted wordsmith of his age. Every foreign minister should ponder one of his lines: "Oh, would some Power give us the gift / To see ourselves as others see us!"

When I picture how others see Britain right now, I suspect old friends are shaking puzzled heads. The clash and thunder over Brexit is not an appealing spectacle. Some may feel that British politicians are acting out Monty Python sketches in real life.

So please put aside the doom-laden commentary and accept my assurance: We British are neither abandoning our neighbours nor retreating from the world. We have not taken leave of our senses.

True, our Parliament can be exasperating. But in a democracy that is also its job. The mother of parliaments is proud, fiercely independent and sovereign. If the British government must fight for every vote on something as crucial as our country's place in Europe, that is as it should be. If we lose sometimes, that too is democracy. For all the pressure it puts me under personally, I take pride in answering to a parliament that is impossible to suborn.

In some countries, disputes of this kind might spill violently onto the streets. In Britain, our national debate on Brexit has been contained within our democratic institutions. We have been through worse – the repeal of the Corn Laws, for instance, poisoned British politics for a generation after 1846. We have also shown resilience in the most supreme of tests – maintaining parliamentary democracy and removing a respected prime minister

even as the country fought for its life during World War II. Having survived such tests, British institutions will overcome this one too.

Look beneath the surface and Britain's international position remains unchanged. The United Kingdom is a small archipelago, with rather less than 1% of the world's population. Alongside the United States we have done more to shape the world we live in than any other country and remain in the global top five of most important leagues.

We have the fifth-biggest economy in the world, the No.1 financial centre in our hemisphere and the second-biggest military budget in NATO.

We reliably supply three of the world's top 10 universities in surveys and are often ranked at or near the top for 'soft power'. When it comes to innovation, we are fourth in the global league, according to an annual index compiled by organizations including Cornell University and the World Intellectual Property Organization. And we continue to rank highest for business-friendliness.

Don't forget that Britain also possesses a nuclear deterrent, globally deployable armed forces and two new aircraft carriers. We like to believe we are the most capable ally America has. We've been with you in Afghanistan from the beginning in 2001; our servicemen and women have helped you to take apart the Islamic State in the Middle East.

And we do more for European security than any of our neighbours. Right now British soldiers are the single biggest contingent of NATO's deployment in Poland and the Baltic states.

It might seem odd that we are protecting these European Union members in the middle of Brexit negotiations. In truth, it's entirely logical. Britain is leaving the structures of the EU, which we joined as recently as 1973, as that organization moves from economic cooperation to political union. But our unconditional commitment to the security of our continent long predates our EU membership and will not waver after we leave.

In fact, one of the few things that unites British politicians of all parties and our European counterparts is that we plan to work hand-in-glove on foreign and security policy after Brexit. Our vital interests and values are going to stay aligned, just as they will with the United States.

So once Brexit has happened, be in no doubt that Britain will retain all the capabilities of a global power. You may be the superpower but our worldwide network of alliances and friendships places Britain among the handful of countries with genuinely global reach. We want to put it at the service of the democratic values both our countries share.

As the country steps up to our global destiny, I follow in a remarkable tradition. The first foreign secretary, Charles James Fox, abolished the slave trade. Another, George Canning, reshaped South America by helping its countries to achieve independence.

Outside my office stands a bust of Ernest Bevin, who was an architect of NATO

exactly 70 years ago and arguably did as much for European security as any other post-war European politician. Bevin also ensured that Britain stayed out of the supranational body that came before the EU. He saw no contradiction between those two positions – and he was right.

Britain has been shaping the world for centuries and we're here to stay.