

The good boys (and girls) of Brexit – you and me!

As Leo McKinstry pointed out, Remoaners are “the sorest losers in modern British history.” These arrogant individuals just cannot accept that more than half of those who voted in the June 2016 referendum decided that we were better off returning to normality – in other words, re-joining the rest of the world as a self-governing nation. They ignore that fact that this incredible result was achieved in spite of the Leave side being very much the underdogs. Cameron chose to fight on as favourable ground for Remain as possible – a short campaign where the full government machinery was used to encourage us to stay in and giving us precious little time to put our point of view across. What is more, he recognised that there were bitter divisions within the Leave camp and no agreed exit plan, which worked to his advantage.

In spite of all these handicaps, we won – admittedly by a small margin. Had the referendum been held in the second half of 2017, as was widely anticipated in the months either side of the 2015 General Election, thus giving us longer to explain the true nature of the European Union, I have no doubt that Leave would have won by a far greater margin.

Even so, I doubt if the remoaners would have behaved any differently. The whingeing, the claims that geriatrics and the great unwashed swung it for Leave and the muck-raking around leading Leave campaigners would have been just the same if it had been a 60-40 majority.

The latest remoaner whinger to be brought to our attention is Molly Scott-Cato, the Green MEP for the South West. She has launched a website which has borrowed its title from Arron Banks’ book describing the “Tales of Mischief, Mayhem & Guerrilla Warfare in the EU Referendum Campaign”, The Bad

Boys of Brexit. Unlike Mr Banks' however, book, it isn't a fun read, but then, humour has always been a conspicuously lacking feature of the eternally self-righteous Green Party.

The website features short biographies of 21 leading figures in the Leave campaign, prefaced by the chilling warning that "I think you will find what you read here frightening" as the website claims to "unpick, using widely available and credible sources, the stories of the people who funded and ran the dishonest and opaque campaigns that persuaded a majority of UK citizens to make a decision damaging to their future. Much of what happened remains shrouded in secrecy and considerable efforts have been made to hide the ugly truth."

In all honesty. no one would admit that the referendum was won by a group of angels. Politicians and businessmen have their faults and some of the leading figures who supported leave have made some serious mistakes. We are reminded about Dr Liam Fox, for instance, who *"featured prominently in the Westminster expenses scandal of 2010, when it emerged that he had claimed more from the public purse than any other shadow minister."* Fair enough, but what about that arch-remainer Peter Mandelson? He has been at the centre of a scandal or two during his political career. The implication that the remainers can somehow claim the moral high ground does not stack up.

Some of these "bad boys'" main crime seems to be nothing more than not supporting the ideology of the Green Party. Matt Ridley is a climate change sceptic and a supporter of fracking. For your average Green, holding such views puts you a par with neo-Nazis, and mass murderers (except. of course, if the latter happen to be Islamists).

Jacob Rees-Mogg's biggest crime merely seems to be that he is very rich and that he sensibly has decided that he is better equipped to decide how to spend his own money than the State. What is wrong with that? Everything, it seems, if you are a

Green.

I had never previously heard of Alexander Nix, whose main contribution to the leave campaign was via his company Cambridge Analytica, which skillfully targeted voters with an appropriate message on social media. So it's fine for the government to use taxpayers' money to produce a booklet telling us to stay in but somehow it's wrong for the Leave side to hire a private firm to persuade us to leave?

Making contact with anyone connected with the Russian government is another heinous crime in Molly Scott-Cato's eyes. For some reason, even though Peter Hitchens correctly pointed out that Russia is as much a threat to the UK as the Klingons, it doesn't seem to have dawned on some people that Putin's Russia isn't the same as the Soviet Union and doesn't want either to invade us or to turn us into a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship (Perhaps she would be better advised to direct her self-righteous anger against John McDonnell instead, as he seems rather keener on this idea than Mr Putin). Scott-Cato's website suggests that she is happy to believe any "fake news" suggesting that Russia interfered with Brexit, with the US Presidential election and so on, while at the same presenting a very one-sided view of the Russia/Ukraine conflict with no mention of the covert EU support for the overthrow of the democratically elected but pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovich in 2014,

The biggest criticism of this website, however, does not relate to the selective biographies of any one individual but rather to the implicit claim that somehow, these individuals bear the sole responsibility for the Brexit vote. In actual fact, as we pointed out on that memorable day when the result was announced. **you** did it – *"the thousands of ordinary people who gave of their time and money so readily to distribute hundreds and thousands of leaflets and to canvass and campaign on the streets of our towns, cities and villages."* It was truly a victory for grassroots campaigners who rolled up their

sleeves and gave their all; unknown individuals with no skeletons in their cupboard to qualify them for inclusion on this insidious “bad boys” website. The likes of Molly Scott-Cato have had to lash out at the high-profile names because they cannot bring themselves to admit the truth of this.

I recall one such individual. I was having breakfast at a B&B in Hampshire after taking part in a debate in a neighbouring village the previous evening. A fellow guest joined me and we started chatting (unsurprisingly) about the referendum which, at the time, was less than two weeks away. I found out that he was going to vote leave and when I told him I had a few spare copies of our leaflets in my car, he asked if he could take them to distribute round the village in Somerset where he lived. To my knowledge, this gentleman had never done any political campaigning in his life before – and probably hasn’t since.

Then there was that unforgettable “Battle of the Thames” six days before the actual vote when Fishing For Leave organised a flotilla of fishing boats which sailed under Tower Bridge and up to the Houses of Parliament, making a complete fool of Bob Geldof in the process. Our fishermen are not billionaires or sleazy politicians but widely-respected hard-working men who earn their living in challenging conditions, made much harder by the EU’s appalling mismanagement of fishing in our waters. Sympathy for their plight unquestionably boosted the Leave vote. I recall at least one hitherto undecided voter for whom fisheries was the issue which finally tipped him into supporting leave. He was not the only one, I am sure.

One hesitates to give an individual like Molly Scott-Cato the oxygen of publicity, but the sheer amount of claptrap on her website does merit a refutation. No one would deny that the leave-supporting media and some prominent individuals did play a part in securing the historic leave vote, but it is an insult to the many ordinary activists and the huge sacrifices they made to suggest that the result was entirely due to the

big names. Yes, I do find the website frightening but not for the reason which the author suggests. Rather it is because it reveals the disdain for ordinary people, the arrogant bigotry and the insane jealousy which characterises the Greens. In the past, they managed to hide these traits under the cloak of caring for the environment but websites like this show them in their true colours and it is not pleasant.