

The established media peddle plenty of alternative facts

It is fascinating to see the traditional media wrestling with other ways of looking at the world. They don't seem to like competitive opinions. It is high time some of their own alternative facts were exposed to criticism.

The media regularly tells us that the Conservatives in government cut public spending. If you look at the figures you find that it climbed in real terms from £249bn to £292 bn under Mr Heath, from £326 bn to £437 bn under Mrs Thatcher and Sir John Major, and has risen again under Mr Cameron. (2011-12 constant price basis). The OBR forecasts further real growth this Parliament. The media instead usually takes a figure about the proportion of National Income, so that if the private sector grows faster than the state sector they can call this a cut! They never use the cash figures because these have surged.

The media also regularly tells us Sir John Major's government fell because the party was split on Europe. If you look at the polls you see the Conservative ratings plunged when the economic damage of the European Exchange Mechanism became clear when we were forced to abandon that crazy policy and never picked up. All the rows over Maastricht and the Euro made no difference to the poll ratings.

The media often present Treasury and Other consensus economic forecasts as if they were reality. They rarely ask why these bodies failed to forecast the Exchange Rate Mechanism recession, the Banking Crash recession or the Euro crisis. Now they should ask why these bodies did forecast a 2016-17 recession for the UK which visibly is not happening.

The media love running Big business threatens to pull out stories about their presence in the UK if we resist features of the EU. They ran these stories when we decided to stay out of the Euro and were wrong then. Now they run them about leaving the EU, and were wrong about the short term impact and will doubtless be wrong about the long term as well.