

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



WINTER 2024

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

Laura Blake

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to be able to welcome all our new members. Our existing members are our best ambassador so if you know of others who might be interested in joining the Association please give them my contact details blakelb@Parliament.uk.

SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY,
Woolwich West, Eltham,
Worthing West 1975–2024
BARRY SHEERMAN,
Huddersfield, 1979–2024
SIR WILLIAM CASH,
Stafford, Stone, 1984–2024
SIR GEORGE HOWARTH,
Knowsley, 1986–2024
ALUN MICHAEL,
Cardiff South & Penarth, 1987–2012
NIGEL EVANS,
Ribble Valley, 1992–2024
SIR OLIVER HEALD,
North East Hertfordshire, 1992–2024
CRISPIN BLUNT,
Reigate, 1997–2024
SIR BEN BRADSHAW,
Exeter, 1997–2024
RT HON SIR GRAHAM BRADY,
Altrincham & Sale West, 1997–2024
JAMES GRAY,
North Wiltshire, 1997–2024
DAMIAN GREEN, Ashford, 1997–2024
PAUL MARSDEN,
Shrewsbury & Atcham, 1997–2005
RICHARD BACON,
South Norfolk, 2001–24
JOHN BARON,
Basildon & Billericay, 2001–24
WAYNE DAVID, Caerphilly, 2001–24
JONATHAN DJANOGLY,
Huntingdon, 2001–24
IAN LIDDELL-GRAINGER,
Bridgwater & West Somerset, 2001–24
SIR JAMES DUDDRIDGE KCMG,
Rochford & Southend East, 2005–24
PHILIP DUNNE, Ludlow, 2005–2024
HELEN GOODMAN,
Bishop Auckland, 2005–2019

RT HON SIR ROBERT GOODWILL,
Scarborough & Whitby, 2005–24
GREG HANDS, Hammersmith &
Fulham, Chelsea & Fulham, 2005–24
RT HON MARK HARPER,
Forest of Dean, 2005–24
DAVID JONES, Clwyd West, 2005–24
DANIEL KAWCZYNSKI,
Shrewsbury, 2005–24
THERESA VILLIERS,
Chipping Barnet, 2005–24
SIR ROBERT NEILL,
Bromley & Chislehurst 2006–24
VIRENDRA SHARMA,
Ealing Southall, 2007–24
JOHN HOWELL, Henley 2008–2024
EDWARD TIMPSON CBE,
Crewe 2008–17, Eddisbury, 2019–24
RT HON CHLOE SMITH,
Norwich North, 2009–24
PAUL BLOMFIELD,
Sheffield Central, 2010–2
REHMAN CHISHTI,
Gillingham & Rainham, 2010–24
RT HON GEORGE EUSTICE,
Camborne & Redruth, 2010–24
MIKE FREER, Finchley & Golders
Green, 2010–24
RICHARD GRAHAM,
Gloucester, 2010–24
RT HON ROBERT HALFON,
Harlow 2010–2024
RT HON MATT HANCOCK,
West Suffolk 2010–24
GORDON HENDERSON,
Sittingbourne & Sheppey, 2010–24
PAULINE LATHAM,
Mid-Derbyshire, 2010–24
STEPHEN METCALFE, South Basildon
& East Thurrock, 2010–24
DAVID MORRIS,
Morecambe & Lunesdale, 2010–24
SHERYLL MURRAY,
South East Cornwall, 2010–24
ANDREW PERCY,
Brigg & Goole, 2010–24
HENRY SMITH, Crawley, 2010–24
IAIN STEWART,
Milton Keynes South, 2010–24
RT HON CRAIG WHITTAKER,
Calder Valley, 2010–24
CAROLINE ANSELL,
Eastbourne, 2015–24

JACK BRERETON,
Stoke on Trent South, 2015–24
MARIA CAULFIELD,
Lewes, 2015–24
DR JAMES DAVIES,
Vale of Clwyd, 2015–24
PATRICK GRADY,
Glasgow North, 2015–24
PETER GRANT,
Glenrothes, 2015–24
HOLLY LYNCH,
Halifax, 2015–24
SCOTT MANN,
North Cornwall, 2015–24
ANNE MCLAUGHLIN,
Glasgow North East, 2015–24
JOHN MCNALLY, Falkirk, 2015–24
VICTORIA PRENTIS,
Banbury, 2015–24
WILL QUINCE, Colchester, 2015–24
CHRISTINA REES, Neath, 2015–24
OWEN THOMPSON,
Midlothian, 2015–24
MAGGIE THROUP OBE,
Erewash 2015–24
RT HON KELLY TOLHURST,
Rochester & Strood, 2015–24
ANNE-MARIE TREVELYAN,
Berwick-upon-Tweed, 2015–24
MATT WARMAN,
Boston & Skegness, 2015–24
DR PHILIPPA WHITFORD,
Central Ayrshire, 2015–24
WILLIAM WRAGG,
Hazel Grove, 2015–24
ROBERT COURTS, Witney, 2016–24
WILLIAM GRANT,
Ayr Corrick & Cumnor, 2017–19
TRUDY HARRISON, Copeland, 2017–24
RACHEL MACLEAN,
Redditch 2017–2024
REBECCA POW,
Taunton Deane, 2017–24
GILES WATLING, Clacton, 2017–24
NICKIE AIKEN, Cities of London &
Westminster, 2019–24
SARAH ATHERTON, Wrexham, 2019–24
SIMON BAYNES,
Clwyd South, 2019–24
AARON BELL,
Newcastle-upon-Lyme, 2019–24
ROB BUTLER, Aylesbury, 2019–24

AMY CALLAGHAN,
East Dunbartonshire, 2019–24

MIRIAM CATES,
Penistone & Stocksbridge, 2019–24

THEODORE CLARKE, Stafford,
2019–24

ELLIOT COLBURN,
Carshalton & Wallington, 2019–24

VIRGINIA CROSBIE,
Ynys Mon, 2019–24

ALLAN DORANS AYR,
Carrick & Cumnock, 2019–24

RUTH EDWARDS, Rushcliffe, 2019–24

STEPHEN FARRY,
North Down, Belfast, 2019–24

SIMON FELL,
Barrow & Furness, 2019–24

PETER GIBSON, Darlington, 2019–24

JONATHAN GULLIS,
Stoke-on-Trent, 2019–24

SALLY-ANN HART,
Hastings and Rye, 2019–24

DARREN HENRY, Broxtowe, 2019–24

ANTONY HIGGINBOTHAM,
Burnley, 2019–24

JANE HUNT, Loughborough, 2019–24

MARK JENKINSON,
Workington, 2019–24

IAN LEVY, Blyth Valley, 2019–24

CHRIS LODER, West Dorset, 2019–24

CHERILYN MACKRORY,
Truro and Falmouth, 2019–24

JASON MCCARTNEY,
Colne Valley, 2019–24

LIA NICI, Great Grimsby 2019–2024

SELAINE SAXBY,
North Devon, 2019–24

ALEXANDER STAFFORD,
Rother Valley, 2019–24

ANNA FIRTH,
Southend West & Leigh, 2022–24

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHANGES

Following the recent General Election there will be some changes to the Executive as we invite two new sitting MPs to join the Committee. We are pleased to confirm that Richard Fuller has agreed to be the sitting Conservative MP on our Executive. We are delighted to announce that we have invited Nigel Evans, who was one of our sitting MPs and now is an Association member and former MP, to continue to contribute to the Association by sitting on our Executive Committee.

NEW HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMEMORATIVE PIN AVAILABLE

Presented in a House of Commons gift box, this sterling silver portcullis pin badge is exclusively available to current and former Members of Parliament. The badge has been intricately designed to feature the iconic Parliamentary portcullis surrounded by the floral emblems of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Limited edition, 925 Sterling Silver Hallmark, Made in the UK. The price is £50, which will include free UK delivery. To purchase one of these limited-edition lapel pins, please contact shop@parliament.uk.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Might you be interested in joining the annual Parliamentary Ski Week in 2025?

Every year since 1956, British and Swiss MPs have skied together in Davos, culminating in races between the two nations – the oldest interparliamentary sporting fixture in the world. The race, though, is only a small part of a week of skiing. We have skiers of every level, including some beginners each year.

Our Swiss counterparts provide us with ski passes as well as guides, though travel and accommodation are at our own cost. Former MPs are very welcome and come every year. Other than not being officially timed in the race, it is exactly the same for former and sitting MPs.

In 2025, we will be going from 1 to 7 January, so as to coincide with both parliamentary recesses.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the Chairman, Lord Hannan, on dan@hannan.co.uk.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Thursday 5th December 2024

OUTREACH TRUST MEETING

1.30pm – Committee Room 1
House of Lords

ALL MEMBERS MEETING

2pm – Committee Room 1
House of Lords
Baroness Butler-Sloss has kindly agreed to be our guest speaker.

CHRISTMAS RECEPTION

4pm – 6pm River Room House of Lords
It is with many thanks once more to the Lord Speaker for allowing us to hold our Christmas Reception in the River Room. All members and their partners are invited (no guests please as there is a limited number of places available).

If you wish to attend, please email me with names asap on blakelb@parliament.uk.

There is a cover charge of £15 per head towards costs which can be paid by cheque or bank transfer to "Association of Former MPs Account no 50281506 Sort Code 20-47-39. Once you have confirmed payment and attendance details, I will send you the official invitation.

If you do not have a pass to enter the Estate, the invitation should be sufficient to enable you to gain access to the event.

THANK YOU, NIGEL

By Eric Martlew



As a Member of Parliament Nigel Evans served on the Executive of the Association of Former MPs for many years; he was the link between the Association and the House of Commons.

During that time he was a source of great advice, and his intervention was invaluable on many occasions.

Though he was a Deputy Speaker, he always found time to help us.

When he was no longer in the House, the executive unanimously voted to invite him to join us. We were delighted when he accepted and he attended our last meeting, giving us the benefit of his vast experience.

Thank you and welcome.

Eric Martlew is Chair of the Association of Former Members of Parliament.



SO HE DID IT.

by Steve Norris

Trumph's victory was larger than many of his own supporters would have predicted. Of the seven states that we were told would decide the election Kamala Harris lost in all three rust belt states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan and did as badly in the sun belt states where the Republicans have mostly been in the majority in recent years. Trump won in Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina and Georgia.

A clean sweep, and what is clear is that while Harris was a massive improvement on Biden and her appeal to women in particular was strong, her lack of a clear programme for government and the nagging doubt that a win for her would be a win for more spending, higher taxes and in effect a continuation of Bidenomics proved fatal.

It was a classic division of the spoils. The West Coast voted Democrat as

did the East Coast. From California to New York, they did what they always do. But in the flyover states, the ones we always forget when we're challenged to name all fifty, and the ones who know that the only reason the coasts vote for higher taxes and more state intervention is because they can afford to, turned to the man they believe will help them recover from what has been a punishing four years.

Money markets soared immediately, the dollar reaching a three-month high against sterling. For what it's worth Bitcoin too reached an all-time high and US Treasury yields jumped 14 points.

Some analysts have concerns about Trump's planned isolationist import tariffs which they see as counterproductive in terms of their impact on domestic producers and they also worry that the commitment to massive deportation of migrants will lead to rising labour costs - but in general American businesspeople are happy. And this in the end is what defined this election.

Sweetness

In the one head-to-head debate Harris won by a mile. Whatever her politics, here was a serious decent individual who called out Trump's more egregious meanderings and looked far and away the person you would want to trust. She has come a long way from being the least popular Vice President in history. She radiated sweetness and light, her rallies were joyful, she laughed a lot and her Veep, Tim Walz added to the sense of a positive enjoyable campaign. Barak and Michelle sprinkled stardust and Taylor Swift backed her.

But doubts about what she actually stood for remained. Roe v Wade was a huge part of her agenda but Trump himself had moderated his stance on the issue, declaring that all his Supreme Court appointees did was to reinstate the right of individual states to make their own decisions. She never once spelled out a fiscal agenda that made any sense and she was clearly backtracking on several important previous commitments. It proved a fatal weakness.

Trump, by contrast, claimed that God was on his side. That may or may not be, but in my conversations with my American business friends they were pretty much all clear that: yes, he is a deeply flawed human being, yes some of his utterances were absurdly exaggerated, yes he cheats at golf and yes, he's not as rich as he likes you to think he is, but he's better for business than a Democrat whose boss is proud to have been the first President to stand on a picket line. There's no doubt that Harris did not do enough to convince that she would not be Biden Mark 2.

What now for Kier?

So what does all this mean for the UK?

Kier Starmer and his Foreign Secretary are going to have to work hard to get alongside a man for whom the special relationship means nothing. Trump is a transactionalist. Everything is a deal. He won't care what David Lammy might have said about him because he won't regard him as important. His best friends in UK politics are Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. Make of that what you will.

He will be civil to Kier, who will sensibly seek a modus vivendi with the man who will be in charge for most of this government's term of office, but Labour can expect few favours. Ukraine will be foremost in the PM's mind. Trump's boasting of stopping the war after he's had a call with his friend Vlad terrifies NATO, all of whose members, including the UK, believe that Trump's deal will be to leave Putin with what he's got, in return for stopping the fighting and a promise not to invade a NATO country any time soon.

Europeans know that amounts to a win for Putin. Yet Trump is nothing if not predictable. The bluster will now come face to face with reality.

We can expect more clarity on Trump's agenda between now and his inauguration on January 20th. Be prepared for the unexpected, the welcome and the unwelcome. The only forecast guaranteed is that nothing is certain in Trump land. We may well be in for a very bumpy ride.

Steve Norris was Conservative MP for Oxford East, 1983-87, and Epping Forest, 1988-97".



IRISH VISIT

by Nicholas Bennett

Following our meeting with representatives of the Irish Association of former Parliamentarians in the House of Commons last year and my reciprocal visit their Christmas lunch in Dublin last year, Mary Flaherty their president and other members of their Executive were guests at our Summer Reception held in the Speakers House in July. In October I joined our Irish colleagues in Leinster House for their meeting with members of the US Association.

The US Association, formed more than fifty years ago, has nearly 800 former members of Congress in membership. Strongly supported by Congress and industry, the Association has 13 staff and runs a varied programme of study visits, receptions and outreach to universities.

The US delegation was sadly depleted because of an outbreak

of Covid which meant some of the group had to stay in their hotel rooms but there was a lively symposium on the US presidential elections. This year's president Barbara Comstock (R-Va) was supporting the Democratic ticket as she had no time for Donald Trump. The general consensus from all the contributions was the election was Trump's to lose. One Republican remarked 'and he's going all out to do so by ignoring his campaign team's advice to concentrate on Kamala Harris's policies rather than make personal attacks'.

Following the lunch an invitation has been extended to the UK Association to visit Washington next summer to join our sister association at their annual conference. As with my visits to Dublin this trip would be self-funded. If any member would like to join me please contact me.



Political Incident No. 7

When you have lost your seat and want to be re-selected elsewhere attendance at by-elections is a 3-line whip. So, one December day in 1994 I travelled to the Dudley West constituency (as it then was) following the death of its Conservative MP, John Blackburn. On arrival at the campaign headquarters I signed in and was asked to canvass and leaflet in a particular ward. "It's a good area" I was told, "you should get a positive response."

Knocking on doors and stuffing leaflets into letter boxes I worked my way up the road. Most people seemed to be out, until knock-knock – and the door was opened by a very small boy who couldn't have been more than six years old.

"Hello!" I said brightly. "Is your mum in, or your dad?"

"Mummy's in" he said, standing back and waving me inside. I was extremely reluctant to step over the threshold, but he was insistent, and when he said "Mummy's over there", pointing to a door across the hallway, I thought well, OK. The little boy shut the front door behind me, and asked "What's your name?" "Hugo" I replied. "That's a funny name" he said. "My name's Billy." "Nice to meet you, Billy" I said, "could I have a word with your mummy?"

Billy went over to the door and opened it, releasing clouds of steam and the sound of running water.

"Mummy" he shouted, "there's a funny man here." Back came the reply "If it's daddy, tell him to start the supper. If it's Chris, I'll see him upstairs in ten minutes."

Deciding there and then that that household's domestic arrangements were already sufficiently complicated, I hastily departed, dropping a leaflet on the hall table and waving goodbye to Billy, everlastingly thankful that my name wasn't Chris!

Hugo Summerson was MP for Walthamstow, 1987-1992. Between 1982 and 1994, he stood three times as a council candidate, and three times as a Parliamentary candidate.



YOU'RE FROZEN

BY MADELEINE MOON

IN 2020, MADELEINE MOON WAS TOLD THAT HER BANK ACCOUNT WAS FROZEN, THE START OF A NIGHTMARE WHICH IT SEEMED WOULD NEVER END.

Economic and financial crime, fraud ransomware and cybercrime now comprise 50 per cent of reported crimes. So why are banks, breaking their own customer guidance, using Know Your Customer (KYC) call centre staff, to cold call account holders and asking for security questions to be answered?

The KYC staff cannot provide proof they are from your bank. Customers are told to ring the bank (average waiting time for an answer – one hour) to uncover what they want. A failure to comply, can result in the freezing of access to accounts and banking services, with no access to cash. Standing orders and direct debits unpaid, financial standing destroyed. Your mortgage, life, car, house insurance utility bill unpaid, your credit and credit cards no longer work. The customer is in a Kafkaesque, postofficeesque, trap. The crime is unknown and asking questions proves guilty.

In January 2020 I was told that my accounts would be frozen if I failed to provide copies of house deeds, evidence of pension and redundancy payments and proof of address. Eventually I received an apology and was told there should be no further problems.

Again

In late 2023 calls from KYC started again, wanting to know my employment status, why a standing order was in place, why I had a saving account, and asking for a utility bill and (again) copies of deeds. Information I was told they were collecting from all customers. They don't.

The Land Registry documents provided were deemed inappropriate (they were appropriate, I checked via a FOI request). I was told I should employ a solicitor to access the deeds. My account was frozen. I was notified 10 days later, by letter.

Making a complaint and a subject access request brought little insight. A padded envelope contained over 300 pages of documents dating back to 2005. There were brief written negative comments relating to telephone conversations, comments, that were not verified by voice recordings. Where voice recordings are unclear it was my fault. Where a poor signal means voice records cannot be heard, inaccurate written records are deemed valid. A sudden end to a phone call is also my fault.

Getting access

Accessing voice records is not easy. A CD with instructions arrives and needs a call to the bank to access the password. The Bank took a month to accept a request for a memory stick and an emailed password. It took two letters to the Chief Executive to access a passcode for a second memory stick and a notice that the complaint was now closed. I was advised to complain to the Financial Services Ombudsman if not satisfied.

Minutes of the Everyday Banking and Homes Financial Oversight Meeting which should reveal why the decisions to seek information and to freeze my account were made, were deemed an internal policy related matter.

Customers cannot access minutes of discussions between staff and details of the powers and legislation that allow the bank to freeze accounts. You are not advised which internal and external agencies are notified of the decision to freeze accounts or if they are informed when the bank acts wrongly.

No oversight

Why and when were banks given powers to arbitrarily select customers to investigate, find guilty on the basis of a deemed lack of cooperation, maintain inaccurate records, on the basis of which they can freeze accounts? Why is there no judicial oversight?

The bank claimed the questions asked were required by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The FCA say they have no specific rules regarding the information a firm needs for their KYC requirements. If as part of their process, a bank requests it, this is considered a commercial decision, and therefore not part of a FCA requirement.

The need for banks to fight fraud and money laundering is understood. Their heavy-handed spot checking of personal accounts needs tighter regulation, monitoring and oversight by regulators and Parliament. Cold calling must cease. Decisions to freeze accounts should be ratified by an external independent body not left to an unaccountable department in a bank.

Madeleine Moon was MP for Bridgend, 2005-2019



LIFE IN THE CLOISTERS

DAVID HINCHLIFFE RECALLS THE DAYS WHEN AN MP WITH AN ACTUAL OFFICE WAS ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES.

With the significant improvements in office accommodation, particularly since the advent of Portcullis House, I am certain the new Commons intake of 2024 will have had a rather more positive experience entering Parliament than many of us elected for the first time back in 1987.

My memories are of being genuinely homeless for my first few days there and, along with Alice Mahon, receiving a severe telling off from Ted, the burly barman in charge of the old Strangers Bar, for opening our one-foot-thick piles of mail on one of his tables. Our relationship only recovered when he discovered I was Walter Harrison's successor in Wakefield. Walter had operated from the bar as a whip and described it as his Lower Office.

Beggars can't be choosers, and I jumped at the first offer of accommodation in somewhere called the Cloisters which was basically a corridor with desks surrounding a quadrangle just off Westminster Hall. Accessing the Commons via the Members' Entrance and Cloakroom, it was on the right before the stairs leading to the Members' Lobby. Going through the double doors, Conservative MPs occupied the corridor on the left, with not far off thirty Labour MPs occupying the one on the right.

Lucky me

I suppose I was fortunate to be allocated a spot at the far end, where we had a Yorkshire corner with Alice and John Battle and there was less pedestrian traffic. The individual desks were face to face, with a screen acting as a barrier between. My desk faced Scottish MP, Maria Fife, and we were the only ones in the corridor for some reason with no screen. Behind Maria was the entrance to

the side-room in which the death warrant of Charles 1 was reputedly signed and this was occupied by three Scots, Jimmy Wray, Jimmy Hood and Ian McCartney, who actually had an English seat. An Englishman, Frank Doran, was MP for Aberdeen, and was allocated a desk in there, reputedly to keep order.

To the other side of their room was what became known as the Vaz Factory, Keith Vaz's desk, which was always surrounded by several presumed interns who were working for him. The limited space meant it was difficult to accommodate more than one member of staff comfortably and the presence of additional folk added to the constant noise levels in the place.

Scots

Along the main stretch of the corridor were more Scots, including the neurosurgeon, Sam Galbraith, Tommy McAvo, a career whip, and Tommy Graham, whose rich Glaswegian accent troubled the Hansard writers every time he spoke. This latter Tommy created history by once doing an interview on live TV with a post-it note stuck to his forehead. It had attached itself when he'd used a handkerchief to wipe off perspiration.

A ghost?

The Cloisters offered a genuinely mixed cast of characters and the chance to get to know folk from a variety of backgrounds. Rhodri Morgan, later to be the initial Welsh First Minister, was always good company, as was Bernie Grant, one of a London contingent which included future London Mayor, Ken Livingstone and Paul Boateng. Paul's desk, for some reason, sported a huge teddy bear, which, along with the moveable turntable for Post Office vans in nearby Star Chamber Court, always fascinated my children on their occasional visits.

Seated close to the London contingent and our Association Chair, Eric Martlew, was the one Labour MP in the Cloisters not from the 1987 intake. Clare Short must have got the wrong side of the whips to have been allocated the worst possible spot next to the entrance door.

If the Cloisters was noisy, overcrowded and impractical during the day, it offered absolutely no solace during the quite frequent late night and all-night sittings of those times. There was just one couch on the main corridor and Harry Barnes always seemed adept at bagging it to sleep. I think I occupied it just once but didn't sleep a wink. The corridor was dark and dingy even during the day but genuinely quite spooky when you were alone there at night. At somewhere around 3.00 a.m. in the morning, I was wide awake and alarmed at the sound of a slow, distant shuffling along the floor, gradually coming closer. I shot up to find Sir Alan Glynn, an elderly Tory MP with limited mobility, coming through the door.

There was one particular mystery from my time there which was never fully resolved. One day, a faecal deposit was discovered on the carpet just outside the death warrant room. No-one accepted responsibility and David Blunkett's dog, Teddy, got the blame. I knew Teddy well and felt this was grossly unfair as his continence was higher than the Palace average, particularly if the Lords were included.

I faced a genuine dilemma when finally offered an escape route from the Cloisters, sharing a room with Brian Sedgemoor. Should a life-long rugby league man share with a former County rugby union player? Beggars can't be choosers.

David Hinchliffe was Labour MP for Wakefield, 1987-2005.

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

We asked a selection of ex-colleagues to say what they have been doing since they stood down or lost their seats

TERRY WALKER Kingswood, 1974–1979



I WAS ELECTED TO Parliament at the February 1974 General Election for the new seat of Kingswood. I served until defeated in 1979. Times were certainly tough then as the money stopped straight away. I had already decided not to return to my former profession as an accountant, and, as the local Labour Party in Kingswood wished me to go on the council, I bought a newsagent's business

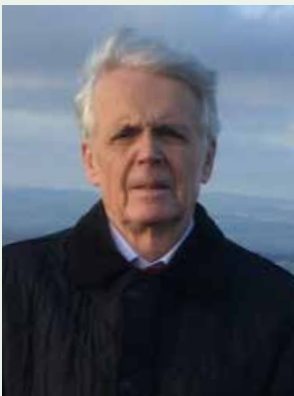
so that I could open at 5am and have free time later in the day for council work. I had to work to support my young family.

I was elected to Avon County Council in May 1981 for the Kings Chase ward in Kingswood and served the ward for 34 years as its Labour Councillor. On Avon County Council I was for many years Chair of the Public Protection Committee and was later Vice Chair of the Authority.

After the County Council was abolished, I served on the South Gloucestershire Unity Authority and was deputy leader of the Labour group for many years. From 1996 onwards I was Chair of the Avon Fire Authority until I retired in 2015, having been responsible for the fire service under the County Council system previously.

I am now nearing my 90th year and very disabled and was not able to do much work at the recent General Election, but perhaps it is valuable to remember the old warriors like myself, now mainly forgotten, who carried the banner for the Party in previous times.

PATRICK NICHOLLS Teignbridge, 1983–2001



THERE IS A SAYING that 'nothing as 'ex as an ex,' Some ex-MPs find it harder than others to accept that. I remember one sad 'ex' who used to hang around Members Lobby in the days after our defeat in 1997 to pigeon-hole front benchers with his thoughts on the previous night's debate. If he is still alive, he may still be doing it now.

It's nearly a quarter of a century since I lost my seat. Initially, I missed it, but the behaviour of the Conservative Parliamentary Party in recent years, taken as a whole, cured me of that. For the first few years, it looked as if I might be sent to the Lords, which made sense. I was still only 53 when I lost my seat. I had served on the front bench both in government and opposition and as a

Vice Chairman of the Conservative Party, but as time went on, I was not the only one to discover that the need for party donors will usually trump the need for experienced working peers, So, I have made the most of the opportunities offered to me by the electorate in 2001 and instead built up a successful career as a freelance journalist and a lecturer in British and American politics both here and in the USA. At the same time, I am fulfilling a lifelong ambition to learn Latin and as for politics, I am working on living long enough to campaign for Kemi Badenoch in 2029.

CHRIS BUTLER Warrington South, 1987–1992

CAUGHT IN A LANDSLIDE, no escape from reality?



However, if you were wily enough to become an MP the likelihood is that you will succeed in setting yourself a new life trajectory.

When I lost my seat in 1992, most employers did not want to invest in me: "He'll be off back to the House as soon as he can," they would say. Reluctantly, I accepted the job as a lobbyist, partly because most lobbying I had encountered was inept. But that proved the making of me; because I knew how NOT to do it, I was a quick study for the profession.

The greatest satisfaction arose from running a cross-Party public affairs company of my own, together with the ex-revolutionary socialist, Phil Kelly. We were no longer transferring the benefits of our labour to a third party. There was also a sense of achievement from delivering practical change to our clients, based on the delivery of cogent and concise reasoning. Frankly, I was more effective in changing law and regulation as a lobbyist than as an MP: MPs rarely have the time or bandwidth to persist with assembling a case and delivering it to a variety of key audiences.

Leaving Parliament affords the great gift of time. In 1992 I adopted a new hobby – deltiology (collecting postcards). Postcards were the internet of Edwardian times, and they afford a fascinating insight into that period. In turn, this inspired me to write a book and a play about my home city of Cardiff ("Cardiff Mysteries Remastered" and "Cardiff's Ship of Shame") and eventually a book reviewed in this organ.

An ousting from Parliament teaches you to fill your time with rewarding activity, and as Omar Khayyam wrote:

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the dust descend.

DEBRA SHIPLEY

Stourbridge, 1997–2005



MY DEPARTURE FROM parliament was unexpected, abrupt, and very traumatic. Less than a year after my husband had died slowly and painfully of bone marrow cancer, I too was diagnosed with cancer. In quick succession, just prior to the 2005 General Election, I stood down from parliament, underwent a double mastectomy and found myself an unemployed, widowed,

single mother in very poor health. It took a number of years to recover, but I survived and wondered what to do next.

In parliament I had focussed on child abuse, domestic violence, childhood obesity, and environmental concerns - all hard, unrelenting, issues. So, for the next phase in my life I decided to do the opposite and instead try to put a little beauty into the world.

I moved to live beside the sea on the Suffolk coast where I established an art studio which I opened to the public during the summer months. People who acquired my paintings have subsequently told me that my work brought joy into their homes - which has made me very happy. I am now working on a large project "Bowls in a Fragile World" a multi-venue, ten year endeavour which seeks to highlight how climate change affects the poorest around the globe the most. Despite their devastating political message, the bowls themselves are, I think, beautiful – I am seeking to create something positive from a negative.

Debra's bowls (currently over 200) are made from junk mail and packaging. They are all polluted with tiny fragments of unwanted plastic and residual chemicals. They have been displayed in many locations nationally. Debra is seeking new venues (large or small) to display any number of bowls. If you would like to display her work (which is not for sale), please contact her directly: debrashipley@outlook.com.

CHRIS POND

Gravesham, 1997–2005



FINDING MYSELF WITH three kids and no job in 2005 was a bit of a shock. Then – out of the blue – I was approached by the National Council for One Parent Families, who were about to merge with Gingerbread and who were looking for a new CEO. Then the Home Office wanted someone to set up and chair an arms-length body

(Capacitybuilders) to help charities improve their effectiveness. Meanwhile, I was also asked to chair an asbestos compensation scheme, which I still do today.

With the financial crisis just beginning in 2007, I joined the Financial Services Authority to set up a new Division and lead the National Strategy for Financial Capability. The FSA also allowed me to take on a role with HMRC, who were working out how to square the circle of improving customer service while raising revenue and cutting costs. And I became Chair of the newly established Money Charity.

Having transformed my Division of the FSA into the Money Advice (now Money and Pensions) Service, I'd done myself out of a job. So, it was again time to move on. Working alongside another former MP, Nigel Waterson, I was asked to chair a Standards Board at the Equity Release Council before stepping into the world of public affairs, as a partner in an international communications agency.

While there, I persuaded one of my clients, Mastercard, to fund the establishment of the Financial Inclusion Commission, which I still chair. Made up of parliamentarians from each of the main parties, together with policy experts and business and consumer representatives, the Commission has campaigned vigorously for a National Strategy for Financial Inclusion, to which the new Government is now committed.

I'm still keeping busy, also chairing TrustMark (the only government endorsed quality assurance scheme for work in and around the home, including the energy efficiency measures so important to meet the challenges of net zero and spiralling living costs), sitting on the board of a market operator in the water sector and proudly serving as a Trustee of Martin Lewis' Money and Mental Health Policy Institute. It was a challenging time. However, business organically started growing, and in September 2020, I started another company, FR Mortgages Ltd, to provide residential mortgages. We are now a one-stop shop between both companies for all our clients' finance needs. I am now successfully running both companies and working on launching a charity (Little Stars Foundation) tackling child poverty, a cause close to my heart.

Life changes teach you a lot, and one must be positive, dedicated, and committed; positive things will happen.

CONTRIBUTORS WELCOME

Andy McSmith, Editor, Order! Order!

AS YOU WILL SEE, Order! Order! is written almost entirely by former Members of Parliament. There is no editorial budget, so the magazine relies on the kindness of contributors who give their time for free. More are always welcome. Should you want to relate your experiences since leaving the House, or write a book review, or a tribute to a former colleague who has died, or write about some other topic, please contact me at andy@andymcsmith.co.uk

A GOOD READ

THE STORIES ARE HILARIOUS SOME MAY EVEN BE TRUE

Jerry Hayes

Unleashed

By Boris Johnson

Published by HarperCollins

UNLEASHED is a white knuckled political roller coaster ride which pulls no punches. Whatever you think about Big Dog, the man writes like a dream.

Alright, some of this book is pure delusional fantasy, but who cares? My guilty pleasure was laughing out loud at the character assassinations and the stories. There are so many ripping yarns that it is difficult to know where to start. Good heavens, some may even be true.

When he told Cameron that he was thinking about voting Leave, the reply was simply: 'if you do that I will fuck you up forever'. But it is the rumination that is so brilliantly Boris - "But I had to admit that the threat sounded serious. Did I want to be fucked up? Forever? By a Prime Minister equipped with all the fucking up tools available to a modern government and thousands of fucker uppers just waiting to do his bidding?...I was conscious of how many were looking at me like the turd in the punch bowl and adjusting their subfusc so I could see their Remain stickers."

He shares a delightful obsession with Theresa May's nose. "It seems weird but I was particularly fixated on her nostrils, immensely long and pointy black tadpole shapes, like a Gerald Scarfe cartoon and the way she would twist her nose as if to show them off".

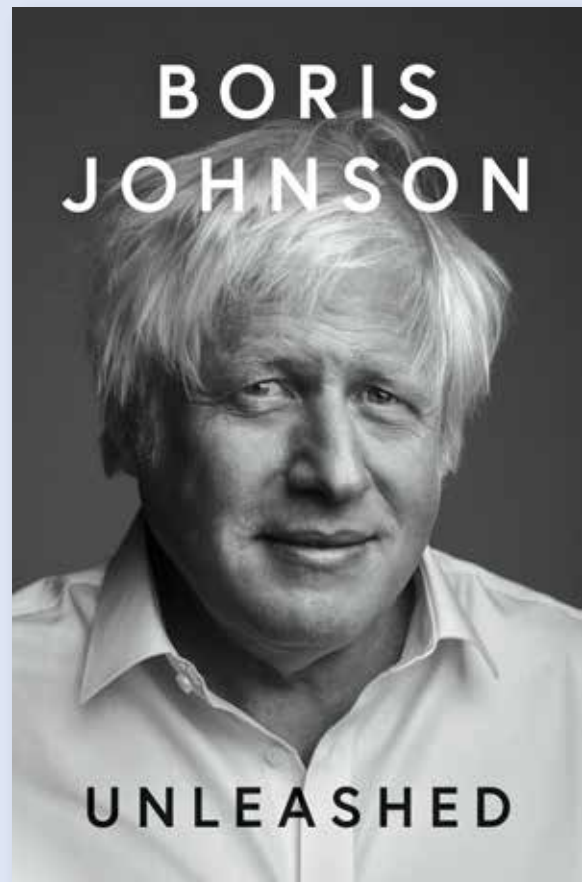
He recalls a lunch for President Santos of Columbia. 'Grumpy pants', as he called her, was there. "Theresa said almost nothing and the burden of the conversation fell mainly on me. President Santos was describing the wonders of his jungle rich country, the many different types of amphibians. 'We have forty frogs,' he boasted. 'That's nothing,' I said. 'When I was Mayor of London we had 400,000 frogs. In fact, we had more frogs than the whole city of Bordeaux'.....Theresa goggled at her plate."

There is a whole chapter on the London Olympics, and he recalls the Queen looking at the rather strange steel structure named the Arcelor-Mittal Orbit and politely saying 'how fascinating'.

But what made me choke on my cornflakes was his speech at a Gay Pride dinner. "I announced that we would be hosting these new ceremonies (same sex marriages) in the Olympic Park so that the registrar would be able to bring the service to a climax by informing the happy couple: 'you may now take your partner up the Arcelor Mittal Orbit'.....some Labour MPs led by Angela Eagle walked out."

He wasn't as scathing as I expected about Michael Gove, whom he warned you would be wise to look at him through the rear mirror. When Boris was seriously ill with COVID he reminded Gove of some Athenian history. 'Pericles died of the plague....his glasses seemed to glitter at the thought'.

Of Dominic Grieve, the former attorney General and MP for Beaconsfield, he says simply: 'electoral slogan, Grieve for Beaconsfield'.



But he pulled no punches his loathing of the disloyal leaker Dominic Cummings.

"To leak lockdown details; to brief against our own Vaccine task force. This was getting insane. I felt like the crew of the Nostromo, the space ship in Alien, when they discover that their colleague Ash is a homicidal robot on a completely different mission."

This is a book joyously riddled with wry introspection. He recalls a conversation with a former cabinet minister who was begging for his job back to no avail. He gave Boris a prophetic warning. "What you don't understand is that the Tory Parliamentary party is a cuntocracy. The bigger the cunt the more successful you are. These people are out to get you"

And there is a lovely line from Nick Soames about the Whips office. "They are mice auditioning to be rats"

Yet there is a serious and honest analysis of his fall: "I was just complacent.....I was used to being Mayor with supreme monarchical power and no back benchers to worry about. I also believed that they would not be so stupid as to get rid of me."

His Nemesis was his loyalty to Chris Pincher who was alleged to have been rather handsy after a dinner at the Carlton Club. When the story broke Johnson commented to friends that, 'these MPs will be the death of me....at the time I meant it to be satirical'.

Unleashed is a rare beast. A prime ministerial memoir that is fun, informative and unputdownable. It should be a required read for anyone mad enough to aspire to that office.

Jerry Hayes was MP for Harlow, 1983-1997

THE MAN WITH LETTERS IN HIS SAFE

Peter Heaton-Jones

*Kingmaker - Secrets, Lies and the
Truth about Five Prime Ministers*
by Sir Graham Brady

Published by Bonnier Books

WHEN I STUMBLED into parliament as a newly-minted MP in 2015, Graham Brady - four years my junior - was already a Tory Grandee. He had yet to perform the most public-facing duty of the Chairman of the 1922 Committee - overseeing a leadership election - but he was still a big man on campus. Literally. Occasionally we found ourselves walking together from Westminster back towards our respective flats. The significant height difference invariably gave rise to aching neck muscles by the time we parted near Victoria Street. But I have fond memories of those chats. He was always smiling, personable, friendly...and incredibly hard to crack. I worked in the news business before entering the House, but no amount of journalistic endeavour could ever elicit any juicy gossip. Graham Brady was the soul of discretion.

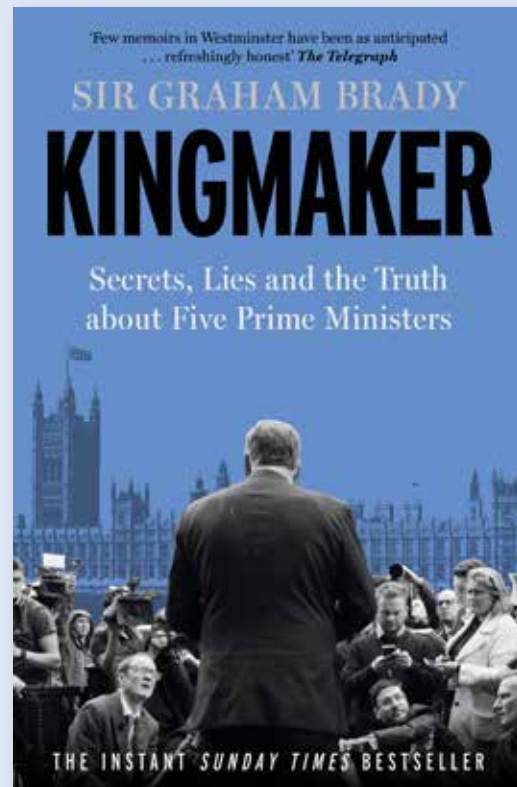
Until now.

His memoir, *Kingmaker - Secrets, Lies and the Truth about Five Prime Ministers*, is at times deliciously bitchy. 'What a complete arse', he says of David Cameron at one point. In another passage, he muses about some of the 'bizarre circumstances' he has witnessed since entering Parliament in 1997: 'A prime minister ambushed by cake, a special adviser driving the length of the country to test his eyes... Nadine Dorries serving in a cabinet'. Ouch.

Aside from the occasional acid drops, the main point of the book - let's be honest - is to reveal the big secret: How Many Letters Did He Really Receive? Sir Graham was the man to whom Tory MPs wrote to say they'd lost confidence in their leader. Once a certain threshold was reached, a leadership election would be triggered. And so, as the Tory Party descended into a series of chaotic psycho-dramas, the number of letters in Graham Brady's famous safe became a constant obsession for inmates of the Westminster village.

But - and this is a minor criticism - I'm not sure the book's detailed analysis of the volume of correspondence really holds much interest to anyone outside that bubble. In other words, anyone normal. This is especially so given the maelstrom of Conservative politics in recent years. Such a deluge of water has passed under Westminster bridge since the Boris scandals, that nowadays the big revelations just don't seem very, erm, big. Even the Truss traumas already feel like yesterday's news. But in Sir Graham's hands, it all makes for entertaining copy. No spoilers here, by the way; suffice to say the fevered speculation about numbers of letters was usually wide of the mark.

Away from the 'tah dah!' moments, Sir Graham shares some valuable insights. One in particular rang a bell: "Members (of parliament) are just so busy all the time, and that is not impressive; it is a problem. And one of the reasons they're so busy is they do lots of really stupid things that have virtually



no effect". But my favourite is his reflection on the many leaders who've passed through the revolving door of Number 10 in recent years: "I have always believed that all Prime Ministers go mad, and the measure of how good they are is the length of time it takes".

The book is also a personal account of Graham Brady's time in politics. His wife's sudden illness and the impact it had on the family is movingly portrayed, for instance. And there is also room for some serious policy discussion: Europe is a recurring theme, of course, but so too are grammar schools. The latter issue is clearly a major preoccupation of Sir Graham's; indeed, he resigned from David Cameron's shadow ministry in a row over the party's policy on selective education.

Which brings us back to Dave. I think it's fair to say that Sir Graham is not his biggest fan. As well as the 'arse' comment (which, to put it in context, was the author's reaction to a particular incident at the height of the MPs' expenses scandal), we also hear about Cameron's apparent manoeuvring to try and stop him getting the top job at the '22. This mainly involved offering him increasingly attractive positions on the front bench - which, to Sir Graham's credit, he always rebuffed.

And thank goodness he did, because his role put him at the centre of some of the biggest political dramas for a generation. This unique position has undoubtedly earned him the right to tell his story, and he does so in an engaging and wittily-written book. It's probably the best so far of the crop of memoirs from ex-Tory MPs. And, let's face it, that's becoming a pretty crowded field.

Peter Heaton-Jones was Conservative MP for North Devon, 2015-19

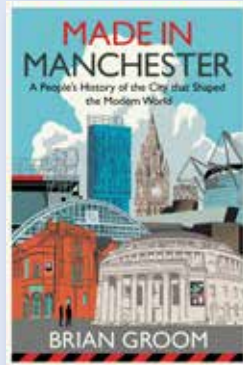
MANCHESTER THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Gordon Marsden

Made in Manchester: A people's history of the city that shaped the modern world

By Brian Groom

Published by HarperCollins



TO TURN RUDYARD KIPLING'S PHRASE 'what do they know about Manchester, who only Manchester know.' This is the task Brian Groom sets himself, in *Made in Manchester* following his highly successful book *Northerners*. As he did in *Northerners*, he rolls out a broad chronology, from the Romans to the 2020s, and with chapter headings like 'Migrant Tales', 'Science and Technology', 'Words and Pictures', 'Votes for Women' 'Popular Culture', 'Music' he gives us vivid pen portraits of dozens of people and places, some little known, which blow away the clichés of Dickensian caricatures and 'trouble at t'mill' so beloved of comedians and costume dramas.

There are two threads running through the book. There is radical thought, protest and direct action, including Luddites, meetings suppressed in the aftermath of the French wars, the totemic Peterloo Massacre, the Chartists in the 1840s demanding universal male suffrage, the Anti-Corn Law League, the launch of the Trades Union Congress in Manchester in 1868, the 'deeds, not words' Suffragette movement founded by the Pankhursts in their house in Manchester in 1903, and the Fifth Pan-African Congress in 1945, some of whose delegates rose to power after the end of Empire.

Today, there is Andy Burnham lobbying central government to restore Northern Powerhouse and High Speed Rail. 'Yet it was also the home of a successful, employer led campaign for free trade and economic liberalism', Groom observes, and 'was dominated by the Conservatives in the late 19th century and between the 20th's century's two world wars.'

The second thread is - 'How am I defining 'Manchester'? The answer is 'very loosely'. None of the four Georgian entrepreneurs and inventors who did most to make Cottonopolis Manchester a boom town - Kay, Hargreaves, Crompton and Arkwright - was a native Mancunian. It was Stockport born Joseph Whitworth who 'created a standard system of screw threads for nuts and bolts, enabling mass production'. Without them and a hub of engineering and machine tool manufacture, it is doubtful the city would have eclipsed its rivals, as its population boomed from 10,000 in 1700 to 303,000 in 185.

'It is hard to overstate how fascinated the world was with Manchester in the 1840s ... all things seemed possible', Groom writes.

Now, Groom muses 'Manchester has become a test case for how post-industrial cities can reinvent themselves', but to others 'Manctopia, bristling with new skyscrapers, is a neoliberal playground for property developers and young middle-class graduates, while being also riddled with poverty and inequality.' The challenge is to spread the vibrancy not only across the city but also into 21st century Greater Manchester.

Gordon Marsden was born and raised in Manchester and Stockport and was Labour MP for Blackpool South, 1997-2019

WHAT ARE THE WELSH FOR?... READ ON

Kim Howells

100 Reasons to Celebrate Welsh History

By Virginia Butler and Chris Butler.

Published by The History Press.



I REMEMBER, back in the late 1980s, Alastair Campbell telling me that he'd had what he'd termed "an insane conversation" with the then leader of the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock.

"Neil," he said, "has just tried to convince me that, position for position, Wales has produced a finer football player than England has ever managed to produce. He's adamant about it. What is it about you Welsh? Why do you always assume that you're the best at everything and that you invented everything? You're worse than the Chinese..."

This book is a bit like that, except that it doesn't seek merely to challenge the idea that, within the United Kingdom, the English have always led the way (and consequently dominated) among other things, science, religion, technological research, engineering, soldiering, literature, drama, television, film, world exploration, commerce and sport. Its authors give 100 examples of how Wales led the world in most of these areas. Now if, like me, you happen to be Welsh, this handy, very readable little book does nothing to dispel Neil's argument that we Welsh, generally, are justified in regarding ourselves as a particularly talented tribe.

The authors flaunt this in the face of English commentators like A. N. Wilson who wrote in 1993, "The Welsh have never made any significant contribution to any branch of knowledge, culture or entertainment..." and Anne Robinson who called the Welsh "irritating and annoying... useless... What are they for?"

Refreshingly, Virginia and Chris Butler set out in the introduction that this celebration of Wales doesn't dwell on "perceived oppression, exploitation, grievance, rebellion and poverty (these are implicit in any national history)," but takes us on a "journey of achievements, a recognition of the shining successes of the past, and an aspiration towards the sure triumphs of the future."

How Welsh some of the listed achievers actually were tests one's imagination. They include quite a few distant descendants of our tribe's diaspora. Occasionally, the list reminds me of seasons, not that long ago, when rugby players could be picked for Wales if they were prepared to swear that their mothers, when pregnant, had looked left towards the principality when driving north up the M5. But the authors celebrate their heroes with a welcome brevity and lightness of touch. In 2024, after a stretch of dismal performances by Wales's football and rugby sides, and after losing Port Talbot (and Britain's) last steelmaking blast furnace, I was grateful for their optimism.

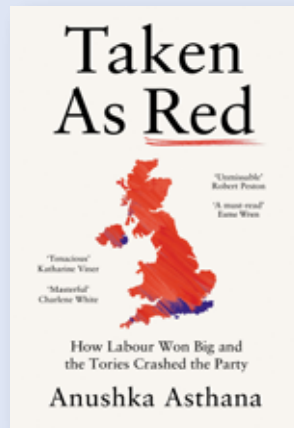
Dr Kim Howells was Labour MP for Pontypridd, 1989-2010

BUT WHY THE UNFORCED ERRORS, SIR KEIR?

Denis MacShane

*Taken as Red,
How Labour Won Big
and the Tories
Crashed the Party*
By Anushka Asthana

Published by HarperCollins

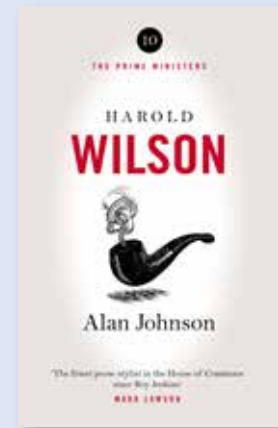


AND WHY NO LASTING LEGACY, HAROLD?

Denis MacShane

Harold Wilson
By Alan Johnson

Published by Swift Press



ALL JOURNALISTS - and Anushka Asthana is a top flight newspaper and TV political reporter - are taught the 4 "W's" they should answer in the first paragraph of a story: Who? What? When? Where?

Asthana lists an interminable number of Labour aides who were on the bridge or stoking in the engine room as HMS Keir sailed to victory. Everyone gets a name check and there is vast detail of who was where, and what happened and when. But the book does not fully explain the Why? Why did Labour move from the three defeats of 2015, 2017 and 2019 and emerge with one of the biggest majorities ever in UK parliamentary history?

One of the biggest names in Asthana's book is Sue Gray, the civil servant who never quite won a post as a permanent secretary of a ministry, but helped secure the humiliation of Boris Johnson for refusing to abide the Covid lock-down rules that he insisted the voters of Britain should obey. Her report ended Johnson's career, but where is Ms Gray now?

We get no sense from Asthana why Team Starmer moved from the organisational mastery of winning power to being dragged into hand-to-hand gutter fighting with the press and TV about accepting freebies of clothes, prestige tickets, holiday stays, or use of luxury homes that in monetary terms dwarf the sums MPs pocketed under the office costs allowance scheme.

The months since the July win have seen endless unforced errors. Why? Labour after 2010 proposed two men who were unelectable as prime ministers. Ed Miliband understood the rules and stood down. After 2017, when it was clear that Jeremy Corbyn had been rejected by voters, Labour told them to get lost and put up Jeremy again. Why did Corbyn insist on staying on?

In 2019 voters vented their fury at Labour's arrogance by giving Johnson a big majority. The Tories delivered Labour the keys to Downing Street by choosing Liz Truss as the Conservative Corbyn, after which almost any normal, middle-of-the-road anti-extreme Labour candidate was destined to win.

Asthana narrates a lively page-turning account of Starmer's four years as PM-in-waiting. Other than being a cautious one-step-at-a-time barrister we learn little about why Sir Keir has taken the decisions he has since he became PM. That will await Ms Asthana's next book. Labour has won power but seven out of ten voters did not vote for Sir Keir. An explanation of why this happened may answer the question can Labour win again?

THE ONLY DECENT prose writer amongst the many Cabinet ministers that the last Labour government produced is Alan Johnson, whether he is writing about politics, in fiction, growing up in London or trades unionism. Now, with excellent timing, he has produced a short vividly readable biography of Harold Wilson, who retired as prime minister when he was 60, two years younger than the current Labour Prime minister. Wilson fans like to highlight the four elections he won, but, unlike Blair, he never kept Labour in power for long than six years at a stretch. Like Cameron, he won the 1974 election by offering a plebiscite on Europe but he had all the press, and most Tories on his side.

But both Johnson, and Starmer's Cabinet colleague, Nick Thomas-Symonds, who has written a full-length Wilson biography, duck the big question: Why did Wilson, with his Oxford exam-passing brilliance, fail to impose a lasting Labour settlement on Britain?

Wilson was unable to reform the UK economy as he could never get labour market reform accepted by trade unions. Like Attlee, his mono-lingual Oxford and Whitehall background meant he could not understand Europe. After the 1975 referendum, Labour descended into primitive nationalist populist hostility to full European partnership.

Like other biographers, Johnson lauds Wilson for staying out Vietnam - in contrast to Blair and Iraq - although by not criticising the US, he turned the 1968 generation, who occupied university campuses and took part in muscular confrontations with the police in front of the American embassy in Grosvenor Square, off Labour. He also refused to intervene to stop the Turkish invasion and part annexation of Cyprus in 1974 or the white supremacist usurpation of power in Rhodesia, and refused to face down the Ulster Unionist protestant supremacists.

Alan Johnson has written a fine page-turning biography, which could be usefully read by Sir Keir Starmer as a guide on what not to do if Labour wants to change Britain rather than gently manage decline.

Denis MacShane was MP for Rotherham for 18 years and a Minister of State at the Foreign Office. His book "Labour Takes Power. The Denis MacShane Diaries 1997-2001" is published by Biteback.

TRIBUTES

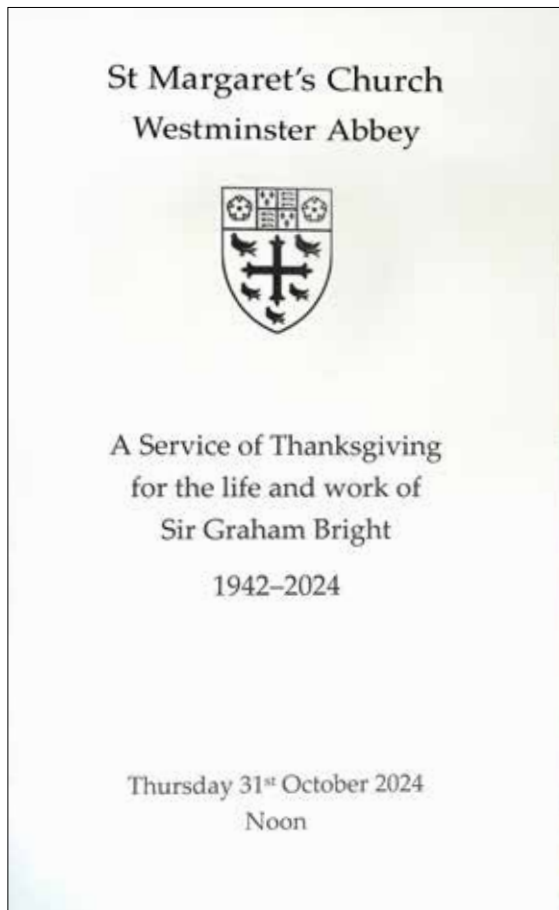
FAREWELL, MY FRIEND

By Sir John Major



This is the text of the address by Sir John Major at the memorial service held in St Margaret's Church, Westminster, on 31st October, for his former Parliamentary Private Secretary, Sir Graham Bright, who died on 19 January this year.

SIR GRAHAM WAS A founder and former chairman of the Association of Former Members of Parliament.



THOSE WHO KNEW Graham will remember him with a fond chuckle: those who did not, missed someone who was a friend among friends.

I first met Graham over 50 years ago when we were both involved in local politics. He was committed and ambitious – but ambitious to do things rather than to be somebody.

In this he never changed: to Graham, influence was always more important than a prestigious position. He had no thirst for power. No burning ambition to climb the greasy pole. The interests of the people he cared about were more important than personal advancement or Party philosophy.

His concerns were always: Did something work? Did it improve life? If so, then he was all for it.

We met again after we were both elected to Parliament in 1979. We had similar interests and instincts and became firm friends: Graham was always more than the sum of his parts – shrewd, balanced in his views, a team player and – so I was to learn – utterly loyal to his conscience and to his friends. In that order.

Graham had a very unusual political gift: he was a world class listener to other people, and a brilliant assessor of where they stood in the political spectrum; what their true intentions were; how they would react to different situations; and - crucially - whether they could be trusted.

This was political gold dust. But what of Graham – the man?

He was a farm worker's son with a social conscience, who became a political junky.

His Labour voting family was astonished when he became servatives when he was 16; was a Borough Councillor for 13 years; an Essex County Councillor for 3 years; a National Young Conservatives Vice-Chairman; and President of Eastern Area Conservatives.

He fought his way into Parliament through sheer persistence, losing elections in safe Labour seats in 1970 – and twice in 1974.

But defeat to Graham – in politics as in life – was merely a spur to further action - never a final rejection.

He was finally elected with a tiny majority for Luton East – and then Luton South – and sat in the Commons from 1979 to 1997.

Graham built his business career by setting up “Dietary Foods Ltd” and selling “Sweet’N Low” – a sweetener for those trying to lose weight.

In this – as in so much else – Valerie was with him from start to finish. He could not – as he would always say – have done it without her.

Given Graham's rather – how shall I put this? – rather rotund figure – it's unlikely he would have ever been chosen as a poster boy for his product: but he took over a failing company, and made it into a global success.

For many decades – all around the world – I would be reminded of Graham over breakfast, as those small pink packets of “Sweet’N Low” appeared on the table.

By the 1980s he Chaired two companies and, in the Commons, never shrank from chiding the Conservative Government for helping big business when – in his view – they should have been helping small businesses become big business.

Almost uniquely in Parliament, he introduced two Private Members Bills that became Law.

One was to regulate “video nasties” and to increase penalties on retailers if they sold them to children.

The second was to shut down unlicensed “raves” so that such parties would be legal and safe.

Both were actions out of conviction – and to protect the law abiding and vulnerable.

To pass one backbench Bill into Law is a triumph: to pass two is almost unheard of. But Graham achieved it.

He was my Parliamentary Private Secretary as both Chancellor and Prime Minister.

As my PPS, Graham was rarely stumped by his Parliamentary colleagues – but he was left floundering by a small child at one of the Christmas Parties we hosted for disadvantaged children at No10.

The room was bursting with festivity as Graham arrived through the door – in full Father Christmas kit, and loaded with

a sack of gifts. He really looked the part. One child engaged him in conversation, and remained by his side throughout: "Can I watch you fly up the chimney when you leave?", he asked.

Graham tried to "Ho! Ho! Ho!" his way out of this – but failed dismally.

In desperation, he claimed there was a bird's nest in the chimney which – as an animal lover – he didn't want to disturb. His Grand Inquisitor accepted this reluctantly, and finally moved on.

Being a PPS – most especially to a Prime Minister – can make you a proxy target for discontent by more formidable figures than a child.

One evening, after a particularly bad day and having endured some personal abuse, Graham was rather low. We sat over a whisky and I did my best to console him.

Later that evening, I scribbled some verses based on what Graham had told me – and, with Valerie's approval, I will read a short extract to you now:

*They spoke as if he wasn't there,
Didn't matter and didn't care.
But he heard every plot
What was and was not,
And warned the Whips to prepare.*

*He then confessed to me sweetly
How he outwitted rebels so neatly,
He said it helped – as a rule
That they thought him – a fool,
Which was to misread him completely.*

*Graham detested soundbite and spin
The mis-use of truth was never for him
He would never rest
In his quest for the best,
Which he learned by listening.*

*He worked by day and by night
To keep his sharp wits out of sight.
While they thought him placid,
He was deadly as acid
In protecting what he thought was right.*

Graham was, at heart, a public servant. Even after leaving Parliament, he continued to contribute to public life, and was elected as the first Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

The last years of Graham's life were difficult, as ill health overwhelmed him. But even as it did, his ever-positive spirit believed he would recover. Alas, upon this, he was wrong.

Though increasingly frail, he watched (his son) Rupert's inexorable climb up the medical hierarchy with pride.

And he knew his life-long debt to (his wife) Valerie. She was always by his side to console and comfort. Her love and full-time care for him was unwavering – as it had been throughout their 50 years together.

Graham was kind, good-humoured and generous-hearted – with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, and a genuine love of life.

I shall always remember him with great affection – and gratitude for all he was, and for all he stood for.

Farewell my loyal and trusted friend, and may you rest in peace forever.

1997-2015 KEN EASTHAM

11 August 1927-21 July 2024

Labour MP for Manchester Blackley,
1979-1997



KEN WAS A BARBER'S SON, brought up in Beswick, in East Manchester, and went to school locally. He joined the Labour Party in 1953, and was a councillor for 18 years, from 1963. He was Deputy Leader of Manchester Council from 1975 to 1979.

He worked as a planning engineer for the General Electric Company at Trafford Park, and was president of his local branch of the AUEW (now a component of Unite union). He was particularly angered by a dispute in Manchester in 1972, during which 36,000 workers were locked out of their workplace by a management who, he claimed, were breaking a national agreement. In Parliament, he argued fiercely against legislation introduced by the government in 1980 to restrict welfare payments to the families of strikers, claiming that good employers did not need this reform, because it was bad employers who causes strikes.

On the same day that he was elected MP for Manchester Blackley, half a mile away from his childhood home, he was re-elected a councillor for Beswick ward, which was by now in the neighbouring seat of Manchester Central. He stood down from the council in 1982.

He was fated to spend his entire 18 years in Parliament as an opposition MP. In his maiden speech in the Commons, he warned against the consequences of cutting council budgets, and foresaw that unemployment would rise.

A former chair of Manchester's education committee, he frequently made the point that education is labour-intensive, and that although it cost more to increase the number of teachers, that also was the way to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio. He also argued constantly for improvements to healthcare and social welfare.

On 9 March 1983, Ken Eastham asked the Foreign Minister, Cranley Onslow: "What was the last occasion when the question of the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela was raised by HM Government?" It was – perhaps surprisingly – the first time Nelson Mandela's name had been mentioned in the UK Parliament.

Having entered Parliament comparatively late, at the age of 51, he was mostly content to be on the back benches, arguing for whatever would improve the lives of the people of Manchester. Though never a shadow minister, he was an Opposition whip in 1987 to 1992.

At the age of 96, he was second oldest living former MP, topped only by Sir Patrick Duffy, former Labour for Colne Valley, who had his 104th birthday last June.

In 1951 he married Doris Haworth. She died in 2019. He is survived by their daughter, Beverly. A son, Paul, predeceased him.

DEFEATED MP SUPPORT SCHEME

by Andrew Bingham

Regular readers of Order! Order! will be aware of the support scheme we put together in advance of the Election to try and provide some support for defeated MP's.

A cross party group of former MP's volunteered to act as supporters and mentors for any defeated MP who felt they needed someone to talk to who had an understanding of the experience of being defeated at an Election.

Firstly, I would like to thank all the former MP's who volunteered their services and particularly Laura Blake who helped coordinate and liaise with the House and IPSA. To my knowledge this is the first time that anything like this has been attempted and the concept met with widespread approval.

All defeated MP's were given a short introductory leaflet about the scheme, with contact details if they wished to

avail themselves of the service. Any conversations and contacts between defeated MP's and mentors, as we called them, were guaranteed to be kept confidential so as a consequence we haven't undertaken a thorough assessment of the scheme in order to learn lessons. As a first attempt there were always going to be areas that we can do better next time. Therefore, I would be very interested to hear any feedback that readers may have.

I would be especially interested in hearing from you if you are one of the unfortunate Members defeated on July 4th. From informal discussions I have had with some defeated MP's there are a couple of areas I have identified that we should look at for potential improvements. Some Members were unaware of the scheme as the pack of information which included the scheme details were passed on to their staff and in the rush to vacate offices and wind up operations the message got lost, meaning some Members may still be unaware of its existence. With so many losing their seats in July, the sheer numbers have created a cadre of such a size there has been a lot of mutual support from

within between former colleagues. Whilst it is too early to decide on the future of the scheme for the next election any thoughts or insights into our first attempt would be very much appreciated. Whether by email, remote meeting or face to face chat I would love to hear from anyone affected in any way. Whether as a user, mentor or as a sitting MP who witnessed colleagues losing their seats.

Finally, while the election is now several months behind us the pain can and will still remain. As Parliamentary emails are being now closed down and final IPSA payments being made, the feeling of finality and loss can be as acute as ever, so please for any defeated MP reading this, I and the other Mentor MP's are still here and ready to support you in any way we can, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

For a list of the mentors, please contact Laura Blake at the Association or if you have any feedback or thoughts contact Laura or myself. My email address is Bingham.bingham@btopenworld.com

Andrew Bingham was MP for the High Peak, 2010 – 2017.



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin

FIRSTLY, a very warm welcome to new members of the Association. Many former MP's tell us that one of the more enjoyable parts of the job as an MP was being invited to speak to students in schools and colleges. The Trust provides an opportunity for former MP's to continue that work. Whichever political party we represent, we share a rare direct experience and knowledge of how Parliament works – the good and the bad – and we hope that new members of the Association will want to share that knowledge and experience with students. Every member of the Association is eligible to join the Trust and to join our team of volunteer speakers.

Since our last update we have renewed our link with Nottingham Trent University and in November Ian Lucas did a lively on-line session on Parlia-

mentary Scrutiny and the work of Select Committees. In December, Helen Jones will be leading a seminar on The Role of the Whips and a general session with Sir Vince Cable is in the pipeline for the New Year.

Our partnership with the charity, SpeakersForSchools, continues and our members receive a number of invitations to speak at State Secondary Schools. In June, Sir David Hanson (now Rt Hon Lord Hanson of Flint) engaged with 200 students in a virtual online session for the Swanwick Hall School, Derbyshire. Also in June, Hilton Dawson spoke in person at Whitley Bay High School, North Tyneside and Victoria Borwick addressed pupils at Brentside High School, Ealing.

Lord Hanson has been one of our regular volunteers and we offer our congratulations and best wishes to him

in his new role as Minister of State at the Home Office and our thanks for his past service to the Trust,

The Trust will hold its AGM in Committee Room 1, House of Lords at 1.30pm, Thursday 5 December prior to the Association's all member meeting. All members of the Association are invited to attend.

In the meantime, we would be pleased to hear from any members who wish to volunteer as speakers with the Trust or want more information.

Please contact John Austin at admin@parlyoutreach.org.uk

We are still keen to hear from members who may have contacts at universities and colleges.

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