

Negotiating with the EU

The only past UK Prime Minister to have conducted a successful UK negotiation with the EU was Margaret Thatcher. I wish the current PM every success in pursuing a Free Trade Deal and a full assertion of UK powers over borders, trade, money and laws.

All the other PMs failed to stand up to Brussels bullying or failed to engage to get the UK a better deal in the first place. Mr Heath needlessly sacrificed our fish in a last minute panic to get into the EEC, setting up a running sore about our membership. His terms over money were also feeble.

Mr Wilson attempted a renegotiation which gained practically nothing back from the EEC, but did allow him to force his very divided party into accepting the EEC after a referendum. The pro remain referendum campaign told us we were just joining a Common Market with no loss of sovereignty. Over the years instead successive governments surrendered power after power to the EU institutions, making self government impossible.

Mr Callaghan accepted the Wilson settlement. He lost the election owing to poor economic management, partly triggered by the large balance of payments deficit with the EEC created by the adoption of EEC trading rules and tariffs.

Sir John Major signed the UK up to the Maastricht Treaty which split the party and country. He did not use the big EU push for more integration to secure a less intrusive model for the UK, though he did get the important opt out from the Euro. Sir John lost the General election heavily thanks to the enormous economic damage done by the European Exchange Rate Mechanism which he forced the UK into.

Tony Blair promised a renegotiation of the Common Agricultural Policy and stupidly surrendered part of our cash rebate to get it. The Reform never materialised as wanted by the UK.

Gordon Brown did not try to get anything back for the UK.

David Cameron went in for a major renegotiation. He travelled the EU asking what they would give, and got the answer very little. He asked for very little and did not even get that. He failed for example to restore control over our benefits system. One of the many Remain lies over the years was this was a red line issue which meant we would stay in charge. His failure led directly to the referendum outcome, with many otherwise loyal Conservatives backing Leave. Mr Cameron had to resign owing to his EU policy.

Mrs May constantly gave in to pressures from the EU, leaving her with an unacceptable set of terms for withdrawal which led directly to her exit from the job as PM.

Tomorrow I will look at how Mrs Thatcher carried out the very successful negotiation to get a substantial rebate on our onerous membership terms.