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Brexit Snags on Irish Border: No history is mute.

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Robert F. Lyons, Kennebunkport

It is indeed true that the future of the Irish border hovers “over the Brexit proceedings as the single most intractable problem and the element most liable to yield disaster”. ([Brexit Snags on Irish Border, NYT December 26](#)). This is but another chapter of Britain getting sucked into the Irish bog as it has over the past eight centuries.

Winston Churchill wrestled with similar issues while negotiating the Anglo-Irish treaty. He asked: “How is it that the English political parties are shaken to their foundations and even shattered in almost every generation by contact with Irish affairs? Whence does this mysterious power of Ireland come? How is it she has forced generation after generation to stop the whole traffic of the British Empire to debate her domestic affairs?” (December 21st, 1921).

Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer reminds us that, “No history is mute. No matter how much they own it, break it, and lie about it, human history refuses to shut its mouth. Despite deafness and ignorance, the time that was continues to tick inside the time that is.”

Diarmaid Ferriter, Irish historian recently wrote that what compounds the problem is “the breathtaking ignorance” of Brexiteers on the Irish Border issue as “Westminster continues to deny and elide”. ([Irish Times, December 15](#)).

Theresa May, the prime minister and the honorable MPs should listen to the late great Tommy Makem’s signature song, [Four Green Fields](#) to fill in the gaps of their historic ignorance on the UK border in Ireland.

Might the Brexit debate be re-framed: if the UK would not only leave the EU but also depart from Ireland, the ancient problem of the English border in Ireland would finally be resolved?