

Ukip's death throes could boost the Tories



Last week ex-UKIP leader Nigel Farage is [reported to have said](#) “Ukip is collapsing . . . the basic structures of the party organisation are disappearing”.

If that is the case, there are something in the region of 593,852 voters (as of 2015) who might be swept up by the Conservatives. So, says Clare Foges in today's **Times** (paywall).

But, she also asks do the Tories want them?

For some time now, it has been clear that the Conservatives have wanted to distance themselves from their natural core voters. There has been an undignified display of ‘getting down’ with the kids which Foges has witnessed personally:

In high command, (the Conservative party) ... yearns to be a party of Instagrammers, not Zimmer-framers – and certainly not ex-Kippers..... In the years I worked for the party I endured countless conversations about how it should “face the future”, code for turning away from the fuddy-duddies and provincial Little Englanders – and towards the young and trendy. A senior

party figure once famously branded activists “swivel-eyed loons”, and though the disdain was not usually this explicit, there was a sense that many of our natural supporters were just too retro for the modern image Conservatives hoped to project. Indeed, for many self-ordained modernisers, “detoxifying” the party has meant doing anything that might raise the blood pressure of the white-whiskered Colonel in the shires.

Note to Tories: Do you really think there are really that many white-whiskered Colonels left in the shires to worry about?

Note to Tories: See recent activity involving pro-Brexit groovies [Artists 4 Brexit](#) and various [Brainy Brits for Brexit](#). So not just your Aunt Agatha (but don't forget her either).

Then there is the issue of the courting of under-35's. After a full decade of parading its socially cool credentials the Conservatives share of the student vote trails 45 points behind Labour, so says Foges:

The main effect of this fad-chasing is to irritate older voters and instinctive Tories, who see a party fiddling while Rome burns and trying to be PC at all costs.I'm not suggesting the party gives up on attracting the under-35s, but the way to do this is through reform of the housing market, of the wider economy, of skills provision. It is by offering substantive, recognisably Conservative ideas that extend opportunity; not by mimicking the left and desperately jumping on the latest fads in a way that only alienates your core vote.

Note to Tories: She is right you know, but as important as the economic stuff is I will also suggest that there are a lot of under 35's out there who are seeking a more traditional, more stable social basis on which to proceed with their lives.

*See recent brouhaha over Jordan Peterson/Cathy Newman

interview and the numerous post-mortems about it on the internet. Somethings brewing – it's just an instinct – who am I to say but.....?