

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



SUMMER 2023

ALSO IN THIS EDITION...



3 JACQUI SMITH
Guest speaker at next All Members' meeting



8 CAROLINE SPELMAN
The Parliament Choir goes to Italy



11 DENIS MCSHANE
A new book on the chaos in No 10



16 STEVE NORRIS
On meeting US counterparts in Washington

THE BOMB & THE PEACE MISSION



Mike Hall recalls the atrocity in Warrington and the Good Friday peace agreement pp4-5

Allstar Picture Library Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo



Andy McSmith writes: Glenda Jackson’s death on 15 June, at the age of 87, came as this issue of *Order! Order!* was up against a deadline, so in place of the normal tribute, here is a wonderful story about her from Neil Kinnock.

WENN Rights Ltd



In the 1980s, Glenda was a very committed Labour Party member, who added star dust to some routine party campaigns. Late in 1989, she told Neil Kinnock that she wanted to run for Parliament. She had her sights on Hampstead and Highgate, which had been held since 1983 by a Conservative, Geoffrey Finsberg, who was helped by a very strong showing in the seat for the third place SDP. The collapse of that party made Hampstead and Highgate an obvious target for Labour. Glenda fancied it “because they’d understand”.

The Labour Leader’s reaction was “great, but let’s talk about it.”

At that time, she was appearing in *Scenes from an Execution* by Howard Barker, at London’s Almeida theatre. After watching her put in a brilliant performance, Neil Kinnock joined her for supper, hoping that he might talk her out of her parliamentary ambitions, because – as he put it – the Labour Party “can get lots of good candidates but not many Oscar winners”.

“Bloody piffle,” she replied. “I want to do it – but anyway, I have thrown my hat in already, and I want to talk about that. I’ve had a letter from the Secretary of the CLP saying that because I have breached the guidelines I will be disqualified”.

After hearing more detail, the Leader concluded that she had not broken any rule: she was being set up by an opponent who had eyes on the same seat, and he advised her to ignore the letter and carry on.

But how should she reply to this letter, Glenda asked?

Kinnock replied: “Dear ..., I have your letter and after expert advice I have to say ‘pull the other one, it plays God save the Navy’”.

She thanked him, and they got on with a very pleasant evening.

Weeks later, Kinnock was fascinated to see a front-page story in *The Independent* saying that Glenda Jackson was in dispute with the Hampstead Labour Party over a letter she had written to the Secretary saying “Pull the other one, it plays God save the Navy.”

He had not, of course, expected her to take him literally – or even necessarily to remember the line he had fed her. When they spoke soon afterwards, he suggested that perhaps it was not wise of her.

“Bugger off,” said Glenda. “When I get a script from the author I generally follow it – and, in any case, you told me I had done nothing wrong”.

“Touché,” Kinnock replied, adding: “Don’t worry anyway. In that Constituency you’ll probably win because of it”. Which, of course, she did. She was MP for Hampstead and Highgate in 1992–2010, and Hampstead and Kilburn in 2010–2015.

A NOTE ON MPS’ PENSIONS

Eric Martlew chair of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



WE RARELY RECEIVE FEEDBACK from members in receipt of their parliamentary pension and assume all must be working well with the system administered by Buck.

We have picked up some issues regarding those entitled to take a future parliamentary pension, or about a private scheme administered through Buck, and we would like to hear from you about your experiences.

The Association meets from time to time with Trustees of the pension fund and if you have any comments to make, positive as well as negative, we can pass them on directly. This includes ideas on how to improve the administration.

Contact Laura Blake at Blakeb@parliament.uk

SCOTTISH BRANCH UPDATE

Gordon Banks



Since our last meeting in February as reported in the spring edition of *Order! Order!*, the Executive committee met on 10th May.

At this meeting we discussed the need to appoint a new Treasurer, so if any of the membership would like to assist by taking up this position, please don’t hesitate to contact me at gordon.banks@cartmore.com

We also discussed a range of speakers to create a list for invitations to future meetings and this list will be kept updated and added to as appropriate.

Should any of the Scottish branch membership have any suggestions, please contact me on the above email address. Speakers are always a challenge but having this kind of resource will hopefully make things a little easier going forward.

We agreed provisionally to hold a Scottish branch meeting on 24th August subject to securing a speaker and we are currently waiting for a response from James Cook, Scotland Editor of the BBC.

Once we have something positive on a speaker, we will notify the membership of any arrangements.

I am also pleased to announce that Tom Harris, former MP for Glasgow South and a former Minister and Shadow Minister has joined the UK Association and the Scottish Branch. We look forward to seeing Tom at future events.

Our current Executive Committee members are:

Gordon Banks – Chair	Sir Robert Smith
Sir Michael Hirst – Vice Chair	Gavin Strang
Lindsay Roy CBE – Secretary	Sir David Hamilton



ASSOCIATION NEWS

Laura Blake

NEW MEMBERS

WE ARE DELIGHTED to be able to welcome four new members some of whom were introduced to the Association by current members. Please don't be shy in encouraging colleagues to join us. If you wish to forward details on to me of any interested potential members (obviously with their consent) I will be happy to send them information.

Our new members are:



Kirstene Hair
Kirstene was the Member of Parliament for Angus between 2017 and

2019. In the UK Parliament, Kirstene was a member of the Scottish Affairs Select Committee, Home Affairs Select Committee, and Women and Equalities Committee and had been a member of the Regulatory Reform Committee since November 2017. In 2019, Kirstene was appointed as a parliamentary private secretary (PPS) in the Ministry of Justice and later that year became the PPS to David Mundell MP in the Scotland Office. Kirstene now

runs a Leadership Coaching Consultancy for women.



Tom Harris

Tom was Member of Parliament for Glasgow Cathcart South from

2001 to 2005 and for Glasgow South from 2005 to 2015. He served on the Science and Technology Select Committee from 2001 to 2003 and appointed PPS to the Minister of State for Northern Ireland in 2003. Since 2021 Tom has been lead non-executive direct of the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and Advocate General for Scotland and serves as a NED on the board of HS2 Ltd. He was a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Transport from 2006 to 2008. He was Shadow Environment Minister from 2012 to 2013.



Sally Keeble

Sally was the Member of Parliament for Northampton North from

1997 to 2010. She held the posts of Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Department for International Development from May 2002 to June 2003 and Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions from June 2001 to May 2002. Sally served on the Agriculture Select and from 2005 was a member of the Treasury Select Committee.



Greg

Mulholland

Greg was the Member of Parliament for Leeds North

West from 2005 to 2017. He held posts for the Liberal Democrats of Shadow Minister for Health from December 2007 to May 2010, Shadow Minister for Education from March 2006 to December 2007, Shadow Minister for International Development from May 2005 to March 2006. He was on the Work and Pensions Committee from July 2005 to May 2010 and the Public Administration Committee from July 2010 to March 2015 and chaired several APPGs.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 13th July

3.30pm Annual General Meeting of the Parliamentary Outreach Trust, Committee Room G, House of Lords.



4.00pm We are looking forward to seeing some of you at the next **All Members'**

meeting, in Committee Room G, in the House of Lords, close to the Lords gift shop. Our guest speaker is Jacquie Smith.

6.00pm Mr Speaker has kindly offered us the State Apartments again for our **Summer Reception**. Can I ask those attending the reception do so through the main entrance to the Apartments please which is off Speaker's Court.

The date for the Christmas Reception is Tuesday **12th December**. However, at the time of going to press I cannot confirm the venue but will update you with details nearer the time.



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

John Austin



WE ARE PLANNING a series of talks with universities for the

coming autumn term, and are currently in touch with Exeter, Westminster, Edinburgh and Brunel Universities.

The Trust continues its partnership with the charity Speakers for Schools with 13 confirmed speakers. During

the current academic year, the following of our members have spoken to students:

Sir Vince Cable: Testwood School, Hampshire; Court Moor School, Hampshire; Cove School, Hampshire

Victoria Borwick: Stanmore College, Harrow

Lord Clive Soley: Inverness Royal Academy

Tom Levitt: Featherstone High School, Ealing

Adrian Sanders: Torquay Boys' Grammar School, Torbay

Sir David Hanson: Ysgol Aberconwy, Wales

Jeremy Lefroy: Wolgarston High School, Staffordshire

Ian Lucas: St Peter's Catholic High School, Wigan; Darwen Vale High School, Darwen

Gordon Banks: Holyrood Secondary School, Glasgow

Sir David Lidington: St John

Rigby RC 6th Form College, Wigan

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 13 July at 3.30pm in Committee Room G at the House of Lords.

Members wishing to volunteer to speak to schools and colleges should contact John Austin at admin@parlyoutreach.org.uk

John Hopkins/Alamy Stock Photo



WARRINGTON 1993; BELFAST 2023 THE ATROCITIES THAT SPEEDED UP PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE

Mike Hall

2023 marked the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday/Belfast agreement which has brought peace to Northern Ireland.

I am certain that the two IRA bomb attacks on Warrington in 1993 played their part in bringing the ongoing ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland to an end.

The first attack occurred on 26th February 1993 when the IRA bombed a large gas storage facility in Winwick Road, directly opposite a housing estate. The bomb exploded but failed to ignite the gas tanks. Had the IRA succeeded in this attack the outcome would have caused carnage beyond anything witnessed in Britain outside the blitz of World War Two.

On 20th March 1993 the IRA carried out its second attack placing Semtex in two litter bins in Bridge Street, one outside McDonald’s and Boots Chemist and the other 100 yards away outside the Argos Shop. This was the day before Mother’s Day and Warrington was full of shoppers.

At 12.25pm the first bomb exploded. Terrified shoppers running from the blast ran towards the second bomb that detonated a minute later.

Four-year-old Johnathan Ball was killed instantly. Twelve-year-old Tim Parry suffered horrendous injuries, and died

five days later. Bronwen Vickers, 32, lost a leg and died a year later. These bald statements do not go near to describing the devastation visited on Warrington.

I was in Warrington town centre at the time attending a Transport Conference, with two fellow MPs, John Prescott and Doug Hoyle, Brian Simpson MEP and many other leading politicians. It occurred to me years later – what could have happened if the IRA had known about the conference?

As the new MP for Warrington South and long-term local resident I was shaken to the core. Two attacks within three weeks made me ask ‘what was the point of such mindless destruction and violence?’

Some suggested the second attack was a reprisal by the IRA for the arrest of two of their members for the first bomb. It was also suggested that both bombs were planted by a rogue IRA cell operating outside the command of the Provisional IRA.

In 2013 Martin McGuinness gave the annual lecture at the Warrington Peace Centre. I asked him about the ‘rogue cell’ being responsible for the Warrington bombs. He candidly confirmed the

As the new MP for Warrington South and long-term local resident I was shaken to the core

Provisional IRA was responsible for both bombings.

At the time of the Warrington bombs Prime Minister John Major was in direct negotiations with the IRA, though he denied that these secret talks were happening.

It would have been easy for Doug Hoyle and myself to make political capital out of this denial but we did not. The prize of peace in Northern Ireland was far greater than attempting to embarrass the Major government.

In the aftermath of the bombs, John Major contacted Doug Hoyle MP and myself and told us he wanted to help Warrington’s recovery. He arranged for me and Doug to meet Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke MP to discuss matters.

Doug and I consulted residents, the local Council, local business representatives and Cheshire Police. We decided to put forward three requests: for bomb proof litter bins; CCTV for the town

centre; and financial support for Cheshire Police to cover the additional £1 million spent on investigating the bombing. These requests were modest but would go some way to reassure the community. We put these to Ken Clarke and he said he would give them full consideration.

In the cabinet reshuffle following 'Black Wednesday' Ken Clarke was made Chancellor of the Exchequer and Michael Howard became Home Secretary. Doug and I were summonsed to see Home Secretary Howard, who said there was no such thing as 'bomb proof litter bins', town centre CCTV was a matter for the local authority, and Cheshire Police would not receive £1 million for their investigation because the circumstances were not 'wholly exceptional circumstances.'

Doug and I were extremely disappointed. But this was partially offset on discovering Ken Clarke, before moving to the Treasury, had 'signed off' new litter bins and the CCTV for Warrington town centre. However, it still rankles that Howard did not accept that the extra Police costs of investigating the bombings met the 'exceptional circumstances' test.

This year John Major was the keynote speaker at the service to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Warrington bombings. In his poignant address he admitted these atrocities brought him close to giving up on his quest for peace in Northern Ireland – but decided that these bombings placed more responsibility on him to re-double his efforts for peace. He was right.

Despite the Warrington bombings the British and Irish governments persevered with their drive to end the 'Troubles'.

This culminated with the Provisional IRA announcing a cessation of military operation on 31st April 1994. This fledgling end to the 'Troubles' worked well until the IRA ended their cease-fire on 9th February 1996 by blowing up London Docklands.

But be in no doubt about the importance of John Major's contribution to peace to Northern Ireland. He demonstrated the possibilities for peace.

In 1997 the new Prime Minister Tony Blair was determined to deliver peace in Northern Ireland. Blair knew he had an opportunity to bring Unionists and Republicans together in the common purpose of a peace in Northern Ireland.

Blair was joined in this endeavour by Bertie Ahern Taoiseach of the Irish Republic, US President Bill Clinton, the US Special Envoy Senator Mitchell, Mo Mowlam Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and many others.

Thirty years on from the Warrington bombing and 25 years since the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement peace in Northern Ireland prevails.

As the saying goes success has many parents. I want to put on record my appreciation to two remarkable friends Colin and Wendy Parry. The loss of their son Tim in the Warrington bombing was devastating and their resulting contribution to the Northern Ireland peace process just as profound. Thank you, Colin and Wendy.

Mike Hall was MP for Warrington South, 1992–1997; and Weaver Vale, 1997–2010.



John Major speaking at the 30th anniversary of the Warrington bombings



Political Incident No. 4

ATTACKS BY VOTERS' PETS ARE RARE, but they do happen. Doing a leaflet drop in Islington in the 1982 council elections I incautiously allowed a finger to stray inside a letterbox – and yanked it out with a screech. My finger had a long deep scratch and blood was dripping onto the pavement. What did the cat think it was? A fish finger? (I assumed my attacker was a cat.)

Then during the Southgate by-election in December 1984 I was canvassing a voter who had opened her door only slightly. Behind her a huge Alsatian expressed its bitter dislike of me in volleys of fearsome barks and thunderous growls. The woman had her leg across the opening, but when we finished our talk (she still hadn't decided how to vote) she moved her leg as she stepped back to shut the door. The dog squirmed through the gap and, jaws agape, went for me.

At that moment I felt like Sir Henry Baskerville pursued by the great Hound. Very fortunately it was a cold day and I was wearing a padded jacket that had belonged to my father. Its surface was stiff and shiny with age, and the dog's teeth skated across it, getting no grip. Howling with frustration it turned and leapt again, but its teeth slid down my jacket once more and it landed in a heap on the garden path. The woman rushed down, grabbed the dog's collar and hauled it back into the house, shouting over her shoulder as she slammed the door "You've got my vote!" I should think so too.

Having already suffered at the paws of a cat I was thankful to escape unscathed from the jaws of a dog, and not to have to shed my blood for the Party a second time.

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.



DREAMING OF GERONTIUS

The Parliament Choir in Italy

Caroline Spelman

The Parliament choir is now in its third decade and has flourished under patronage of successive Speakers of both Houses.

The choir is composed of singers from every aspect of the work of parliament such as its clerks, librarians, secretaries, and researchers as well as MPs and Peers. The Parliamentarians are completely cross-party as Chair Lord German, and its former Labour Chair Baroness Hayman and the Conservative Chair of the Liaison Committee, The Hon Sir Bernard Jenkin exemplify. It is a workplace choir in every respect. As the Speaker of the House of Commons says, it has become part of the life of the UK Parliament.

On special occasions the choir has provided a great celebration, such as for the Golden Jubilee of our late Queen and the commemoration of the centenary of WW1. On the latter occasion we joined with the choir of the German Parliament to remember the great sacrifices on both sides of the conflict. In return the choir went to Berlin to share our two countries' traditions of singing carols at Christmas.

The latest international foray was to sing in Rome at the Papal Basilica of St Paul outside the walls to mark the canonisation of Saint John Henry Newman, with music composed by Sir Edward Elgar set to a poem written by the then Cardinal called *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Anyone who knows this work will know it takes huge resources in both orchestra and choir. So, a choir 350 strong

was assembled by inviting singers from the choirs that the Parliament choir has teamed up with over the years, from Coventry, St Albans, and Italy among others. In the huge Basilica the wave of sound was amazing and resulted in a five second echo as it travelled the length of the Nave.

We were also marking the 200th anniversary of the rebuilding of the Basilica as its wooden earlier structure burnt down in 1823.

We recreated a piece of history as in 1958 the UK Ambassador to Italy arranged for a performance of the *Dream* before Pope Pius XII, which the latter declared sublime. There are in fact two British Ambassadors in Rome: one for Italy and one for the Holy See, which are separate states. There is an Italian Ambassador to the Holy See as well.

Our Ambassador to the Holy See is Chris Trott, whose team did an amazing job facilitating this visit. He himself is immensely knowledgeable about the work of the Catholic Church around the globe and arranged meetings for our own Parliamentarians to discuss important shared concerns around human trafficking and the discrimination against women in education.

Chris took some of the choir around St Peters and showed his command of its history and art. Cardinal Vincent Nicholls known to many as the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster held a communion service in the Crypt for those prepared to rise very early on the morning of the concert and prayers were said for the great day ahead.



Our Ambassador to Italy generously hosted a recital by our soloists (Robert Murray tenor, Beth Taylor mezzo-soprano and Arthur Brice baritone) accompanied by the choir's conductor Simon Over, for whom the aspiration of bringing the choir to Rome to sing the *Dream* was indeed a dream come true.

The work itself is of great emotional power. Not many pieces of music have attempted to portray what happens to us when we die. *Gerontius*, whom Elgar described as an everyman, bares his soul to us and before God as he lies dying on his bed, and his friends are praying for him and calling on God to "be merciful and be gracious".

This is the initial role of the choir in intercession. At the same time there is a semi chorus quietly singing the opening movement of the Mass *Kyrie Eleison*. Already you get a sense of the complexity of this work with two choirs intertwined. In Part One *Gerontius* dies, and Part Two is an evocative journey for his soul through purgatory to his eventual arrival in heaven. During this passage the choir plays the role of the demons in hell evoking the terror of souls condemned there with mocking laughter and contempt for their pleas. This rather blood-curling passage gives way to *Gerontius's* rescue and the choir takes on the role of a heavenly chorus singing praises and a loud and sustained Amen. As the echo died away in the huge Basilica there was a spellbound silence in which no one moved such is the power of this piece.

Elgar never heard this work performed in Italy although intriguingly he had stood in the very church the Parliament

choir was to perform in. He had a difficult time writing *Gerontius* as his choir master suddenly died before its initial performance. It has since established itself in the choral repertoire but is not often performed because of the resources it requires not just of singers but also musicians.

The Parliament choir sponsors the Southbank Sinfonia comprising young musicians in their first job after graduating from college and they joined the choir in Rome, albeit that their flight there was cancelled at the last-minute reducing rehearsal time, much as Elgar experienced. However, the Choir Master Nicholas O'Neill, deeply beloved of the choir, had rehearsed us well so the lack of preparation time with the orchestra had no impact. To see choir master and conductor embrace with considerable relief at the end was a telling moment.

Several encores ensued once the audience had recovered from musical and spiritual impact upon them.

If this pen portrait of the concert has whetted your appetite to sing then do not hesitate to contact the secretary of the Parliament choir who may have just about recovered after doing an amazing job organising such a spectacular success: secretary@parliamentchoir.org.uk.

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



MELANIE JOHNSON
Welwyn Hatfield,
1997–2005

WHEN I LOST MY SEAT IN 2005, I thought I would return to something in the public sector, which was predominately where I had worked before 1997. But in the event things turned out very differently. There was ad hoc advising work and an opportunity

came up to be co-chair (with an industry co-chair) of a panel at the Association of British Insurers, which was looking to improve information to pensions customers. Our panel was a bit frustrated by the lack of real industry focus.

In late 2009 I moved to a new role being created by the then UKCARDS Association, newly established to represent the issuers of debit and credit cards (the banks). I wanted to be free to argue the cause of their customers and a delicate negotiation took place as part of the appointment! In the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 they agreed. We established a data driven case for what should be done, which was shared in full with the government and accepted. It meant change for the industry and improvement for customers. I'm particularly proud of the things we did to combat card fraud and the role the Association played in leading and facilitating the introduction of contactless cards to pay for transport, starting with TfL

As UKCARDS transitioned into UK Finance in 2017, I became the founding Chair of Pay.UK which many may not have heard of. Pay.UK is part of the UK's critical national infrastructure (CNI) for payments, overseeing the security and work of Faster Payments – the bank-to-bank payments many of us use day to day to pay for items – and BACS (Bankers' Automated Clearing System) – which many do know but perhaps don't realise its significance.

BACS oversees the payments of most of the UK's salaries, wages, pensions and benefit payments. Pay.UK's biggest single customer is HMG. And if the payments system were to fail or be compromised, money flowing to the economy would stop. It was my role to set up the new integrated organisation to oversee the merger of the two payment systems safely (and also the company overseeing cheque payments) and to make sure that the highest standards of governance and security were met, satisfying Bank of England requirements.

I came to appreciate just how important critical national infrastructure is, and how little most of us know about what is really critical. I worry that governments are not sufficiently focussed on the risks and pay them far too little attention. I am very interested in how society needs the private sector as a partner in this regard, and how to get the best for us all.



NICK HAWKINS
Surrey Heath,
1997–2005

AFTER I LEFT THE HOUSE IN 2005, I went back to my pre-Parliament life as a Corporate Barrister. My time having been Shadow Solicitor-General, and for a number of years a Shadow Home Office Minister, proved highly-relevant. I firstly joined the largest

international law firm in the Sultanate of Oman, then worked for two City of London law firms, and then had 4 years as Legal Director and Company Secretary of a large national and international leisure and sports group, with headquarters in Leeds, so I moved back North.

When that was sold, I got involved in investment-raising for a University spin-out, and I've continued with investment matters in parallel with my legal work. I went back to my old Chambers briefly and then since 2016 I've been a Corporate Barrister Partner in the senior-lawyers-only, 200+-partner, law firm GunnerCooke LLP in the City and Leeds and Manchester and elsewhere. This has been excellent, and not long ago, on secondment from them, I got close again to Government matters, as I was, for a whole year, interim Head of Legal for Northern Trains Ltd, after it came under Government control after Arriva had their franchise terminated.

I'm still very much enjoying the varied work, much of it international. I'm glad to say that all my 3 children and 2 step-children are thriving in their careers, and I enjoy visiting the 8 (so far) grandchildren! I have, however, always kept in touch with friends in both Houses, and I'm very glad to say I've continued to play cricket for Lords and Commons C.C., as well as being Club Secretary and Vice-Captain of the historic Yorkshire Club Romany C.C.



HOWARD STOAITE
Dartford 1997–2010

I KEPT UP SOME GENERAL PRACTICE whilst serving as the MP for Dartford, feeling that it gave me a unique perspective on the health service, both as a practitioner and as a politician. So, when I stood down in 2010, it was an obvious step to

increase my General Practice role.

So, late in 2010 I stood for, and was elected, Chair of the Clinical Commissioning Group for Bexley, whilst continuing to practice medicine. My term of office ended in 2015 so I was able finally to concentrate on clinical medicine, becoming senior partner.

I decided to retire in 2020 but a month before my retirement – and grand retirement party, having worked in the NHS since qualifying in 1977 – I became an early adopter of first wave Covid 19 and things were pretty rough for several weeks. After recovering and having ‘retired,’ it was soon obvious that the NHS was fighting like never before to avoid complete collapse, so I offered my services to my excellent local practice as a locum GP, which I am still doing and greatly enjoying. As Mark Twain said, ‘Find a job you enjoy doing and you’ll never have to work a day in your life.’

Just to complicate matters, we bought a Grade 2 listed windmill in East Kent, moving away from Dartford in 2019, and our current project is restoring, renovating, and researching its history, a not inconsiderable task but extremely rewarding. Our family keeps us busy, and our 2 sons have 5 grandchildren between them who luckily love the windmill and the beach.

I try to keep in touch with the Association of Former MPs and still meet up with former colleagues. Inevitably talk turns to politics both then and now.



SEEMA KENNEDY
South Ribble,
2015–2019

DECIDING TO LEAVE PARLIAMENT after a short spell was both an easy and difficult decision. Like most people who become MPs I had spent years getting there and had made enormous personal, financial and professional sacrifices to sit on the

green benches.

The easy part is the absolute joy I have in spending workaday time with my family. I didn’t really know my youngest son until I left Parliament and spending most evenings with my husband and children for me far outweighs the glamour of the red box and the post-nominals. The difficult part is trying to replicate the sense of purpose I had serving my constituents and the camaraderie of the House.

Leaving Parliament and then trying to find a job during a global pandemic presented some challenges, but I was able to build on my professional background in the law and the

commercial property world as well as my spell in frontline politics. I now have a variety of roles, including leading a project for the US Chamber of Commerce, an adviser for Global Counsel and as a NED on the board of OFWAT. This combination provides me with satisfying, purposeful work and more control over my time.

As a Trustee of the Cares Family, I have continued to campaign on loneliness and isolation: efforts which I began with Jo Cox, and then after her murder, continued with Rachel Reeves. I am still involved in the Great Get Together, now spearheaded by Jo’s sister, Kim Leadbeater MP.



ADRIAN FLOOK
Taunton, 2001–2005

I WAS PRETTY LUCKY to land on my feet six weeks of losing my seat in Taunton in 2005 after yet another Labour landslide. Originally from Somerset, I had made a career in the City after leaving university, which meant after only four years in the House someone obviously

thought I still had a few memorised skills I could deploy again in financial public relations.

Then ten years ago I joined Sir Lynton Crosby’s London based campaigns consultancy, which now makes me one of his longest serving team members. We utilise the approach to winning elections – opinion polling research and disciplined messaging to win campaigns for corporate clients –and before half the readership of *Order! Order!* take umbrage, it might be worth adding that I never personally get involved in UK elections. But having served as an MP I do have some very useful insights.

I was re-elected as a Wandsworth councillor in 2018 and found the comparison between those four years with my eight years in the 1990s quite depressing from an elected representative’s point of view. Wandsworth was always well run, with acute political antennae; but these days there appears to be an institutional vacuum of trust across local government which has been filled by excessive administration and bureaucratic justification.

But perhaps the happiest event since 2005 for me and Frangelica my wife was the birth of our daughter three months after losing my seat. She will be eighteen this summer and is anxiously waiting her A Level results before hopefully going to Durham to read Economics. Without having to serve both parliament and a constituency meant I could be fully involved in all of her young life. So, there is always a true silver lining to losing!



WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT CLASS SAYS POLLY TOYNBEE

Andy McSmith

We do not talk enough about class, according to the journalist, Polly Toynbee. Much is said about race, gender, and every variety identity politics, but class is the issue that “overarches all those other identities”.

There is an “awkwardness” about discussing the subject, she told the spring meeting of the Association, because so many people who have started their lives at an advantage like to believe that they have risen to their present positions through merit alone – so they claim to have risen from a humble start. Research by the London School Economics showed that 47 per cent of people in professional or managerial jobs called themselves working class. “A quarter of them call themselves working class, even if they have middle class, graduate parents,” she said. “Then they reach back to grandparents to look for some shred of class credibility, to justify their position in life.”

But Alan Milburn’s final report as Chairman of the Social Mobility Commission showed that 54 per cent of leading journalists, 55 per cent of partners in top law firms, 68 per cent of barristers and 70 per cent of the judges had been educated at private schools.

Toynbee was not claiming working-class credentials for herself, though her family’s privileged position was ‘educational’ rather than ‘financial’, but comfortable all the same, because education gave her relatives exceptional job opportunities. And judging by the book she has just published about them, they all seem to have rebelled against their privileged background.

Her great grandfather, Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Classics

at Oxford, was “vegetarian, teetotal, anti-empire, anti-capital punishment, and a tremendous internationalist, passionate about home rule for Ireland.”

Her grandfather, Arnold J. Toynbee, was a historian whose book, *A Study of History*, was so successful that he was featured on the front cover of *Time* magazine.

“My father was called Philip Toynbee,” she added. “He was a writer, novelist, literary critic and poet, also a great rebel all his life. He ran away from school when he was 15 to join an anti-public school magazine called *Out of Bounds*.”

“He was the first communist President of the Oxford Union. His recruits included Stephen Spender and Denis Healey. I didn’t know that until Denis Healey told me: ‘Your father recruited me. I didn’t stay very long.’”

“I wondered how on earth he could be the first communist President of the Oxford Union. I only discovered the other day that he was elected because his opponent on the Tory side was Randolph Churchill, and the Tories hated Randolph Churchill so much that they decided to vote for a communist.”

Philip Toynbee left the Communist Party because of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact, but was a radical campaigner for the rest of his life, and a stalwart of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. “We were brought up to believe that without doubt there would be a nuclear holocaust. When we went on holidays, he always brought a large bottle of pills to kill us all if the bomb went off while we were on the beach so that we would not get radiation sickness. Once he had to turn round and collect the bottle of pills because he had left them behind.”

There is an “awkwardness” about discussing the subject, she told the spring meeting of the Association

“He ended up founding an agricultural commune. It was incredibly idealistic. Everyone was going to share everything. All sorts of strange people turned up, but they were into reflexology, crystals, mysticism – they weren’t really into digging up cabbages. He was the only one that did any digging at all. It eventually collapsed.”

Their campaigning did not always end in failure. Sexual politics has advanced: when Polly Toynbee first got married, for instance, she could not sign a loan agreement without permission from her husband. But the great failure is that, in the past half century, society has become more unequal.

The great opening up of opportunity for social mobility occurred in the 1960s to 1970s, with the rapid growth of white-collar jobs. By the mid-1970s, society was more equal than it has ever been. During the reforms of the 1980s, she said, the top 10 per cent did “fantastically well” while people at the bottom saw their circumstances worsening.

“The tea boy to top management ideology still hangs around, mostly around people who remember when it was possible,” she said. But it is only a memory, from half a century ago.

Polly Toynbee memoir, *An Uneasy Inheritance: My Family and Other Radicals*, was published on 1 June by Atlantic.

A GOOD READ



SUCH GLAMOUR AND SO LITTLE TO SHOW FOR IT

Denis MacShane

Johnson at 10: The Inside Story
By Anthony Seldon and Raymond Newell

Published by Atlantic Books

THE MAIN POINT OF THIS BOOK is that it's both scholarly and at the same time a lament, a *cri de coeur*, by a moderate Conservative aching with disappointment that the most glamorous Galahad and orator the Tory Party has produced in the last half century has ended his career in such disappointment, not to say ignominy.

Anthony Seldon is a private school headmaster – of Wellington whose alumni include recent Tory MPs Crispin Blunt, Julian Brazier and Neil Parish. He has now taken over Epsom College. This is middle class, middle England territory. Boris Johnson is a graduate of Eton, Balliol, the Bullingdon Club and Brexit but to the Tory headmaster who is Anthony Seldon he has badly let down the side.

As well as being an educationalist who headed the private Buckingham University, Seldon is also a thorough professional historian. He has written serious well-received biographies of all occupants of 10 Downing Street since Margaret Thatcher.

He has remarkable access. With his fellow author, Raymond Newell, a former student at Buckingham University, he claims to have interviewed 200 people for this account of 31 months in Downing Street.

Seldon begins by saying Johnson was probably the most exotic of Prime Ministers to enter Downing Street since Lloyd George. But the comparison peters out instantly. By the time Lloyd George became Prime Minister in 1916 he had an extraordinary record of political creativity and achievement to his name. He had helped send the Tory Party into a decade of oblivion as they focused on hostility of open trade (today read Brexit), to Lords reform, to rights for Irish citizens, to (white) South Africans' self-governance, to creating the first state pensions.

As Seldon and Newell make clear, Johnson had many abilities but being prime minister was not one of them

Johnson was at best a mediocre Mayor of London, stealing Ken Livingstone's proposals for pay-as-you-pedal bikes or claiming credit for the 2012 Olympics, which were brought to London by Tony Blair out-manoeuvring the French at the International Olympic Committee in 2004.

He "won" Brexit but that "victory" has turned to ashes as all the Brexit Tories are now out of high-level Tory politics and government and Rishi Sunak tries to clear up the mess Johnson and his mid-rank FCO diplomat assistant David Frost created.

Luckily for Johnson – and this point is not really examined by Seldon – the Labour Party chose their own version of Johnson in insisting on keeping Jeremy Corbyn as Labour candidate for No 10 even after he gained 50 fewer seats than Theresa May in 2017 and handed the government over to a Tory-DUP coalition.

Johnson then won 161 more seats than Labour (a huge number of seats for Labour to win in 2024) in December 2019 but many of the men and women who became MPs under Johnson have now announced they are leaving. He has been disowned by his MPs in the Commons with his efforts to overturn Rishi Sunak after the Windsor Framework agreement on Northern Ireland ending in just 22 Tory MPs following him into the lobby.

He was unlucky as he had barely entered Downing Street before Covid, the Pandemic, and the lockdowns with 202,000 related deaths overwhelmed his government. His negotiations of the final Brexit deal left Britain poorer, without essential workers, and global investors looking with dismay at Britain turning its back on trade with the biggest market in Europe.

Between his early anti-EU columns in the *Daily Telegraph* thirty years ago and the Brexit he bequeathed Britain when he left office, Johnson's political career has been linked to the Europe question. He scored tactical wins but today fewer than one in ten voters now think Boris's Brexit was a good idea.

Seldon takes us through the history. He has got senior officials like the FCO Permanent Under Secretary Sir Simon, now Lord, MacDonald, to say on the record what a useless Foreign Secretary Johnson was. Johnson was unable to build any relationship with a US president – Trump nor Biden, nor with any leader in Europe or the world except a flirtation with Vladimir Putin whose oligarchs in "Londongrad", another Johnson creation, gave the Tory Party £12 million in dodgy donations.

Today he and his few remaining supporters like to blame the Civil Service, – the "blob" – for his failures and the innumerable problems he left behind. Any reader of *Order! Order!* who served as a minister will know that is nonsense. There are good and bad civil servants but the best are very good indeed and they serve the government of the day to the best of their abilities.

That Johnson presided over one of the worst governments in living memory should not be blamed on officials. The buck stops and stopped on the Prime Minister's desk in No 10. As Seldon and Newell make clear, Johnson had many abilities but being prime minister was not one of them. Johnson, in the authors' view, "never understood how to be prime minister, nor how to govern."

Denis MacShane was MP for Rotherham, 1994–2012.

MULLIN AND 'THE MAN'

Tom Levitt

Didn't You Use to Be Chris Mullin?

Diaries 2010–2022

by Chris Mullin

Published by Biteback

I ONLY DABBLED in the earlier volumes of Chris Mullin's diaries, having been more diligent with his novels: *The Friends of Harry Perkins* was far too short, Chris! However, my deficit has been addressed. *Didn't You Use to Be Chris Mullin?*, the fourth diary, is different from its predecessors as it describes the first dozen years of what some might call 'retirement' following a Parliamentary career.

'Retirement' isn't the right word. I'm proud of having spoken at two literary festivals since 2010, yet it feels as though Chris has done two a week for a decade. He's clearly well fed and enjoys tending his acre of walled garden. That in itself is a full-time job, fighting off grey squirrels, pheasants and kidney stones along the way.

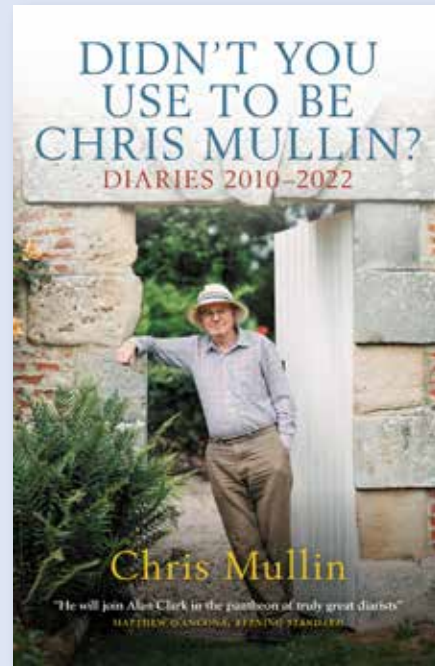
The book is an account of a man fulfilled. He's clearly loving his pedestrian lifestyle (a reference to his love of rural rambling) and believes that his position as Chair of the North East Regional Heritage Lottery Fund is destiny achieved. Membership of the Northumbria National Park Authority, ditto. At 75 his family bring him pleasure and pride, providing a loving anchor without smothering him.

Mullin's life has been full of words. As I write, Chris pops up on Radio 4, obituarising one of the Birmingham Six. Such campaigns for justice for those wrongly convicted were the first many of us heard of him. The journalist became an MP in 1987, assuming a low profile for a decade. He became a hardworking chair of the Home Affairs committee in 1997, spending four subsequent years as a minister (in three different roles).

The FT's Robert Shrimmsley is quoted as regretting that "I had lazily bought into the stereotype of Mullin as a Bennite headbanger and never bothered to get to know him." I can understand that: the only time I worked closely with Chris was on the Benn deputy leadership campaign. That's Hilary's, of 2005, not Tony's. Chris was quite lovely; modest, informed, reliable, totally committed. Hilary, he opines in *Didn't You...*, was the leader Labour should have had, the best chance of renewing the Party after the frustrating Corbyn phase. Spot on!

Chris has no personal axe to grind against Jeremy but never regarded him as a viable leader. Had he still been in Westminster in 2015 and '16 might he have persuaded Benn junior to stand?

Chris clearly loves conversation. His final exchange with a bearded, bedridden and dying Tony Benn, his career-long pal, is truly moving whilst nicely understated. He has catholic tastes amongst his many friends who vary from the Tory benches, such as the admirable Andrew Mitchell, to unsympathetic Northumbrian landed gentry. They include yesterday's men (sadly) like the North East's Byers and Milburn, plus many covert and not so covert current Labour politicians.



... the diary does reveal impressive insights, a salacious appetite for speculation... and a bid for movie stardom

Yet the one who is cited most – in almost universally positive tones – is 'The Man', aka Tony Blair, despite not having been personally close. Mullin regrets that the Iraq experience had made 'The Man' unelectable although that didn't seem to apply in 2005. If you were to ask Chris who has contributed the most common sense to political discourse in Britain since 2010, he might well say that it was 'The Man'.

Even the PM for the first half of this volume, David Cameron, seems to be a fan. Both he and Cabinet Office officials are known to have quoted from earlier chapters of the Mullin record.

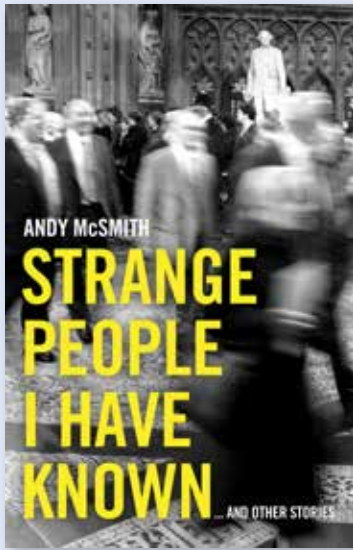
Sunderland South disappeared in 2010 but the seatless Mullin lost none of his interest in politics. His diary reveals predictions about as accurate as yours or mine: on Black Thursday, June 23rd, 2016, the former representative of the most Brexit constituency in the country wrote 'My hunch is that Remain will win'. And later: 'Labour may have lost the working class vote in Rochester but not in Blyth'. Ahem! But the diary does reveal impressive insights, a salacious appetite for speculation... and a bid for movie stardom.

Diaries can't be constructed like novels or non-fiction tomes. A day's excitement may not portend a crescendo; stories disappear from the headlines and re-appear when least expected. The writer has no control. Conveniently, few entries are more than a page long so it's a book that can be dipped into, frequently.

I have a confession: I'm off to USA and 550 pages is a lot to digest against a short deadline. But the first half of *Didn't You...* (2010 to 2017, inclusive) was fascinating – I'm looking forward to finishing it at leisure!

Tom Levitt was MP for High Peak, 1997–2010.

His political thrillers, *A Fallen Man* (March 2022) and *The Spine Politic*, are out now.



INSIGHTS, SLIGHTS, SACKINGS AND SINNERS

Jerry Hayes

Strange People I have Known, and Other Stories

By Andy McSmith

Published by Biteback

THIS BEAUTIFULLY WRITTEN BOOK is creaking at the seams with anecdotes about the good the bad and the downright ugly who run our country. It is an unvarnished account of how politics and journalism can be a foul sewer of hypocrisy where the truth is an optional extra.

The poignant opening sentence, 'as the past is another country, I am a foreign visitor in today', sets the scene of McSmith's journey as a man who is traditionally of the left, who has run a Socialist book shop, been employed by megalomaniacs Robert Maxwell, Conrad Black, the Labour Party, the *Daily Mirror*, *The Independent* and *The Observer*.

The portraits are exquisite. On Enoch Powell, 'distant like an oracle. He had a face like a sloping bank of hard, grey and unsightly gravel and the body language of a ventriloquist's dummy, as if in his mind he did not belong in something so mundane as a body. He gave the impression of someone who had never known a moment of joy'.

On Ted Heath, '(he) valued women when they were cooking, keeping house or otherwise making him comfortable. What he found was intolerable was that a woman could be in charge of the Conservative Party'.

The vignettes about 1980's lobby journalists, in particular the much respected Gordon Grieg of the *Daily Mail*, who were fearless in their questioning of the big beasts in politics are delightful. He asked Margaret Thatcher when she was Leader of the Opposition, 'how do you lead the Conservative Party when you have a voice like breaking glass?' She took his advice and hired a voice coach.

And the way she dealt with the lobby? 'Watching her deal with the mental jousting, surrounded by men younger than her was like being with a flirtatious granny.'

It is like being a visitor to Bedlam where the inmates have taken over control.

There are some great stories about Norman Fowler during his campaign to eradicate AIDS. Trying to have a chat with Thatcher about producing government literature dealing with anal sex was never going to be a laugh. But he managed to slip a poster through warning of the dangers of hypodermic needles in drug use. 'It only takes one prick to give you aids'.

There are some squeaky bottom stories about being forced into accepting the job as Robert Maxwell's press Secretary. Maxwell was a bully and a monster and McSmith was warned that to refuse him was like putting up your hand to a speeding train. At a private party '(Maxwell) was again sitting silently alone like a malignant wallflower. Suddenly, he stood and strode across the wide floor, sending waves of uneasiness in all directions. I could see that he was unmistakably heading towards me'. If you want to know what happens next buy the book.

Working at the *Mirror* meant a close association with Alastair Campbell, the political editor. 'It also pained him to let a political story get in without the words below the headline, "by Alastair Campbell"'.

Campbell and Blair were no fans of McSmith. They assumed he was a trouble maker and no friend of New Labour. He found Blair treated him with disdain even as a press officer for Labour. In one interview Blair asked Campbell to 'arrange a cup of tea'. The response was, 'I'm not moving while he's here'.

There are many stories about the swears and tactile Mo Mowlem when she was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. My favourite was when McSmith asked Ulster Unionist MP the Reverend Martin Smyth if he had been touched by her. The answer? 'Mercifully Satan has not brought me that experience yet'.

Being invited to work for the *Telegraph* by Charles Moore wasn't expected. '(I'm) looking for somebody who knows the Labour Party but not part of the Blair gang'.

The description of Conrad Black will not go down well with the old lag. '(He) was the second most bombastic egocentric proprietor I had ever met. He was Godzilla to Robert Maxwell's King Kong'.

McSmith is complimentary about Moore protecting him against any fallout from what he wrote. But adds a Barb. 'Charles Moore is so very upper middle class that I feared that having to associate with some of the people who had been granted peerages would be bit of a social climb down for him'.

This is a wonderful book of insights, slights, sackings and sinners. It is like being a visitor to Bedlam where the inmates have taken over control. McSmith is not a, 'foreign visitor in today' after all.

Jerry Hayes was MP for Harlow, 1983–1997

TRIBUTES

KAREN LUMLEY

28 March 1964 – 25 May 2023

Conservative MP for Redditch, 2010–2017

Remembered by Andrew Bingham



PA Images/Alamy

KAREN WAS THE Conservative MP for Redditch for seven years, until ill health forced her to stand down. Karen's victory in 2010, standing in the seat for a third time, was a high-profile Conservative gain as she unseated the former Labour Home Secretary Jacqui Smith. She won the seat with a 5,821 majority.

After the 2005 election Karen and I – with a small number of others – were reselected in the seats we had narrowly failed to win in that election. That was when I first met Karen, and in the intervening 18 years we became close friends. Everyone who knew Karen will have their own recollections but all of us will have common memories, her refreshing outlook on life, her larger than life personality and her ever changing hair colours. Wherever Karen was, the sound of laughter was never far away. The Leader of the House, Penny Mordaunt, summed Karen up beautifully from the despatch box in her own emotional tribute, saying that Karen was a force for good. Karen was more than just a force for good, she was a force of nature.

But underneath that jolly optimistic person there was a keen political brain and a burning desire to not only represent the

Conservative Party but moreover to represent her constituents of Redditch, something she did unflinchingly during her years in Parliament.

Karen had been involved in politics and with the Conservative Party for many years before becoming the MP for Redditch. Living in Wrexham following her marriage to Richard in 1984, she was Deputy Chairman of the Welsh Young Conservatives in 1986 before being elected to Wrexham Maelor Council and being the Conservative Group Leader from 1991–1996. She also served for three years on Clwyd County Council. It was in Wales where she first stood for Parliament, fighting Delyn in 1997.

Following the family's move to Redditch, Karen once more threw herself into local politics, being elected to the local Council in 2001 and the same year making her first attempt to win the Redditch seat. Narrowly missing out by less than 3,000 votes, in true Karen style she refused to give up and contested the seat again in 2005 before triumphing at her third attempt in 2010.

Karen was a fighter and she fought till the end. Always cheery, always with a smile she is a huge loss to all of us who knew her and to British politics as a whole. We will all miss her terribly but none more so than her beloved family, Richard, Lizzie and Chris. Rest in peace Karen.

JOHN COCKCROFT

6 July 1934 – 25 April 2023

Conservative MP for Nantwich, February 1974–1979

Remembered by Lucia Cockcroft



JOHN COCKCROFT, who was a regular contributor to *Order! Order!* Magazine and a conservative MP in the 1970s, has died at the age of 88. Cockcroft was elected to the Nantwich, Cheshire seat in 1974 when Edward Heath called a general election in February of that year. In the Commons, he was an active member of the select committee

on the nationalised industries. He was a lifetime ardent pro-European, becoming a council member of the European Movement in 1973, a year after the UK's membership of the EEC came into effect.

John Hoyle Cockcroft was born in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, the son of Jenny and Lionel Cockcroft – brother of the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Sir John Cockcroft. The family were prominent figures in the area, with three members, including Lionel, serving as mayor. He attended Oundle school from the age of 13 and won a scholarship to St John's College, Cambridge, going up in 1955 after National Service as a second lieutenant with the Royal Artillery. His years at Cambridge were some of his happiest. He was president of the Cambridge Union in 1958 and it was here that he made treasured friendships, many of which lasted a lifetime.

After University he became features writer at the *Financial Times* under the then-editor Nigel Lawson and remained at the newspaper for two years. In 1962 Cockcroft moved to the economics department of the engineering firm Guest Keen and Nettlefolds (GKN) – the beginning of a long association with the company. Whilst he was there, he was seconded to The Treasury for a year before becoming economics editor of *The Daily Telegraph*.

It was during these years that Cockcroft wrote and published his first book, *Why England Sleeps*, in which he argued the case for entry into the Common Market. He remained at *The Telegraph* until 1974, when he was elected as MP.

Cockcroft's decision to stand down as an MP in 1978 was influenced by responsibilities of a growing family. He moved to Duff Stoop as a stockbroker, working on mergers and acquisitions in the City. His interest in debate and politics, solidified by his four years as an MP and time as a journalist, lasted well into old age. In addition to proudly writing regularly for *Order! Order!* he was often heard on local radio station Essex FM, speaking on all-things European. His pro-European stance was a constant thread throughout his life and he was deeply saddened by Brexit and what he viewed as its far-reaching implications. Earlier in 2023 he fulfilled a life ambition to publish his memoirs, *Titans Encountered: Snapshots from the Foothills*: a collection of memories and anecdotes drawn from encounters with people met over his long life and career.

Cockcroft married Tessa Shepley in 1971, having met at a lunch. Tessa survives him with their three daughters: Lucia, a mindfulness teacher and writer; Gemma, who works in education; and Eloise, who is a social worker.

LORD MORRIS OF ABERAVON

5 November 1931–5 June 2023

Labour MP for Aberavon, 1959–2001

Remembered by Paul Murphy



UK Parliament

I HAD KNOWN JOHN MORRIS for about forty years, though I was only eleven when he was elected MP for Aberavon (Port Talbot) in 1959. He was one of only two former MP's who had been elected in the 1950's, and he was the longest serving Privy Counsellor. He had served in the governments of three Labour Prime Ministers –

Wilson, Callaghan and Blair, and had been a Minister for Power, Transport and Defence. He had been Secretary of State for Wales, Attorney General, as well as being a Knight of the Garter and a leading QC!

That was quite a career for a farmer's son from Ceredigion. He spoke only Welsh until he was seven, although this was no handicap, and he went on to study law at Aberystwyth University and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he was an Honorary Fellow.

In many ways, his finest years were when he was Welsh Secretary, where he was ably assisted by Lord (Barry) Jones and Lord (Ted) Rowlands. He was an absolutely committed advocate for a Welsh Parliament, and led the doomed campaign in the late 1970's. The referendum was lost and he was personally devastated. He was vindicated twenty years later, when a second

referendum produced a "Yes" result. He was honoured, rightly, by playing a significant part in the opening ceremony of the new Welsh Assembly by the Queen. It had taken a long time for his dream to be realised.

Naturally, he was a great supporter of the Welsh language and of Welsh culture and took immense pride in becoming Lord Lieutenant of Dyfed. He was never a nationalist, but always a Welsh patriot. He believed that education was the best way for young Welsh men and women to progress, and took very seriously his role as Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan (South Wales), often called the university of the valleys. After all, one of his grandfathers had been a Rhondda miner.

John held his seat for longer than any other Labour MP in Welsh history. He had been a member of the Labour Party since the age of twenty and he represented a constituency almost entirely dependent upon the steel industry, with Port Talbot being one of the biggest steelworks in the UK. And he never forgot that this tough steel town was the base for everything he did in politics.

He was one of the country's leading lawyers, and, for a short time, was a Crown Court Recorder. As Attorney General under Tony Blair he played a vital role in determining the legality of military action in Kosovo.

He was very kind to me as his eventual successor as Welsh Secretary, and was a fount of wisdom and good advice. He was an inspiration and leader to all Welsh Parliamentarians. He will be missed by so many people, not least, of course, by his devoted wife, Margaret, his three daughters and grandchildren.

STANLEY CLINTON-DAVIS

6 December 1928–12 June 2023

Labour MP for Hackney Central, 1970–1983

Remembered by Neil Kinnock



STANLEY WAS MILD in appearance and manner, resolute – sometimes fiercely – in conviction and action. He was fastidious about detail as a solicitor, MP, Minister and European Commissioner and he earned respect in all those roles for his integrity, professionalism and unflinching courtesy.

His beliefs were deep-rooted. A dedicated democratic socialist from his teenage years, he was a profound enemy of racism, bigotry and bullying of every kind. Those attributes were recognised by positions of trust and honour nationally and internationally.

To me, he was a kind and loyal friend and comrade for nearly 50 years from the times when he drove me and flatmates home from late-night sittings in the early 1970's through to his retirement from the Lords in 2018.

At my proposal, he was an EU Commissioner from 1985–1989 and took the Transport portfolio. He was a frequent and valued linkman between myself and President Jacques Delors.

When I deliberately succeeded him as Transport Commissioner in 1995, he advised me about the difficulties of overcoming the resistance of Member States to adopting high EU legal standards of Maritime Safety, a source of his furious frustration following the tragic sinking of the *MS Herald of Free Enterprise* at Zeebrugge in March 1987.

The thorough work that he and his team did enabled my Department to begin to introduce comprehensive and effective improvements after the MS Estonia catastrophe in October 1994.

Stanley sought to achieve constructive progress for humanity throughout his life. I offer my deep sympathy to his beloved Frankie and their family.

Louise Ellman adds: I first met Stanley Clinton-Davis in his capacity as European Commissioner in the mid-1980s when I led a Lancashire County Council delegation to Brussels. I recall Stanley in that meeting as a quiet, serious man who listened intently, asked searching questions but gave little indication of his assessment of our case. We were relieved when, in due course, we received the support we sought to improve Lancashire's infrastructure.

In more recent years I met him in meetings of the Labour Party's first affiliate, Poale Zion (PZ), relaunched as the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM). He became a patron. Stanley was always a strong advocate of setting up a Palestinian State alongside Israel. He was usually joined at political events by his wife Frankie. They were a great team.

Stanley's quiet manner belied his immense knowledge. He had a calm, thoughtful approach and was always courteous. He made important contributions to intense debates, and his influence was felt across a wide spectrum of public life, in local government, House of Commons, House of Lords and in Europe. His interests were wide, including refugees, environmental issues and civil liberties

He has left a tremendous legacy. He was a very likeable and modest man who used his immense knowledge to improve the lives of many. He will be missed.



At the Library of Congress, Washington DC. Left to right: Jesse J. Holland, journalist and Moderator; Steve Norris; Ann Taylor; Tom Graves, former Republican member of Congress, Georgia 2010–2020; Donna Edwards, former Democrat member of Congress, Maryland 2008–2017

TRANSATLANTIC CONVERSATIONS

Steve Norris reports back from April's meeting of *Transatlantic Conversations: Law-Making and Representation in the US and the UK* at the Kluge Centre, where he and Baroness Taylor were guest speakers from the UK.

AS SOME COLLEAGUES MAY KNOW there is a longstanding history of transatlantic conversations between the British Library and the Library of Congress. Both believe they house the largest collection of books in the world but, despite the friendly rivalry, are keen to foster a close and fruitful working relationship. This year, a program was organised by the American Trust for the British Library in conjunction with the John W Kluge Centre at the Library of Congress.

In April this year Ann Taylor and I had the privilege of representing the Association in such a session in Washington DC where we two former MPs joined two former members of Congress to talk through similarities and differences.

Donna Edwards was the first African-American woman elected to Congress from Maryland as a Democrat and Tom Graves had represented one of the safest Republican seats in the House in Georgia. Needless to say, when you get two former MPs together with two former members of Congress, there is no shortage of conversation. Our audience included high school students, Congressional Interns, British Embassy representatives, senior personnel from the Library of Congress itself and from the John W Kluge Centre together with interested members of the public.

Ann and I were not sure what was expected of our conversation. We'd expected a discussion about differences. After all they're huge. We don't have a codified constitution, they do. Literally half of Americans believe it needs updating while half see it as a version of holy writ. The constitution allows the right to bear arms and we know where that leads. When you tell Americans that ninety percent of our police don't wear guns, they think you're either lying or crazy.

We don't have a balance of powers embedded in our system and the supremacy of the Commons majority has been called elective dictatorship before now. They have a classic balance between an executive, a legislature and a supreme court of justice but that often leads to paralysis as exemplified by the regular cliff edge negotiations around

spending. They have term limits and we don't, relying in our case on the tried and tested formula of sell-by dates.

And no American president dare finish a speech without wishing his audience God bless, and God bless the United States of America. This in a country which separates church and state. We, by contrast, recently crowned a monarch as defender of the faith but when Alastair Campbell told a reporter "We don't do God" he simply reflected a long-established consensus.

Which system works better? In truth both have their strengths and weaknesses but what shone through our entire interaction with our US friends was the belief that representative democracy and individual freedom need to be protected more than ever in a world where totalitarianism is ever present.

In the event our audience was just as interested in how we all got into politics. Ann and I both hail from the North West – she from Bolton and me from Liverpool. We both passed the eleven plus. How one of us went left and the other right thereafter is surely what our politics is all about.

Our American counterparts had more straightforward stories to tell, one of a brave woman breaking down barriers and fighting for basic human rights, the other driven by what so many of us are driven by – a desire to serve.

We talked to two audiences, first in the magnificent Jefferson Building housing the most precious items in the Library of Congress and then the next day in the British Embassy. In both cases it was young people who asked most of the questions and were clearly engaged.

Our hosts could not have been more helpful and hospitable throughout and we hugely enjoyed a tour of the quite magnificent working library used to this day by politicians and researchers. If you haven't visited Washington the sheer scale of the Capitol and the buildings around it and the broad sweep down to the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial is breathtaking. The city is well worth a visit. Both Ann and I felt very privileged to be able to enjoy our short stay.

Steven Norris was MP for Oxford East, 1983–1987, and Epping Forest, 1988–1997

ASSOCIATION CONTACT DETAILS

Laura Blake, blakelb@parliament.uk, Telephone 020 7219 8207
Editor, *Order! Order!*, Andy McSmith, andy@andymcsmith.co.uk

Association of Former MPs, House of Commons, Room G13, 1 Parliament St, London SW1A 2NE