

John Major's hypocrisy

Our former Prime Minister Sir John Major stirred up a storm last week when he suggested that the Government should make the “brave” decision to offer the free vote to “let Parliament decide, or put the issue back to the British people” – calling, in other words, for a second referendum.

Not surprisingly, such words provoked a strong reaction from some Brexit-supporting MPs, with Nadine Dorries calling him a “traitor”, Jacob Rees-Mogg was – characteristically – somewhat more polite, saying “We had a democratic vote and the decision has been taken. And what he is trying to do is overturn that.”

Traitor or not, you don't need that long a memory to contrast Major's enthusiasm for a free vote now with his behaviour during the vote on the Maastricht Treaty during his premiership. He imposed a three-line whip to get the bill through parliament and referred to the rebel Tory MPs as “bastards”.

It's therefore rather ironic that having denied the public a say or his own MPs a free vote on Maastricht that he has suddenly changed tack. He claimed that the public was realising it had been misled and had “every right to reconsider the decision”.

Well, where's the evidence? There is little evidence of voter regret. Most people **DID** know what they were voting for. The problem for Mr Major is that they made a decision he doesn't like. Even if the government had made better progress in the Brexit talks than the current muddle, he would still have found something to whinge about.