

Distraction

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:09 pm

I struggled to see themes in this morning's news that were initially worthy of comment. Then I realised that is almost certainly deliberate.

The UK is set in course to leave the EU in two weeks time. No one has ever successfully explained why we are so desperate to depart the single market and customs union, most especially given that the former was Margaret Thatcher's creation, which is a point the Tories seem keen to forget.

GDP remains rocky. The Tories are not delivering on their promises.

The NHS is having the crisis that was all too predictable. There will be excess deaths compared to trend data as a consequence that can only be explained by an absence of funding.

A war between Israel and Iran has only been avoided because they backed away from the conflict Trump tried to create.

Data on the climate crisis just gets worse. Large parts of Australia are still on fire.

Scotland is being denied a referendum.

The government is not saving Flybe: it's giving a bung to an airline without obvious explanation and cutting carbon taxes to do so, which is going to seriously backfire, and very quickly. It's early evidence of incompetence because ministers simply do not have real experience of decision making, let alone a strategy to guide them.

But what is happening according to the news? Harry and Meghan. And fury over Big Ben bonging. Those are the stories. It's as if the media would wish that we be distracted from the big issues that an election did not in any way resolve and which should be at the top of every agenda.

I am but especially into conspiracy theories. I am not saying conspiracies do not exist by suggesting that. But by and large my belief is that if you can spot what looks like a

conspiracy it is almost inevitably more like a cock up. And I don't, for example, think Harry and Meghan timed their family row to suit Boris Johnson's needs. But, even so it would seem that, as usual, there are elements of the media more than pleased to play to a Tory tune. And right now distraction is suiting Boris Johnson very well indeed and the media seem more than willing to play along. I would wish it otherwise. On this occasion I have little hope of change.