

**BUSINESS**

# Prufrock AT THE BUSINESS PARTY

It is, people say, the party that kicks off the Christmas season. The ballroom at Claridge's in Mayfair was host, once again, to The Sunday Times Business party last Wednesday.

Among the first guests was Sir Victor Blank, hotfoot and gasping from the HBOS court case, where he has been a witness. He was soon swerving to avoid other witnesses and other interested parties from the banking community.

Unipart boss John Neill found himself bemoaning Brexit to a less than receptive audience of economist Gerard Lyons and shopping TV king John Mills, both firm leavers.

It was man hugs all round for arch Remainers Chuka Umunna, the Labour MP, and Innocent Drinks founder Richard Reed. CBI president Paul Drechsler also had his arm round Umunna, aware, it seemed, that their movie would have an unhappy ending.

Other Labour MPs included Rachel Reeves and Chi Onwurah. David Davis led

a small Tory contingent that included Rishi Sunak and Sir Michael Fallon, now with a little more time on his hands.

Old colleagues were reunited such as Sir Dick Oliver and Mike Turner, former chairman and chief executives of BAE Systems. Perhaps the hatchets had been buried, we just couldn't see where.

Passing like ships in the night were Christen Ager-Hanssen, fighting for a clearout of the Johnston Press board, and the publisher's chief executive Ashley Highfield – or "Cashley Highpay" as the Norwegian raider calls him. Also looking in was Roger Parry, Johnston's chairman during its ill-fated takeover spree in the mid-2000s.

While former Barclays chief executive Bob Diamond pitched up, there were slim pickings for Barclays tormentor Amanda Staveley. Baroness (Karren) Brady seemed to enjoy the evening. Meanwhile her team, West Ham United, were being hammered on Merseyside.

Andrew Lynch



Catherine Raines of the Department for International Trade, and Andrew Smith of Pinewood; below, Priya Lakhani of Century Tech and Arnaud Massenot of Luma



Lord Leigh of Cavendish Corporate Finance and Bob Diamond of Atlas Mara

Paul Drechsler, CBI president, and Rachel Reeves, chairwoman of the Commons business, energy and industrial strategy committee; below, Matt Lumb, chief executive of Tangle Teezer, and Emily Brooke, founder of Blaze



Christopher Grigg, chief executive of British Land



Ivan Menezes, chief executive of Diageo, and Baroness Brady; David Davis, Brexit secretary; Poppy Gustafsson of Darktrace



Tony Hayward of Glencore, Sir Michael Fallon and Paul Manduca of Prudential



Euan Blair of WhiteHat, Sanjay Arora of Arora and Oswald Boateng, the tailor



Poppy Gustafsson of Darktrace