

# Would Boris benefit from losing?

***By John Clancy, Visiting Professor at the Centre for Brexit Studies, former Leader of Birmingham City Council and Labour Councillor for Quinton.***

British voters are not sentimental when it comes to governments and Prime Ministers. In fact, they can be pretty brutal.

Delivering on promises aren't enough for them, I'd say. What they want is something to vote for (or perhaps against).

What they don't do is say 'thank you'.

If, say, Boris delivers a Brexit of whatever description before a general election, that could be dangerous for him. He should not expect a Brexit election dividend. The electorate are more likely to say, "What next?" rather than, "Bravo Boris".

Voters will vote for a set of future promises. Those delivered on previously are literally consigned to history.

Winston Churchill should have been rewarded with great acclaim by a grateful nation in 1945. The nation turned out to be far more interested in what kind of new brave post-world war society could be built for heroes, home front women, and their families. They turfed him out at the first opportunity.

Atlee delivered (or at least started to deliver) on the new Labour promises for a welfare state cradle-to-grave, and started the foundations of the NHS. The electorate wanted more. And they wanted it quicker. He was ultimately out on his ear by 1951 and good old Mr. Churchill was back.

Prime Ministers have introduced huge steps in the extending the franchise, and have had that new franchise then kick them out.

In more recent times, it could be said that Prime Minister Gordon Brown had achieved a great deal in co-ordinating a massive international intervention in Global Capitalism and the entire world

financial system to save it from itself. He helped save the U.K. and the world economy from falling rapidly into a genuine, long-lasting, deep depression, rather than a recession.

The electorate unceremoniously dumped him.

So Boris Johnson always preferred an option of a general election in which he promised to 'do' something. He wanted to promise to do something he believed voters could vote 'for'.

Ironically, then, failing to win backing for his Withdrawal Agreement could become a plus for Johnson. A subsequent election could be framed with a promise he'd actually rather give, and as he set out to intend to give, to the electorate.

If he did on 31<sup>st</sup> October arrange a Brexit with or without a deal, the voters literally won't thank him.

Instead it could be 'Did and Died', possibly in a ditch.