



Vertical Turning Technologies – our experience. Webster & Bennett & Wickman Bennett – our machine tool history

Breakdown service – planned maintenance programs – refurbish – modernization. Guaranteed as when we built new  
VTT-WB are updating qualities that made Britain a world leading machine tool designer and builder

## REINDUSTRIALISATION – the most important policy to solve the UK's problems

The UK has many problems now but the current government is making more. To solve the most public ones, *border control, crime and climate control*, requires only straightforward logical policies managed by persons with the strength and intensity to fulfil them. Defining the policies and actioning them does not need to take any time – weeks not years

**The most serious problem is that the UK is in danger of being bankrupt.  
It may already be so. You need money to fund problem solving**

We go deeper into debt because **deindustrialisation** for over forty years means we do not manufacture enough and we buy too much.  
It has also seriously damaged our population's health and character

The creation of worthwhile jobs is essential for the growth the UK economy needs.  
The jobs need to be worthwhile to aid the fight against the drastic effects on the UK population of decades of deindustrialisation. It is ruining this country. It is ruining the population.  
It has to be reversed or there is no more hope.

**The jobs that gave 'working class' men self esteem and the satisfaction of providing for their families have practically disappeared. We now have generations that have never worked and too many youngsters growing up in a 'no work' 'live on benefits' environment. This has to be reversed**

IF A POLITICIAN CAN SAY, MEAN AND ACTION THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT HE WILL BE THE FIRST POLITICIANS TO DO SO SINCE CHURCHILL. THE TIME IS NOW, IT IS ALMOST TOO LATE

***"If you elect us our no. 1 priority when setting policies and budgets will be to look after the interests of this country and its citizens.***

*We will reindustrialize the UK to create income to take us away from the dire financial position the UK is in, to create good jobs and to fund the solutions to any other problems still existing e.g. law and order, border control and climate control actions (from the UK viewpoint)*

*If we have surplus funds we will use them carefully to the benefit of those less fortunate than us. Although we are not yet in government we are taking actions and influencing where we can, **now**, we cannot rely on the current government to do anything other than increase our indebtedness to others*

**If you agree with the above please read the attachments**

- A. 'Policy Briefing – Reindustrialising the UK Economy'
- B. 'Heavyweight Champions – a 2024 talk to the Bessemer Society'
- C. 'Professor Keith Ridgway'
- D. 'Iain Exeter – a lifetime with machine tools – the Mothers of all Manufacturing'
- E. 'Rebuilding a UK machine tool industry' – a proposal
- F. 'Summary'

My colleague in this initiative is the most practical academic and advanced manufacturing engineer I have met. **Professor Keith Ridgway CBE FREng**, Founder of the Advance Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) Sheffield University and the Advance Forming Research Centre (AFRC) at Strathclyde University.

Documents B and C tell you still more about him, his beliefs and his achievements.

Policy Briefing A tells you very quickly what influences us and what we can do

Document D is full of facts and emotions drawn from my lifelong experiences, so many successful and so many frustrated as a result of government ineptitude and ministerial lies

**Our proposals in A are straightforward.** We are not just looking back, criticizing then and now, we are promoting action that we can undertake and support

We are two people with a very wide range of experience and achievements. This is a brief summary

**Professor Keith Ridgway is the perfect person to kick start and lead this reindustrialisation project.**

He is a very practical Academic with the very highest level of achievement, ask Rolls-Royce and Boeing who supported his creation of the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC). His practical advanced engineering experience won him respect and influence in many of the worlds leading manufacturing companies. He is very experienced and successful in developing training programs for manufacturing engineers as he showed at AMRC

Unlike most academics his position in rugby was hooker, maybe that is why he is so straightforward and direct speaking and why I get on with him so well, I played mostly as centre three-quarter.

**Iain Exeter** – a lifetime achiever in the machine tool industry despite it effectively being destroyed in the UK thirty years ago during my third year of being the joint owner and MD of Wickman Bennett. Following the demise of Alfred Herbert Ltd ten years earlier **Wickman Bennett was the UK no. 1 machine tool builder** whose excellence was recognised throughout the world. **Insane** is the only word to describe the government (DTI and Customs and Excise) actions and ministerial lies that destroyed this, the most basic and most needed industry of any country.

I have a degree in getting up after being knocked over. I took my last kick in the teeth ten years ago from the Chinese. This history is on the company web site <https://www.vtt-wb.com/>

**Seeing again a functioning UK machine tool industry is my personal ambition and hope for the UK.**

This the most needed industry for any manufacturing country's independence of others. It will take time and will start in a small way but it will make a big noise and reinforce the serious intent to reindustrialise. It will create again our independence in building the machine tools for manufacturing, especially for key industries.

I have the experience and some key staff contacts to restart a serious UK machine tool industry. The start up cost is very low because building and training a skilled workforce will take time. Furthermore I have the designs of the world leading vertical turning centres that we built for world leading companies manufacturing aero engines, missiles, rockets, turbines, large valves, oil and gas components, etc. and **designs for larger machines that would be required for the SMR program that really should be manufactured in the UK**

Iain Exeter

October 2025

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<https://www.vtt-wb.com/>

# **A Policy Briefing: Reindustrialising the UK Economy**

Prepared by:

Iain Exeter (Former CEO, Wickman Bennett)

Professor Keith Ridgway CBE FREng (Founder, AMRC)

Date: 10 July 2025

## **Executive Summary**

The UK's manufacturing decline has led to deep economic and societal damage. We import most of what we once produced, weakening national resilience and deepening the productivity and skills crisis. This briefing outlines the urgent need-and opportunity-for an industrial recovery strategy. If Reform UK can understand and accept this document it has a unique chance to lead that change. We offer practical policy support based on decades of senior experience in British industry and manufacturing innovation.

## **Why Reindustrialisation Matters**

- **Economic Sovereignty:** The UK can no longer manufacture many essential goods, including defence equipment and energy infrastructure.
- **Generational Skills Loss:** Skilled trades have vanished due to factory closures, weak industrial policy, and short-term financial priorities.
- **Debt and Trade Imbalance:** Decades of deindustrialisation have contributed to unsustainable imports and reduced tax revenues.
- **Security Risks:** The UK now depends on foreign states (some adversarial) for critical components and technologies.
- **Strategic Blindness:** HS2 is a multi-billion-pound distraction from urgent infrastructure and industrial priorities.

## **Policy Briefing: Reindustrialising the UK Economy**

### **1. National Industrial Recovery Plan**

Publicly commit to rebuilding the UK's core manufacturing base. Frame it as a national mission to restore pride, productivity, and resilience.

### **2. Strategic Investment in Key Sectors**

- Defence manufacturing
- Nuclear (e.g. Rolls-Royce SMR program)
- Oil & gas support industries
- Machine tool production and refurbishing

### **3. Rebuild Skills Through Regional Centres**

- Establish regional training and re-skilling centres aligned with key manufacturing sectors.
- Partner with industry to train apprentices and upgrade existing workforce skills.
- Model after successful institutions like the AMRC and NMIS.

### **4. Industrial Investment Fund**

- Use minority shareholding model to co-invest in British manufacturers with strategic relevance.
- Provide scale-up support to SMEs with export potential or critical technology capabilities.

### **5. Scrap HS2 and Redirect Resources**

- Immediately cancel HS2.
- Commission a 6-month review to redeploy assets for:
  - Freight-focused rail networks
  - Night-time motorway logistics corridors
  - Local road infrastructure upgrades

## **Policy Briefing: Reindustrialising the UK Economy**

### Key Messaging for Government

- "We must start making what we consume again."
- "Economic security begins with industrial capability."
- "We'll restore pride and purpose to British engineering."
- "We'll invest in jobs that produce, not just spend."

### Implementation Partner Proposal

Professor Keith Ridgway-globally respected manufacturing innovator-should be appointed as an Industrial Policy Advisor or Taskforce Lead. His experience creating industrial clusters, training centres, and working with firms like Rolls-Royce and Boeing will offer Reform UK credibility and practical direction.

### Conclusion

The UK's decline in manufacturing is a root cause of its economic weakness. With bold leadership, a focused strategy, and experienced advisors, Reform UK can reverse this decline and win the support of disillusioned voters across the country.

We are ready to help. This is a historic opportunity to reindustrialise Britain. Let's not waste it.

## B

### Heavyweight champions - a talk to the Bessemer Society

#### Prof. Keith Ridgway CBE FREng

In 1973 I left UMIST (now part of Manchester University) with a degree in Mechanical Engineering focused on machine tools.

Looking for a first job was pretty easy.

Home was a town called Partington.

Eight miles North-East was the famous Trafford Park with companies like ICI and Metropolitan Vickers who made steam turbines and the hydroelectric turbines for Cruachan Power station, so big they had to be disassembled at site to get them into place.

Later, Metros became GEC one of the “big two” steam turbine generator manufacturers in the UK. A mile walk and a ferry across the Manchester Ship Canal would take me to Irlam steel works, where I worked during vacations.

Four miles South East and I would be at the Broadheath industrial estate home to a cluster of companies like Kerns, George Richards, Churchill Grinders and Linotype.

Across the City I had the choice of Hawker Siddeley, Ferranti Aviation, Whipp and Bourne Switchgear and Mirlees Diesels.

Or Mather and Platt in Newton Heath, where I landed that first job.

Each one of these firms were within a 12 mile radius of home and all of them with large apprentice and graduate manufacturing training programmes. Mathers had a training school with 100-200 apprentices and around a dozen graduates.

Just half a century later, all these companies and the skilled workforces they employed have gone, and with them much of our national heavy engineering capability.

And what replaced it?

The Trafford Shopping Centre and the promise of Levelling up

So, imagine my surprise when the Chancellor announced in his 2023 Budget that five regions in the UK were to be designated as Advanced Manufacturing Investment Zones, each eligible to £160 million public money over ten years... Greater Manchester included.

The announcement was accompanied by a £4.5 billion Advanced Manufacturing Plan where Advanced Manufacturing is defined as “production processes that integrate advanced science and technology, including digital and automation, to manufacturing.

While welcoming this long overdue recognition of the value manufacturing brings to our national security and well-being, I wonder whether the Plan will ever be delivered?

After all it doesn't come into force until after the election.

But even if a future government does spend the £4.5 billion it is nothing compared to what is being invested in the United States and China who are both pursuing aggressive policies linking science and technology to advanced manufacturing.

The US Advanced manufacturing Strategy declares:

**“Manufacturing is an engine of America’s economic strength and national security. It enables the economy to continuously grow as new technologies and innovations increase productivity, enables next-generation products, supports our capability to address the climate crisis, and create new, high-quality, and higher-paying jobs<sup>1</sup>.”**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS & Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act passed by Congress are pumping \$2 trillion in federal spending over the next ten years.

Much of this is a belated response to China’s own state-led industrial policy that seeks to make it “dominant in global high-tech manufacturing”.

The ‘Made in China 2025 strategy<sup>2</sup> is deploying huge government subsidies, mobilising state-owned enterprises, and pursuing intellectual property acquisition to catch up with—and surpass—Western technological prowess in advanced industries.

The risk to the UK economy and national security from this is two-fold.

- **This struggle between the world’s two super-powers could critically weaken the UK’s manufacturing base at the very time we should be expanding it.**
- **A much weakened manufacturing base makes it all the more difficult to commercialise and manufacture the innovations and products emerging from our fundamental science and technology capabilities.**

In recent years the UK has invested heavily in infrastructure, from renewable energy and nuclear power to high-speed rail, including rolling stock. But instead of nurturing domestic design and manufacturing capabilities we have purchased from overseas, using our infrastructure spend to bolster the economies of countries such as Germany and Sweden.

Take transport. Rather than use this infrastructure investment to rebuild our own rail making capacity we award a £2 billion contract to Siemens to build trains for the Piccadilly Line and celebrate their investment in an assembly facility Goole, a few miles down the road from the former Doncaster Plant where the Flying Scotsman was designed and built and exported around the world.

Instead of a domestic rail renaissance we now have a situation where half the UK rail network is dependent on foreign owned train companies who build trains subsidised by their own governments, while the UK leaves it to the free market. Alstom alone have built, or are building, just under 40% of the UK mainline train fleet; as well as the entire fleets in service with London Underground and Dublin.

HS2 is likewise a missed opportunity. The tunnel boring machines were manufactured by Herrenknecht at its factory in South-West Germany,<sup>3</sup> because the UK didn’t have the Vertical Turning capacity to make the 10m diameter boring machines required.

Wherever we look, it is clear that the capacity-building opportunities of public investment have migrated overseas, along with the skills, talent and billion pound revenues, exposing the UK to

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<sup>1</sup> National Strategy for Advanced Manufacturing. National Science and Technology Council, Committee on Technology, Subcommittee on Advanced Manufacturing. Executive Office of the President of the United States of America, October 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Made in China 2025, Institute for Security & Development Policy ([www.isdp.eu](http://www.isdp.eu)) originally published in 2015.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.globalrailwayreview.com/news/123018/hs2-ltd-launch-first-tunnel-boring-machine/>

becoming a “screwdriver” economy, despite its global lead in areas of science, engineering and technology.

We only have to examine two areas that are critical to national security – defence and renewables — to see how dependent we have become on other nation states who have maintained or grown their manufacturing capabilities.

## **Defence**

In December the *Wall Street Journal* reported the British military— America’s leading military ally — was reduced to 150 deployable tanks and perhaps a dozen serviceable long-range artillery pieces.

A US general noted that <sup>4</sup> the British Armed Forces would run out of ammunition “in a few days” if called upon to fight ...

That its ageing fleet of armoured vehicles, including tanks, was built between 30 and 60 years ago, and full replacements are not due for years.

And that the Royal Air Force lacks the ability to defend its skies against the level of missile and drone strikes that Ukraine is enduring.

In this scenario, the UK would not be adequately prepared if there was a major conflict.

There are signs the government recognises this.

Last year a Conservative Defence Secretary not only nationalised Sheffield Forgemasters but also pumped significant public investment into new equipment: pointing to a much more activist role for the state in matters of national security.

## **Renewables and climate change**

From fighting forces to fighting global warming, heavy engineering and advanced manufacturing are strategically critical technologies.

Yet our boast of being #1 in wind power is actually creating far more jobs in Denmark, Spain, France and Germany than in the UK.

The UK has nothing to export in wind and UK companies don't appear in the list of the top ten wind turbine manufacturers.

Saying the UK leads the world in wind is a misrepresentation....

We are probably the #1 buyer!

The picture is little better with nuclear energy.

Hinkley point C is already costing £35bn.

It is being built by French state owned EDF Framatome with various statements about the amount of UK content.

Figures vary between 50%-60%

BUT where are the big ticket items coming from?

The reactor and steam turbine generators are all made in France

And the UK’s big contribution .....concrete.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/geopolitics-and-policy/11325-uk-army-no-longer-top-tier-fighting-force-warns-us-general>



The situation is no better in steel.

British Steel is owned by the Jingye Group in China.

And Tata Steel announced its plant in Port Talbot is to close its two blast furnaces.

Although Electric Arc Furnaces will be used to produce “Green Steel” the fear is that the UK will not be able to manufacture high quality steel, which, in turn, will seriously reduce supply chain resilience.

Besides losing almost 3,000 jobs what other impact will it have?

Between 65% and 75% of the steel needed to build Royal Navy surface ships is already reported to be sourced from Europe.

With the Port Talbot closure that can only rise.

Likewise, there are grave doubts that the UK has the steelmaking capacity to manufacture large floating offshore wind turbines – as each floater weighs circa 4,000 tons and we will need 150 per year, and it is not clear that this can be sourced in the UK.

So what is to be done?

### **The role of government in rebuilding our manufacturing base**

The US and China point the way.

As the world’s two superpowers they show there is a clear role for government and public policy in creating a more resilient economy through advanced manufacturing, its supply chains and skilled technical workforce.

In the UK the Prime Ministerial Council for Science and Technology recognise this.

In the letter to the PM it noted:

*“Government procurement is not yet reaching its potential to stimulate innovation in Britain’s economy and drive growth, productivity, prosperity, and security. Government’s annual procurement spend of more than £300 billion shapes future markets and supply chains, particularly in sectors where public purchasing dominates the market, such as construction, energy, health, defence and security.”*

Harnessing that procurement power is only part of the story, however.

The message from Washington is that there needs to be a cross party, bipartisan consensus on the need to expand the nation’s advanced manufacturing capabilities.

Congress may fiercely debate the particulars, but once agreement is reached, bipartisan policies are enacted that have the force of law.

For that to happen in the UK will require truly seismic changes of mindset in Parliament and Whitehall.

Westminster must come to the same cross party, bipartisan agreement on the need to expand our advanced manufacturing capabilities, as we have seen on Capitol Hill.

Crucially it means Number 10 and Number 11 working in tandem not against one another

It means that party politics is put aside on this strategic issue.

I believe the voters are looking for such a bipartisan approach.

In places like Partington a rebirth in engineering and manufacturing excellence would bring hope and opportunity to the left behind regions in the north of England.

A strategic political consensus in London would give the private sector the consistency in policy it requires to make big, long-term investments in people and equipment.

It could also empower our devolved nations and regions to become partners in this renewal endeavour.

Organisations like Bessemer have a vital role to play in raising the bar of ambition, of challenging the status quo, and of being the disruptive forces that change things for the better.

Other nations have started from a lower base and succeeded.

There's no reason UK manufacturers can't do the same and once again become world heavyweight champions.

## C Professor Keith Ridgway

Few Academics are as practical as Keith Ridgway. Documents A and B illustrate his practical and informed approach as well as his depth of knowledge.

He has been honoured for many things but the major stand out for me was the first time, 20 years ago, that I visited the wonderful **Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC)**. As well as co founder of AMRC he was Executive Dean.

He is a man of great principles, especially relating to the importance of high quality practical engineering skills training, and that caused him to walk away rather than conform to training reductions. Walking away from something you have built that is being damaged by something you cannot control is something I respect and have done myself twice

Born in Manchester, Keith studied for his first degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Manchester (UMIST) and started his career as a Special Apprentice at Mather and Platt Ltd, Manchester. He worked as a design engineer at Kennedy and Donkin Consulting Engineers, Manchester before studying for a PhD at the University of Manchester, supported by Shell International Marine.

After completion he returned to industry before becoming an academic with a strong desire to bring Industry and Academia closer together. In 2000, he worked with Sheffield businessman Adrian Allen to establish the AMRC with Boeing at the University of Sheffield. This mechanism of collaborative working not only extended to other sectors but was the basis of how Catapults work with industry today.

In 2016 Professor Ridgway became the **Executive Chair of the Advanced Forming Research Centre at the University of Strathclyde**.

In 2017 the University of Strathclyde was awarded £68m by the Scottish Government to establish the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS) as a catalyst for an Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District adjacent to Glasgow Airport.

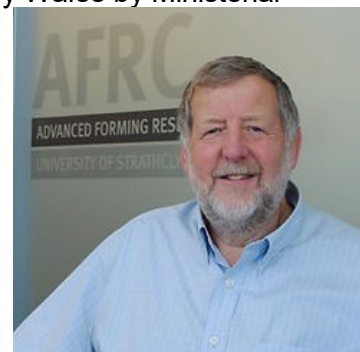
**In 2019 he joined the University of Strathclyde as the Exec Chair of the Advanced Forging Research Centre and established the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland.**

He was awarded the OBE for services to UK manufacturing industry in June 2005 and a CBE for services to Manufacturing Research in January 2012.

In 2019 he was elected a Fellow of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

In September 2020, he was appointed as the Chair of Industry Wales by Ministerial

appointment. (Welsh Government).



## D - Iain Exeter, a lifetime with machine tools – the Mothers of all Manufacturing

IF YOU BELIEVE IN IT – DO IT - I gave up a comfortable and very rewarding life as a machine tool trader to buy a the UK's no.1 machine tool builder that was losing money

Winning an 11plus scholarship gave me seven years in a wonderful school, Eltham College. Injured out of Loughborough Colleges I had to relinquish my teaching ambitions and started work in my parents fledgling machine tool rebuild company in 1961. Since then my whole life has been in the machine tool industry. I have seen it all.

I enjoyed three decades as a machine tool rebuilder and trader, very comfortable, very interesting, extensive international travel.

I had built capital that when the opportunity came to buy **Wickman Bennett, the largest machine tool builder in the UK in 1989** I was able to take on the challenge – WB was losing money but I could see why. The most important things were its quality engineering staff and its world wide reputation. Quite probably it was the best known machine tool company in the world.

“Machine Tools are the ‘mother’ or ‘master machines’, the machines that make all machines. Every manufactured product is made either by a machine tool or by a machine that was made by a machine tool. Thus, at the heart of the industrial health of any nation is its machine tool industry.”

Harvard Business  
School Press 1989

Influenced by the Harvard Business School report just published I took the Wickman Bennett opportunity. It echoed what my father had told me nearly thirty years before

**‘machine tools are the mother of all manufacturing’.** They make the machines that make everything. 40 years ago the UK had an internationally recognized very strong machine tool industry that got into trouble because weak management could not work with the unions and succumbed to incompetent government decisions that promoted the de-industrialisation that has destroyed our abundance of skilled engineers and the lives of quality working class people generally. I experienced all the expectations of the 1960's, then witnessed the negative years that followed. **That dispiriting senseless history is detailed in a large pdf a short way down the page** <https://www.vtt-wb.com/> I don't hold back in criticizing those responsible and I make my rants in my web site <https://www.age-fit.com/>

During the 1990's my company and the whole UK machine tool industry was destroyed by Government mismanagement, ministerial lies and City greed. <https://www.vtt-wb.com/>. The Scott report gives information that came too late [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott\\_Report](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Report)

**‘machine tools are the mother of all manufacturing’.** This is still true today. 50 years ago there were no serious machine tools built in China. Now they have several huge machine tool companies bigger than the UK industry at its peak.

China knows if **you do not make it you have to buy it**. The UK used to make everything. Now we have to buy it and guess where most of it comes from

*Few, if any politicians, know what machine tools are. This may help them*

**During the second half of the 19th century machine tools became the largest industrial sector in the USA.**

The UK machine tool industry was also developing fast. Many of the names below were to be seen in a '**machine tool**' section of the **Financial Times daily record of share prices!** They were amongst the most important names world wide throughout most of the 20th century. Alfred Herbert, Wickman, Webster & Bennett, Matrix Churchill, Churchill Grinders, Dean Smith and Grace, Lang, Holbrook, Colchester, Harrison, Cincinnati, Giddings Lewis Fraser, Kearns Richard, Asquith, Butler, Jones and Shipman, Sykes, Bridgeport, Churchill Gear Machines – it hurts me to remember the stupidity of their demise and the loss of their quality workforces

**The machine tool industry in the UK and the USA were major contributors to our success in the World Wars. Churchill 'out manufactured' Hitler to win WW2**

Contrary to her election promises to strengthen our defence position in 1981 Mrs Thatcher took advice to put a moratorium on defence spending. This destroyed great companies, large and small. Our ability to manufacture weapons and armoured vehicles has reduced to a dangerous level. **The UK manufacturing capacity that remains is almost full of machine tools built overseas, many in countries that we have been to war with or had a poor relationship with. If we fall out with them where do we get spare parts or replacement machine tools?**

Cars, airplanes, tanks, ships, railways, power stations – we made them all but now we spend hundreds of billions for foreign companies to make them for us. Senseless

I cringe when Starmer says 'we will lead the world in developing Net Zero'. Does he never look at a world map and see that the very tiny land surface called Britain occupies only 0.16% of the worlds land surface?

**Some of my own experiences and how I have seen this country being destroyed**

When I started work in the 1960's **London was an industrial city!** Hard to believe but there were engineering companies, large and small, throughout the city and the home counties. Machinists, especially toolmakers, were highly regarded and well paid. Five year indentured apprenticeships with quality companies were highly sought after throughout the region

To the best of my memory immigration started from the Caribbean and grew quickly at this time as these happy, smiling people filled the vacancies in the less demanding and less \*\*\*\* jobs like bus driver, road sweeper etc

Then major engineering and manufacturing companies like Vickers Crayford and Dartford (tanks and armaments), Handley Page (aeroplanes -yes we built aeroplanes in Hertfordshire), The Royal Arsenal at Woolwich (development and manufacture of armaments and ammunition), Matchless Motor Cycles Plumstead, ICL (International Computers Ltd) in Croydon, Letchworth and Stevenage, Phillips in Croydon, Hoover in Perivale....

The list goes on and on. It was the same in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, Coventry, Sheffield and lesser known locations like Peterborough (Hotpoint – gone and Perkins Engines hopefully dealing with the anti diesel brigade)

We can no longer machine the components to build large turbines so we rely on foreign companies for nuclear power turbines

We can no longer build large steam turbines. Sad that I remember being in the factories of GEC, C A Parsons and Metrovickers – world leaders!

**We gave it all away. We need a government with the courage to start the reversal process and bring back hope for a major part of the population before it is too late**

I could write a book about the quality companies that have disappeared from UK manufacturing or UK ownership. The loss of jobs transferred to Italy, France, Poland – all over – and ownerships to China, France and Germany in particular. Every time this happened the UK took a big step backwards towards second rate living standards

**Government inability to set rules that would make owners, management and unions work together to establish a better future for them all in a changing world led to the destruction of the coal and steel industries along with the communities.**

I personally experienced one of the worst closures of all – the **TIMEX plant in Milton of Craigie, Dundee in 1982**. A wonderful plant making Timex watches, Sinclair computers, Polaroid cameras, employing a workforce of several thousand skilled engineers was finally closed when the owners decided they had had enough of the politically motivated unions that governments failed to control. **2600 precision machine tools were up for sale**. I bought them and for the next seven months managed the removal and sale of them. During that time I got to know and respect more than fifty ex Timex employees who joined my team for handling what is still **the largest single purchase of machine tools anywhere**. A large number of machines were sold to a Royal Ordnance Factory. This closure should never have been allowed. Much of the production went to France

**For too long we have been run by politicians with no experience of production.** They use words like ‘increase productivity’ when they talk about, for example, the NHS. The NHS does not produce so it cannot increase productivity – it needs to increase **efficiency**

**Keir Starmer** every few days comes out with “what we are doing will get people back to work”. **He speaks without thinking**. He has no idea where the work is because he cannot understand that his policies are causing job reduction – NI and entrepreneurs fleeing

**It took from the Industrial Revolution to the 1960s to develop a world leading machine tool industry. Five years to destroy it.** I cannot envisage a UK industry ever being back on the scale of the Chinese machine tool industry but there are key machine tools that should be built for key products especially defence, aerospace and power generation. Looking at the unbelievable sums wasted by government the investment required to start the development and manufacture of those machine tools is ‘pocket money’. My proposal is to identify the capacity wanted by the UK manufacturers, build those machines and gradually introduce them to replace the foreign machines. UK skills can also be built up in a program of machine refurbishing. In our small way at VTT-WB we already do this for major aero engine, aerospace and oil and gas companies

**The crazy thing is that governments have continued to spend hundreds of Billions on HS2 that can never be shown to be a cost effective investment or to be in the interest of the majority of voters. Too weak to bite the bullet and stop it**

Not only has it cost money that could be invested elsewhere, including the programs above, but the other costs are totally ignored. Eg **for years now the M42 at Solihull grinds to a halt or a crawl for hours each day**. The wasted fuel costs, the mega pollution and the wasted time of all the drivers is huge but never gets costed in. Solihull is not alone in suffering like this

**HS2 should be stopped immediately** and a small team of engineers and economists given 6 months to form a plan to recover the best practical solution possible for it. This should include:

- Understanding that many times more people want to travel by car than by rail and would like safer, less busy roads, especially motorways
- Instead of fancy 'great for your ego to be there' passenger stations/shopping malls work out a plan to get more freight onto rail and the stations become freight hubs. Give logistic companies serious benefits to use the motorways between 8PM and 6AM

Analyse the benefits and the possibility to convert HS2 routes into standard rail or even roads

We used to make railway rolling stock in the UK. Foreign companies bought our manufacturers. Which companies are making rolling stock for HS2 and which countries are benefitting. Alstom, Hitachi, Bombardier – does not sound very British. In reality the value of the rolling stock contracts is tiny in the scheme of HS2.

**Living in the Midlands I see the effects of HS2 everywhere and the greatest frustration is to be in a log jam alongside miles of cones and no work activity in sight. Huge cranes everywhere, rarely lifting a thing. Hundreds of cars in HS2 carparks, hardly a moving person to be seen. The inefficiency and waste is incredible**

**REFORM should say they would stop HS2, even at this late stage, minimize the losses and maximize what can be rescued from the debacle. This would win you hundreds of thousands of votes and save you billions that is being spent with foreign companies**

## **In summary**

Keith Ridgway's CV speaks for itself

I have achieved a lot technically and commercially, enjoyed having millions, invested it in something I truly believe in and then had it destroyed. If I can help turn it round I wish to do so

**The UK needs politicians who can do more than TALK THE TALK.**

**DO THEY EXIST?** At the moment the only hope I see is for these four people to set aside their egos and get together to get Britain out of this mess.

**Can they? Or are their egos too strong?**

**Kemi Badenoch, Nigel Farage, Robert Jenrick, Richard Tice – you could do something this country has not seen since Churchill**

***Come together to initiate and support policies that the population can believe in and work together to fulfil them***

Following the Industrial Revolution the UK developed a world leading machine tool industry to enable us to manufacture components in metal. It is difficult to believe it now after decades of deindustrialisation but the UK produced the earliest automobiles, trains, lorries, airplanes, motor cycles and cycles, ocean liners, submarines and defence products of all kinds, power plants, steam generators, printing and office machines of all kinds. This was volume production – in the 1960's nearly 2million cars per annum, for example

**Now for almost everything we are reliant on foreign manufacturers for almost everything and what is made in the UK is usually on machine tools from foreign manufacturers. Our world leading machine tool industry was destroyed by the UK governments while they destroyed UK volume manufacturing and many crucial industries. Not only is this close to bankrupting the UK it leaves us in a potentially dramatically vulnerable position at the mercy of countries with whom we do not have the strongest relationships!**

Winston Churchill must be the last British Prime Minister to understand the necessity to have the machine tools needed to build weapons and armaments. During WW2 he inspired factories and the men and women in those factories to work the machines around the clock to produce the ships, tanks, armaments etc to out manufacture Hitler.

Nigel Farage appears to understand what deindustrialisation has done and the damage that the 'world leading nett zero climate control' ambitions of Starmer and Milliband have already done to the UK

**This industry can only be restarted in a small way but it will have a huge positive psychological impact on UK manufacturers**

The biggest brake on re starting a UK machine tool industry at high speed is that since the 1990's there has been very little development of assembly engineers in Britain apart from the team that worked for me so successfully in the late 2000's and the smaller team in the mid 2010's. Lack of large foundry and machining capacity is another hurdle to climb over

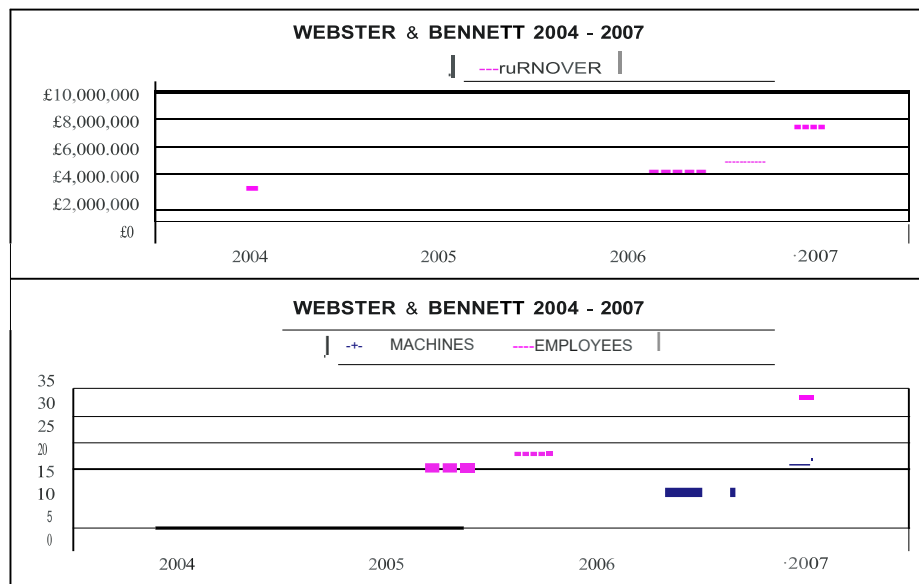
**For that reason my proposal is based on our 2004 - 2008 restart of Webster & Bennett, at that time still the best known name world wide as a designer and builder of vertical turning centres. From almost nothing to serious success in less than four years including new model designs – the REVELATION range**

## Growth 2004 – 2007

|                    |          |            |                |          |              |              |         |              |
|--------------------|----------|------------|----------------|----------|--------------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| <b>2004</b>        |          |            | <b>2007</b>    |          |              | <b>2008</b>  |         |              |
| ABC                | Belgium  | Evolution  | Mannstaedt     | Germany  | Evolution2   | Siemens R3   | Germany | Revelation   |
| KBB                | Germany  | Evolution  | Siemens E9     | Germany  | Evolution2   | Siemens R4   | Germany | Revelation   |
| <b>2005</b>        |          |            | Waukesha       | Scotland | Evolution    | Ohresser     | France  | Revelation   |
| London Underground | England  | Evolution  | Lufthansa      | Germany  | Revelation   | Excel 2      | USA     | Revelation   |
| Weaver Mabbs       | England  | Evolution  | Titan 1        | Nigeria  | Evolution    | Ostlandske 2 | Norway  | Revelation   |
| Wheels India       | India    | Evolution  | Titan 2        | Nigeria  | Evolution    | Varco 3      | Holland | Revelation   |
| Ostlandske         | Norway   | Evolution  | Egyptair       | Egypt    | Evolution    | Doncasters   | Wales   | RevelationZC |
| GEAL               | Scotland | Evolution  | MTU            | Canada   | Evolution    |              |         |              |
| <b>2006</b>        |          |            | Siemens R6     | Germany  | Revelation   |              |         |              |
| Siemens Napier     | England  | Evolution  | Varco 2        | Holland  | Evolution2   |              |         |              |
| Silcoms            | England  | Evolution  | Siemens R1     | Germany  | Revelation   |              |         |              |
| Varco 1            | Holland  | Evolution  | Siemens R2     | Germany  | Revelation   |              |         |              |
| Kownatski          | Germany  | Evolution2 | Gardner Denver | USA      | Revelation   |              |         |              |
| Ohresser           | France   | Evolution  | Richardson     | USA      | Revelation   |              |         |              |
| Elliott Turbo      | England  | Evolution  | Excel          | USA      | Revelation   |              |         |              |
| Siemens E1         | Germany  | Evolution2 | Caterpillar    | India    | Evolution2   |              |         |              |
| Siemens E2         | Germany  | Evolution2 | Siemens R5     | Germany  | RevelationDC |              |         |              |



| YEAR | MACHINES | EMPLOYEES | SALES     | TOTAL CASH | CASH LOCKED | CASH FREE | NPBT     |
|------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| 2004 | 2        | 16        | £1,341,07 | 84,92      |             | 84,92     | 98,65    |
| 2005 | 4        | 14        | £2,138.07 | 9,64       |             | 9,64      | 20,31    |
| 2006 | 8        | 26        | £4,114,8H | 2,191,31   | 1,999,57    | 191,74    | -153,86  |
| 2007 | 17       | 31        | £9,055,00 | 325,00     |             | 325,00    | 1,000,00 |



## Webster & Bennett International Ltd.

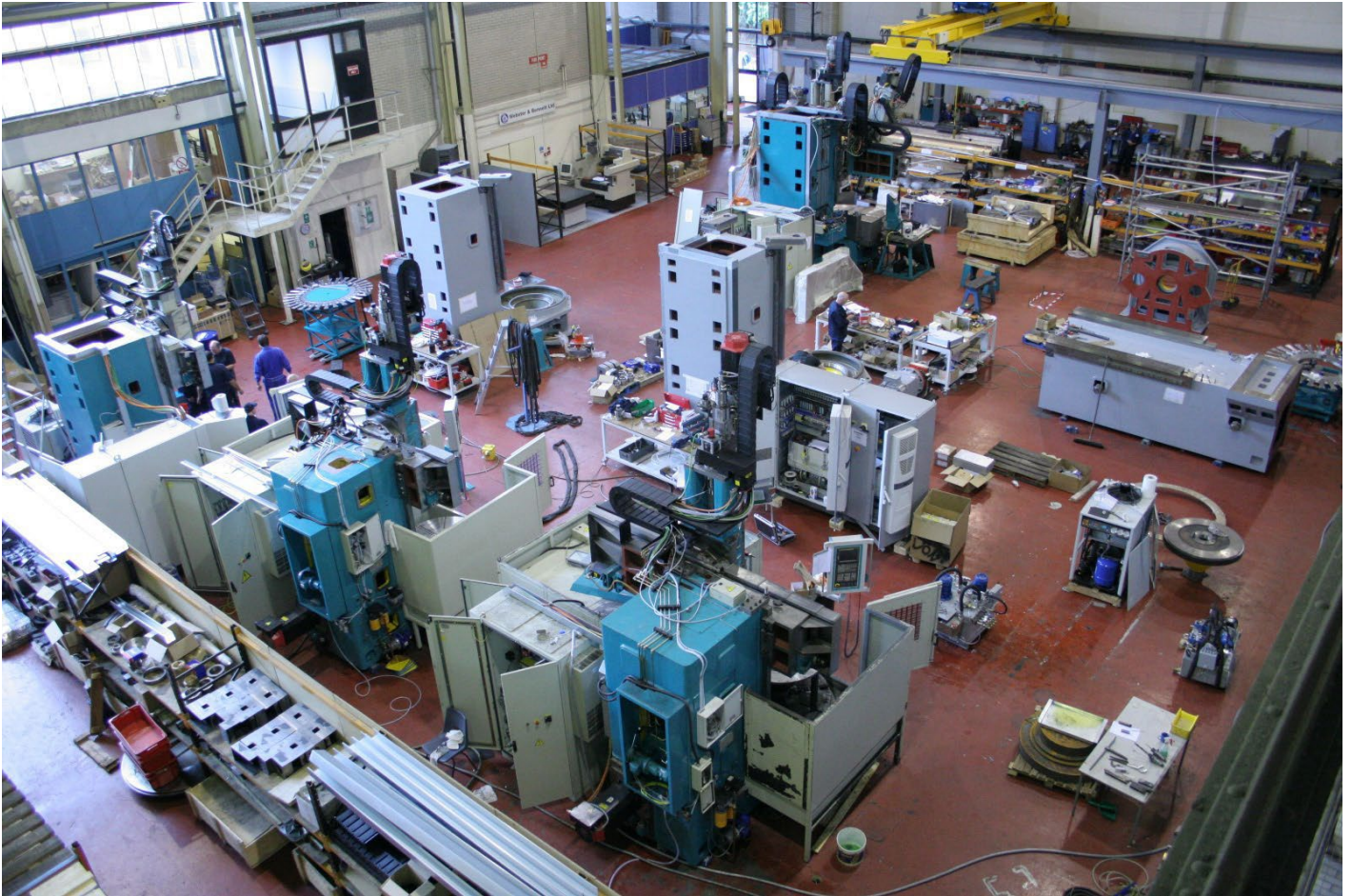


| MANAGING DIRECTOR                                                       |  |            |               |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Iain Exerer                                                             |  |            |               |                          |
| Nicola Stokar von Neuhaus                                               |  |            |               |                          |
| SALES                                                                   |  | PRODUCTION | PURCHASING    |                          |
| RICHARD MARTIN                                                          |  |            |               | DAVWNORRIS DAVID SPRASON |
|                                                                         |  |            |               | Monika Linda             |
| JOEIL HUGHES                                                            |  | Geoff Cook | Steve Thomson | Petr Gabmelli            |
|                                                                         |  |            |               | Paul Stokes              |
|                                                                         |  | Vernon     | BellInnham    | Cechman                  |
|                                                                         |  | Gerdes     | Cotter        | A.N.Other                |
|                                                                         |  | Mason      | Evans         | Jackson                  |
|                                                                         |  |            | Foster        | Chanesworth              |
|                                                                         |  |            | Jenkins DG    | Sham                     |
|                                                                         |  |            | Jenkins DD    | Fanner                   |
|                                                                         |  |            | Jenkins D     | Erwin Dunke              |
|                                                                         |  |            | Johnson       | Andreas Lanner           |
|                                                                         |  |            | Leeson        |                          |
|                                                                         |  |            | Macnamara     |                          |
|                                                                         |  |            | Rihjms        |                          |
|                                                                         |  |            | Thome         | Maintenanre Service      |
|                                                                         |  |            | Wilson        | Comoration USA           |
|                                                                         |  |            | Adams         | Sierrens CNC sunnrt      |
|                                                                         |  |            | Trir.den      | Fanuc CNC suooort        |
| These are the suD concracc cor n. janties or l. personnet we are usinll |  |            |               |                          |

Such rapid growth creates its own problems but Webster & Bennett developed strength and stamina during the difficult years and these problems are overcome. The company has learned to be lean and the organisation structure shows just how lean - a team of less than 35 achieving production of 17 machines with a sales value of £10,000,000 is a substantial achievement.

## THE WARWICK FACILITY WAS AN OPERATION OF OUTSTANDING EFFICIENCY.

DESPITE ITS SMALL SIZE IT IMPRESSED SIEMENS DUISBURG AND AGAINST COMPETITION FROM MUCH LARGER GERMAN AND ITALIAN COMPANIES WE WON THEIR ORDER FOR 9 MACHINES, 10MILLION EUROS



THE WARWICK FACILITY – 1500SQM CAPABLE OF PRODUCING 15 TO 20 MACHINES PER ANNUM ACCORDING TO MODEL MIX  
ALL OUR MANUFACTURED COMPONENTS WERE SOURCED FROM UK MACHINING COMPANIES



**2025** - for such a small company to make a strong impact in the market from day one it needs to show financial stability – if REFORM does not have contacts who can do that then we are talking to the wrong people. It is a small amount!

### What needs to be funded?

A 5 year period to determine the rate of growth that can be possible, very dependent upon the success of recruitment and training in what to many young people will appear to be a strange new but old fashioned industry.

This is an operation that should have the intent and the ability to be profitable during these 5 years. Main costs are:-

- a 5 year lease or rent of a 2000mm factory with a 20ton capacity overhead crane with 6 metres+ height under the hook
- purchase of components to build machines – up to 50% of sales price
  - o year 1 – £600,000 - 2 machines – sales price total £1.5million



- year 5 - £4,000,000 – 10 machines – sales price total £10million
- staffing
  - year 1 - £300,000 (5)
  - year 5 - £1,400,00 (20)

The designs of our models already established on the market would enable the operation to fulfil the sales targets of five years

*The easiest and fastest way to see these is to download the History pdf – link is on the home page of our web site, just below the first photographs. Skim through the background and then see the exceptional machine tools we built and have designed*

The largest machine we built has a capacity of 4000mm diameter. We have designs up to 6000mm. The requirement for nuclear power requires large machines. We can expand our designs and build these. The more serious problem is 'who in the uk can now produce 20 ton castings and machine them'. If the major parts have to be sourced in Europe we can do that but at least we would have design and build in our control in the uk.

Machine tools is not the only industry that would benefit from a UK heavy foundry and heavy machine shop. Bringing heavy machining back into the UK is vital for the country's future economy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gYZl8n-3mg> Destroying our machine tool industry as the government did was insane. This film is about one of our competitors for the 9 machine order from Siemens Duisburg that we won in 2006. They have had the support to develop the huge machines now needed for major power generation

A way to get large machines into production in the UK faster than starting from scratch is to purchase and refurbish, modernise if necessary, secondhand machines. We have been doing this for the past thirty years on standard machines for major companies in the most precise of industries

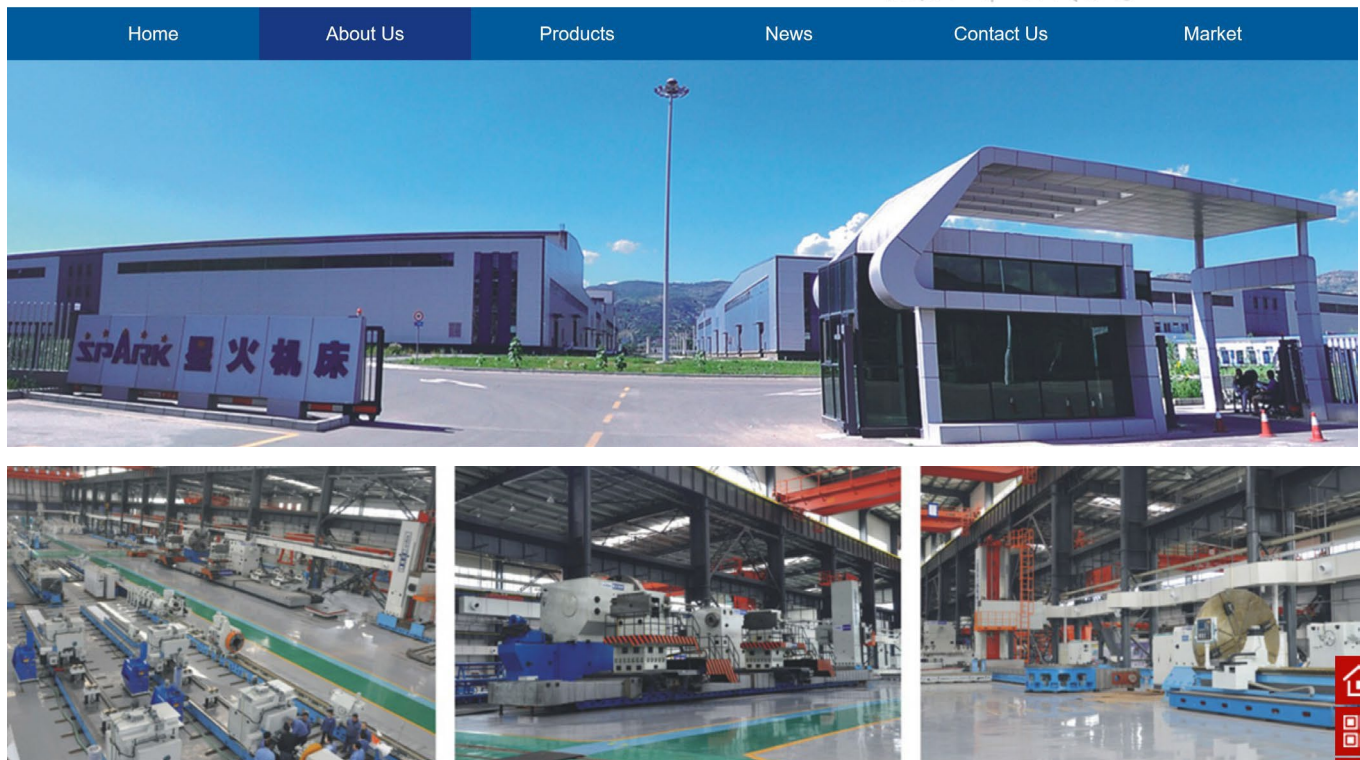
Included in the staffing is the engineering manager responsible for design development. He is independent and works with Tata, JLR and McLaren. We developed designs for larger models under a contract with Spark machine tools China and their German partner Herion. These are seen in the History pdf

One 'bad apple' in Spark killed what was a win:win contract. During assembly in China Richard was asked to install locally made 'precision' components. Had he installed them the machine would have failed. He refused and ensuing politics killed the contract and left us with a big debt.

**SPARK 星火机床**

POWERFUL TURNING MACHINES  
旋转世界 力成方圆

中文版 English



These photos taken from the Spark website illustrate how seriously China takes the machine tool industry. Spark is just one of several huge well equipped modern machine tool builders. However when they broke with us they could not build vertical lathes and concentrated on the easier horizontal machines

## F

## SUMMARY

For nearly 30 years I have said we are being led towards civil war. It is close now

That reinforces my belief that we should put our experience and intensity behind a party that is in agreement with the proposals we have made. Preferably Conservatives/Reform as one

### **No need to wait till the next election – state and action the proposals wherever possible NOW**

Professor Ridgway has the experience and charisma to promote the reindustrialisation policy and to give the battered manufacturing industries hope and strength to join in the fight to win a future

Every week make news to embarrass this insane government

Reindustrialisation will help the economy, the indigenous population and the immigrants who will contribute to it, as many did in the past

I do not diminish the **fight against crime** but I do not see it as a difficult policy to set or to implement

- Set the rules (most already exist)
- Enforce the rules 'with force' where necessary. Make support of the police part of the training program for the armed forces
- Nightingale prisons is the way forward. Keep those guilty of similar levels of crime together.
- No prison should be comfortable. For serious criminals it should be uncomfortable
- Most serious criminals are of no future use to society, keep the cost of their imprisonment as low as possible
- An effort should be made to rehabilitate those guilty of low level crimes – shop lifting for example. For first offenders given a few months in prison give them work making low cost items like we buy from China. Pay them, but deduct something reasonable for 'rent and food'. Encourage them to work to achieve a positive reference they can show to prospective employers when they leave prison.

**Concerning border control problems** I do not see the problem. A government is elected to do its best for the country and its population and to defend it when necessary. Since Tony Blair opened the gates and Angela Merkel displayed insanity border control in Europe has been non existent. I have worked and travelled throughout Europe, have good friends there but I voted BREXIT because the future problems were easy to see and the island that is the UK could easily put in place systems to control its borders. Instead the population continues to be contaminated by those who are nothing but a cost to the country and a danger to the British people. How difficult is that to see? Yet Starmer and the Tories before him act as if they are blind.

### **Kemi Badenoch, Nigel Farage, Richard Tice, Robert Jenrick – get together and do it FOR BRITAIN**

- get your proposals to solve crime and border control issues into the minds of the population and you will have their support
- demonstrate your proposals to help avoid UK bankruptcy by setting up and acting upon a reindustrialisation policy. You do not have to wait to be in office – it is a little of 'put your money where your mouth is' – and it is a little money
- Get Keith Ridgway to develop and market the policy and look for areas where you can be seen to obtaining financial support for it
  - o Companies that Keith can identify who you as a government should invest in. Before you are elected look for a Lord Alli, not for suits for Nigel, for investment for a financial return and a regrowth of a company
  - o My proposal for the machine tool industry

Iain Exeter

October 2025