

# Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



SPRING 2021

## THE CROWN

*“The writer has drawn extraordinary mini portraits of all our prime ministers from 1950”*

*“There is too much emphasis on the things which went wrong for Mrs T.”*



Denis MacShane and Sir Gerald Howarth offer contrasting views of the popular Netflix series p.4 & 5

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## PASSES FOR FORMER MPs

Sally Grocott

THE MUCH-MISSED Dick Tracey and I met our Patron, Speaker Hoyle, in March 2019, just before the first lockdown. He was very welcoming and helpful but explained the urgent necessity to address the problem of the ever-increasing number of passes being issued – because of the security implications as well as the effect on estate services.

We said that at present there were just 444 holders of a Former MP's pass, roughly the same number as our membership, but of course not all of the 444 were members of the Association and not all of our membership held a pass. And 444 was in the region of just 2% of passes issued. We were told that a small number of former MPs were flagrantly breaking the rules of the pass. This reflected very badly on the great majority of members who abide by the rules. We made it plain that the Association strongly condemned breaches of this sort and hoped that appropriate robust action was being taken against the culprits.

The Administration Committee, under the Chairmanship of Sir Charles Wheeler,

is the body which considers access rules. We had asked that the Association be invited to give evidence to the committee, but unfortunately no invitation was forthcoming.

The Committee met on the 20th July and in a letter afterwards from Sir Charles we were informed that new access rules for Strangers' Bar would be implemented in view of the "significant increase in people using the bar with frequent incidents of overcrowding". The new rules are that from Monday to Wednesday, access to the bar will be restricted to MPs and their guests plus pass-holding members of the press. Former MPs who have served a minimum of 10 years will be able to access the bar on Thursdays and Fridays.

We received another letter from Sir Charles, dated the 8th December, to say that further discussions on parliamentary passes had been held. This had resulted, with the agreement of the Speaker, in eligibility for former MPs' passes being amended to two parliaments or six years, whichever is longer. We are very disappointed with the new rules, but we have to accept them now, as agreed House policy. **There is an assurance that no current passes will be revoked.** However, the Association has made it plain at every available opportunity the view that every former MP should be treated the same, however long or short their service.

The Committee had also agreed that former MPs' passes should be deactivated after a 12 months period of inactivity, to start from January 2021. Members would be able to re-apply if their pass had been deactivated. This change had been made to "ensure tight security controls on all passes".

On the 21st December Our Chairman replied to Sir Charles, raising concerns about the decision made in respect of the deactivation of passes, and also about access to the pass office during these exceptional times. Former MPs cannot visit the estate at all because of the strict visiting rules during the pandemic. Indeed they are unlikely to be allowed to do so until at the earliest the summer, giving a very reduced time in which to "activate" their pass. And for the renewal of passes there is an appointments system for visits to the pass office but this is available only to parliamentary e-mail address holders. The first 20 minutes of each hour are available for people with no appointments, but there is no guarantee of being seen which makes it impossible for people, like most of our members, who live away from London. We see no reason why former MPs are not allowed to make an appointment.

We will ensure that members are fully updated on the response from Sir Charles when received.



## NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin

WE HAVE HAD several successful online events over the winter with four Universities; Exeter, Leeds, Westminster and Brunel. There is another in the pipeline with Birmingham.

In November Linda Gilroy (Lab & Co-op Plymouth Sutton 1997–2010) led a session for Exeter University on Parliamentary scrutiny and the work of select committees, followed in December by Edwina Currie (Con South Derbyshire 1983–1997) on Representation and Parliament. A third session, on The Fixed Term Parliament Act and Boundary Reviews, to be led by Bridget Prentice (Lab Lewisham East 1992–2010) has been postponed but is being rescheduled for later this year.

We are pleased to have re-established links with the University of Leeds. In December, Margot James (CON Stourbridge 2010–2019) led a very lively session on Policy change and the role of MPs.

We resumed our programme with Brunel University in December when Tom Levitt (Lab High Peak 1997–2010) led a session on Select Committees and Scrutiny.

For the first time, links were established with The University of Westminster when Helen Jones (Lab Warrington North (1997–2019) led the concluding seminar of a series on How Parliament works, covering

the Blair/Brown years.

The feedback from tutors has been very positive and the questions and discussion have often ranged over a much wider area than the title of the session would suggest. Linda Gilroy's session, for example, was on the work of Select Committees but the questions and discussion covered gender and affirmative action, devolution, the Supreme Court, the role of the House of Lords and reform of Parliament.

Such has been the enthusiasm and interest of students that many sessions have gone beyond their scheduled time.

We were hoping for a similar busy period in the Spring but colleges are struggling with the impact of Covid19 and tutors are waiting for a final decision on how and when teaching is done for the remainder of this academic year. Whilst we have some events in the pipeline we will probably need to focus on the next academic year starting in the Autumn.

We have one event scheduled in March with the University of Birmingham, to mark International Women's Day on 8 March. This event is with the Science Department, and will be looking at the barriers which women face in the professions. It will be led by two of our members, both of who served as Councillors on the Birmingham City

Council before their election to Parliament – Edwina Currie, and Lynne Jones (Lab Birmingham Selly Oak 1992–2010)

On the international front, through our contacts with the Permanent Representative of the IPU to the UN, I am in discussions with UN Women Afghanistan to try to establish an online support and mentoring programme for Afghan women MPs. To date, eight of our former MPs have expressed an interest in participating and hopefully I will have something positive to report in the Summer edition of *Order Order*.

Although the Trust has an active education programme we are still struggling financially. Potential donors seem reluctant to fund an organisation of "former MPs" and we continue to function without any administrative support. We have two requests to Members, some of whom will have contacts with potential funders in the corporate world or know people of high net worth who will value our work in promoting democracy and understanding of parliament and government. Please point them in our direction. Secondly, if Members have contacts with Vice-Chancellors, Heads of Departments or tutors at any Universities please put us in touch.

We can be contacted at [admin@parlyoutreach](mailto:admin@parlyoutreach)

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### WHEN WILL WE MEET AGAIN?

**It seems incredible** that our last all member meeting and Christmas drinks event took place in December 2019, just before the general election. It was a very happy and well attended event. We were all of course ignorant of how our lives were about to change.

Since then the Executive Committee has met virtually. At the most recent one it was decided to hold an all-member virtual meeting with a guest speaker. I am delighted to say that Nigel Evans MP, Deputy Speaker, has agreed to talk to us about life in Parliament during the lockdowns. I am



especially grateful to him because we all understand the responsibilities he has during these difficult times.

So, our all-member meeting is scheduled for the 18th March at 4.00pm. Executive member Lawrie Quinn is a technical wizard (see

below) and quite simply this could not happen without his generous help and expertise.

**If you want to take part on the 18th March, please e-mail (grocotts@parliament.uk) to register. A link will then be sent out in good time for the meeting.**



## WHO'S ZOOMING WHO?

Lawrie Quinn

**A little over a year ago, most of us had never heard of Zoom – let alone used it.**

The social media platform exploded into our lives, with other means of having face to face conversations, because of the need to keep in touch for work, family and social reasons as we drifted from Lockdown One to Lockdown Two.

I've been pleased to assist the Association's Executive Committee members to join the Zoom club, to allow us to conduct business meetings and I hope those Association Members able to will join our first Association Zoom Webinar with the Deputy Speaker on 18 March.

Many members will have built up new skills using Zoom since March 2020 but I'm conscious that the thought of using new technology to stay in touch may seem overwhelming. So to help ease you into the process we thought some guidance might help those trying Zoom for the first time ....

#### HOW TO SIGN UP FOR THE FIRST TIME

1. Start by going to zoom.us. via your preferred search engine eg Google.
2. On the top right corner, click on the blue "Sign Up, It's Free" button.
3. Enter your personal email address and click "Sign Up".
4. You'll receive an email from Zoom to activate. Go to your email and click Activate Account.
5. You'll be redirected to fill in your first name, last name, and create a password.
6. If you'd like to invite others to sign up for their own Zoom accounts, you can enter their email addresses and

select the "I am not a robot" checkbox. Otherwise, select "Skip this step".

7. You're good to go!

#### HOW TO DOWNLOAD THE ZOOM CLIENT

- Start by going to <https://zoom.us/download>
- Click the blue "Download" button under Zoom Client for Meetings to access the installer.
- Open the Zoom installer from your Downloads folder and follow the on-screen steps to set up your Zoom Client.

#### HOW TO JOIN A ZOOM MEETING

- To Join a Zoom Meeting, simply click on the link sent over to you via email or click on the Meetings tab to join a scheduled meeting and you'll automatically be brought into the meeting. More information can be found here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362413-Scheduling-meetings>
- Once you're in the meeting, you may choose to connect audio in three different ways:
- Using computer audio (recommended).
- Dialing into a conference bridge from your phone.
- Have Zoom call you by entering your phone number and your meeting will call your phone.

#### BEST PRACTICES WHILE IN A ZOOM MEETING

- Sign in to the Zoom desktop client and stay signed in.



- Check your internet speed. If you're on free wifi you may need to keep your camera off to improve quality.
- Turn your camera on and have your camera at eye level.
- Stay muted unless you're talking to reduce background noise.
- Make sure you sit in a well lit and quiet place.
- Be mindful of what's going on behind you. Think about having solid wall behind you or turning on the virtual background.
- Be yourself and have fun!

I've agreed with Sally that I'll try my best to answer any questions and if there's any advance interest before we go live with Nigel. I'll hold a training troubleshooting session ....via Zoom obviously....so you can see how easy using this social media platform really is.

Please drop my personal email account lawriewquinn@gmail.com a quick email if you'd find a training session helpful and I'll open up a Zoom Chat room to let you get a feeler for this technology.

I hope this will allow us all to develop new skills, stay in touch and even give us a chance to communicate face to face as we await the passing of the Pandemic!

# ENLIGHTENING, OR JUST LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT?

Millions of viewers have been absorbed by the Netflix series, *The Crown*. There is no dispute that it is beautifully written, acted, and directed – but is it helping to inform its vast audience about recent British political history, or creating a myth that threatens to drown the truth? Here are two contrary views.

## *Politics Brought to Life as Drama*

Denis MacShane

**T**he *Crown* has produced much comment about the representation of the Queen, Prince Philip, Prince Charles, Princess Margaret and their behaviour and personalities, but no-one has noticed how riveting the dramatization is of big moments in post-1950 political history.

Peter Morgan, the writer and creator, has drawn extraordinary mini portraits of all our prime ministers from 1950. The two exceptions were Alec Douglas-Home and James Callaghan. Douglas-Home was not there long enough and Morgan moved from Harold Wilson telling the Queen he was resigning in 1976 as he had been diagnosed with Alzheimers straight to the 1979 election and Mrs Thatcher kissing hands.

The history of the Queen's prime ministers is roughly accurate. Churchill was a sad figure in his 1951–55 premiership especially after his stroke which was kept a secret from the public. The Graham Sutherland portrait episode in which Churchill reacted furiously to the artist's portrait commissioned by the Commons and Lords and which Mrs Churchill threw on a bonfire is a matter of record.

Anthony Eden hated and got bitter having to wait so long to be Prime Minister and was in serious pain and on drugs after a botched gall bladder operation as he tried to handle the Suez crisis.

He did learn Arabic and Persian at Oxford and did meet Nasser in Cairo in 1955. One has a real sense of a prime minister racked by pain, taking drugs to control it, and thinking Suez was a re-run of 1938 with Nasser as a new Hitler or Mussolini.

We see Harold Macmillan, who succeeded Eden as living with the pain of his wife's 30 year long affair with the bi-sexual Robert Boothby, and the pair of them sneaking off to see 1960s London political satire cabarets like *Beyond the Fringe* which monstered Macmillan without mercy. The episode on Aberfan was a devastating reminder of the neglect of industrial Britain, as we enjoyed the hedonism and anything goes of the swinging sixties.

The actors catch perfectly the accent and speaking mannerism of Eden, Heath, Wilson or Mrs Thatcher. Wilson tells the Queen he had to invent a personality. "I was an Oxford don. I don't smoke a pipe and prefer cigars. I drink brandy not beer and prefer



*Might Morgan's success in revealing through drama the pressures and personalities of prime ministers help launch some new dramatisations of political life?*

wild salmon to the tinned variety." All that was true. But there is no evidence that the Queen let out a cheer when Ted Heath was defeated in 1974.

Like any MP, Foreign Office minister and privy councillor I did my share of being in attendance on Her Majesty and, if I check my diary, there is no sense that she wants or needs to opine on political matters. She has behaved with the utmost constitutional propriety.

The most recent series produced a polemic about Margaret Thatcher, one year older than the Queen and who died in 2013. She remains our most Marmite prime minister generating devotion and detestation in equal measure. Her loyal serviteurs sprung to her defence and we are not finished with the Queen's longest serving PM as the Crown continues on our screen.

*The Crown* is intensely political as ministers and archbishops interfere in the choice of Prince Margaret's husband, or Lord Mountbatten and Prince Philip bully and patronise Prince Charles and block his relationship with Camilla in the name of *raison d'état*. Throughout there is the Duke of Windsor and Lord Mountbatten playing political games and intriguing with dark right-wing forces, especially against Harold Wilson's 1966–70 government.

It will be interesting to see how Morgan treats Diana's death and the failure of the Queen isolated away in Balmoral to read the mood of the nation and lower flags in Buckingham Palace or, to begin with, associate herself with the extraordinary outpouring of national emotion. I am sure I was not alone in telling friends who served the Queen that a massive misjudgment was being made in Balmoral about her handling of Diana's death in the week following the Paris tragedy.

It is surprising how few dramas there are on TV or radio about politics. Michael Dobbs *House of Cards* was great fun but as any MP can confirm utterly divorced from the reality of the Commons or the grind of daily politics.

Might Morgan's success in revealing through drama the pressures and personalities of prime ministers help launch some new dramatisations of political life? James Graham managed it on stage with *This House*, and *Labour of Love*. In the latter, a constant prop is a little television set on a filing cabinet. In one scene, there is a clip of my discussion with Jeremy Corbyn, when the BBC grabbed us to comment on Tony Blair's first conference speech in 1994. It's the first and last time I have appeared in a sell out West End play!

Politics is narrated though biographies, or narrated documentaries, or political histories. Is there a role for TV plays and dramatisations so new generations can learn what politics is really like and how and why individual men and women take the decisions that so affect national life?

Denis MacShane was MP for Rotherham 1994–2012



## *It is fiction, dressed as fact*

Sir Gerald Howarth

On returning home from a long day in the House, I would tune in to the evening TV news. My wife used to chide me, asking me why I needed to watch it as I had just been there and seen it all. I explained that what mattered was not what I had personally witnessed, but what the public saw through the prism of the news broadcast; for them, those are the facts.

*The Crown* series is similarly afflicted: for the viewer, these are the facts about the Royal family, a representation reinforced by actual footage of real events and countless broadcasts involving newscasters like Peter Sissons and Michael Buerk. As the eminent historian, Andrew Roberts, wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*, noting that fellow historian Hugo Vickers had spotted at least 500 factual errors in the first season alone, “Yet the massive audiences, especially in America, seem to be willing to suspend disbelief and treat the show as genuine history.”

Despite its actual footage of real events, *The Crown* is not a documentary, it is a work of fiction set in a framework of fact, as a friend of mine described it. Its entirely fabricated conversations, punctuated by those regular and, in many respects, familiar TV shots will be taken by many viewers as gospel.

A huge effort has been made to make Gillian Anderson look and sound like Margaret Thatcher whose mannerisms she has captured, although the voice is somewhat laboured. To the extent that the internal Conservative party battles of the 1980s are well known – ‘wets’ v ‘dries’ etc – the language rings true. She was on a mission to rescue her country from its steady post-war decline and was resolute in that mission and critical of those who could not see the imperative of moving fast, but she did not sack people ‘because of their privilege and entitlement’. Again, her resolution that the Argentinians should not be allowed to get away with their illegal occupation of the Falklands comes through loud and clear. As one of the commanders said to me at an Imperial War Museum reception she and I attended to mark the tenth anniversary, “She asked us if we could do it. We, perhaps rashly, said we could, so she told us to get on with it and left us to conduct the battle.”

The two negative parts of this latest season have been the obsession with the failure of the Prince of Wales’s marriage to Diana which, as Andrew Roberts believes, could well poison public attitudes towards the Duchess of Cornwall, whom the

*Despite its actual footage of real events, The Crown is not a documentary, it is a work of fiction set in a framework of fact*

public has clearly come to love and respect, and the treatment of the relationship between the Queen and her Prime Minister.

Perhaps the worst example is the Balmoral Test where Margaret and Denis are demeaned and mocked, made to look like townies wholly unfamiliar with and unsuited to country life, with the entire royal family acting in a most cruel manner. As a workaholic who wasn’t into hunting, shooting and fishing, I can accept that she might have found the Balmoral sojourn slightly distracting from the business of governing the nation but the idea that the sovereign as hostess would not have done everything to make her Prime Ministerial house guests welcome is, frankly, offensive.

Apart from the final scene in episode 10 when the Queen confers her personal gift of the Order of Merit on Mrs T, the relationship is characterised by disagreements, with the Queen mouthing the familiar anti-Thatcher accusations that she was uncaring and lacking compassion, something those of us who knew her know to be untrue. The exchanges between monarch and PM are, of course, all completely fabricated. Mrs T never discussed with me her conversations with the Queen. As Charles Moore writes, “Mrs Thatcher was almost paralyzingly correct about relations with the monarch and was never heard to gossip about, complain of or even quote in confidence anything the Queen had told her.” It’s hardly surprising if a resolute and determined PM and a sovereign with unrivalled experience did not have the occasional difference of view; indeed, one of the regal powers is the power to warn. What is incontrovertibly true is that the Queen very publicly – and exceptionally – attended Lady T’s 70th birthday bash at Claridge’s in October 1995 and, of course, her funeral.

For me, there is too much emphasis on the things which went wrong for Mrs T, who is barely afforded a smile, and more could have been made of those triumphs which transformed the fortunes and status of our country for the better. The series carries advance warnings that viewers might be distressed by scenes of eating disorders. As DCMS Secretary, Oliver Dowden, rightly commented, each episode should carry a similar warning: ‘This is a work of fiction based on fact.’

**Sir Gerald Howarth was Parliamentary Private Secretary to The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher, 1991–92**



# REMEMBERING JACK KENNEDY

John Cockcroft

**I used to go to Washington frequently to cover World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings, and stay with good friends, called Avery, who were intellectual and prosperous. They were close to the Kennedys and contributed to the Democrats' Party funds.**

**I** happened to be staying with the Averys on the Sunday before the assassination of President Kennedy, in November 1963. That day, George Avery went to the White House for a pre-lunch cocktail party. We waited a long time for him to come back before we started our lunch.

He said, then, that he had never seen Jack and Jackie so close to each other, following the death of their little boy, Patrick, at the age of eleven days. He said that Bobby Kennedy, the Attorney General, had advised the President not to go to Dallas the following Friday, because of the animosity towards him amongst wealthy Texans, who were afraid they would be taxed more on their oil revenues.

Tricia Avery, George's sister said, "The trouble with the Kennedys is they fly like Icarus too close to the Sun."

John Avery, George's brother said, "He reminds me of Calpurnia, inviting Caesar not to go to the Forum on the Ides of March."

Jack Kennedy held his last press conference the following day. The Averys were able to get me into that event. He bounced up to the lectern like a man much younger than his early forties, despite his physical ailments. He was witty in a European sort of way (American humour tends to be rather obvious).

There were many questions, but I was particularly amused by one from an English journalist, who said to the President, "There are rumours that you and Jackie preside over a round table." The President replied, "Well, Jack and Jackie are great friends of King Arthur and, as you know, round tables come in all shapes and sizes and ours is large enough to accommodate most of the Court of King Arthur and I have to admit that we do preside over a second Camelot."

The last question was particularly poignant. The President was asked what were his plans for the next legislative session of Congress, starting in January. He seemed to be vague, but said, "I have an excellent Vice President who gets on with the details. Vice President Johnson is of greatest support to me. And, in this context, I can only quote from my favourite American poet, Robert Frost, 'I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep'."

I expect Joe Biden is familiar with that phrase.

The Kennedys were enormously popular. Crowds of students used to mill around outside that balcony on the White House and shout, "We want Jack! We want Jackie! We want Camelot again!" And the President and his wife did duly appear. They were like rock stars, and both very good looking.

I had become interested in the family long before President Kennedy's assassination. Having read modern history, I was particularly interested in Joe Kennedy, who had made a lot of money out of bootlegging – selling alcohol illicitly – during Prohibition. Joe Kennedy was also a devoted supporter of

*He bounced up to the lectern like a man much younger than his early forties...*

President Roosevelt, during the 1930s, and was sent to the Court of St James as American Ambassador before the 2nd World War. He was there with his wife and many children.

Jack Kennedy studied at the London School of Economics and wrote a book, which had quite a large readership. It was called, *Why England Sleeps: A Critique of Appeasement*. When I wrote my book on Economics in 1971, I plagiarised that title and called it, *Why England Sleeps*, with apologies, of course, to the President.

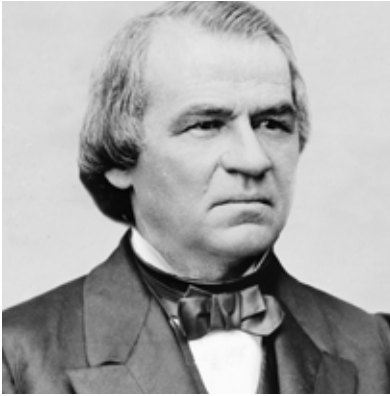
I was very interested to read about President Roosevelt's antidote to the gloomy forecast of Joe Kennedy, about the imminent collapse of the British Government and military operation after Dunkerque. The President sent a personal friend, Harry Hopkins, to spend a week with Prime Minister Churchill in a Downing Street bunker. Harry Hopkins was very impressed and sent messages back to Washington to that effect. He travelled by train with Churchill to the Grand Hotel in Glasgow, where they had an alcoholic lunch and then went on to Scapa Flow, in order for the Prime Minister to see off Harry Hopkins.

Apparently, Churchill asked Hopkins, "What message do you have from the great American President?" and apparently Hopkins replied, "He has authorised me to quote from the Book of Ruth, Ruth to her step-mother Naomi, 'Where thou goest, I shall go. Where thou dwellest, I shall dwell. And your people shall be my people, even unto the end'", at which the Prime Minister broke down in tears, in the desperate aftermath of the events in France.

There is, of course, still a great interest in Britain and internationally in the Kennedys. Kennedy's legislative achievements were slight. He started taking the Civil Rights Movement seriously and sent some so-called advisors to Vietnam, but after his assassination, it was President Johnson, a former speaker of the Senate and an important political figure in Texas, who made the historic legislation which helped to improve the lots of black Americans. But, as we know, he unfortunately got bogged down in Vietnam.

I was at the 1956 Democratic Convention, which selects a Presidential Candidate, where Senator Kennedy made a very good keynote speech – and, of course, he was adopted in the 1960 convention. I know it seems rather far-fetched to have witnessed two such events, but that's life, it happened to me. I was lucky to be able to follow the Kennedy story so personally and I have written about the White House drinks party and the last press conference in my pending memoirs.

**John was Conservative MP for Nantwich, 1974–1979**



# IMPEACHING THE PRESIDENT (FOR THE FIRST TIME)

Peter Heaton-Jones

**A** divisive US president faces impeachment, departs after one tumultuous term, then huffily flounces out of Washington and refuses to attend his successor's inauguration.

History really does repeat itself.

Andrew Johnson, the 17th president, and Donald Trump, the 45th, share other similarities. Both had a penchant for colourful language. Johnson once called opponents 'God forsaken and hell deserving'. He too would have been banned from Twitter, had that been such a thing in the mid-nineteenth century. But above all, the two men are linked by the ignominy of impeachment. Johnson has gone down in history as the first president to be impeached, although he was acquitted at his Senate trial after a knife edge vote. It was the dramatic denouement of a remarkable political story.

Andrew Johnson was born into poverty in 1808 in Raleigh, North Carolina. As a teenager he ran away to Greenville, Tennessee and set up his own tailoring business. His skills were valued in the small town, and he was rewarded by being made alderman and mayor. It was the foothold he needed. He shimmied up the greasy pole, eventually entering the House of Representatives and the Senate. In the 1864 election, President Abraham Lincoln made Senator Johnson his running mate. Lincoln, a Republican, had cannily calculated that Johnson, a Democrat, would attract northern votes and secure his re-election. It worked. Johnson was now vice-president.

And that might have been the pinnacle of his career, had Lincoln not gone to the theatre one Friday in 1865.

Andrew Johnson was sworn in as president on 15 April, the morning after Lincoln was shot in the head while watching the comedy 'Our American Cousin'. It was four years, almost to the day, since the start of the Civil War. The spark which started that fire was slavery. A slaveholder himself, Johnson was a Unionist, not because of any deeply-held conviction that this was the right direction for America, but because he feared slavery might be undermined if too many southern states seceded. He had skin in the game, you might say.

No surprise, then, that when the war ended just a month into his presidency, Johnson sought to rehabilitate the defeated Confederate states and quickly readmit them to the Union. This policy of 'Reconstruction' led to a bitter dispute with Congress.

Nobody was happy. Southern politicians had no intention of sharing power with slaves, and northern Republicans wanted to punish the former Confederate states, not forgive them. The divisions were irreconcilable. Congressmen repeatedly voted to thwart Johnson; he exercised 29 vetoes, and they overrode more than half of them.

It was one such bout of ping-pong which led to Johnson's impeachment. Congress had passed the Tenure of Office Act in 1867, stripping the president of the power to sack cabinet members who opposed his policy. Johnson used his veto and sent it back, but Congressmen pushed ahead anyway. The president was apoplectic and defied them by sacking Republican Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Stanton promptly barricaded himself in his office, as you would. That physical barrier became a metaphor for the political impasse now crippling the Johnson administration. Something had to give.

On 24 February 1868, the House voted 126 to 47 to impeach the president for 'high crimes and misdemeanours' – the first such vote in US history. At the subsequent Senate trial, presided over by the exotically-named Chief Justice Salmon Chase, Johnson faced eleven articles of impeachment. It was number eleven – a lucky dip of disparate charges – which almost brought him down. The vote, on 16 May, was 35 to 19 in favour of conviction, just one short of the two-thirds majority necessary to remove the president. Seven Republicans crossed the aisle and voted with Democrats for acquittal. True to form, Johnson had done deals over future appointments; others supported him to thwart his would-be replacement, an ultra-radical senator from Ohio.

Johnson had just survived, but was mortally wounded. He was denied renomination for the 1868 election and refused to attend the inauguration of his successor, Ulysses S. Grant. And he didn't go quietly. He went back to Greenville and remained active in politics, eventually being re-elected to the Senate in 1875 – the only former president to return to Congress.

Just imagine – an impeached president leaves office in disgrace, but returns later for a second career in frontline politics.

What was that about history repeating itself?

Peter Heaton-Jones was MP for North Devon, 2015–2019

## GOOD LUCK, JOE

I hope that Joe Biden will live up to the expectations of his presidency. I have followed his career for thirteen years, since he was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He is extraordinarily qualified, uniquely in American history, in foreign affairs, having been Vice President, of course, to President Obama, and a very compassionate man, partly because of the tragedies in his own life.

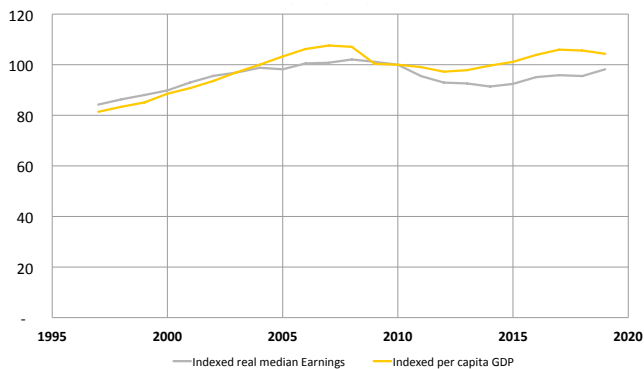
He will be very good at 'reaching out across the aisle', as they call it on Congress Hill, to the Republicans, which is much needed in present conditions. It was relevant that, recently, a Republican Senator said that Joe Biden is the most honourable man he has ever met, so good luck to him.

John Cockcroft

# THE ROAD TO SERFDOM A WAKE-UP CALL

Lynne Jones

Since 1980, we have adopted a system of market fundamentalism that has been transferring more wealth to the already wealthy. Market fundamentalists have us believe that markets are the best way to allocate resources. You can't buck the market and so there is no alternative. The market price is the moral price and reflects merit. Public spending interferes with this morality and must be minimised. And so it came to pass that the Chief Executive of British American Tobacco receives an annual remuneration of over £6.5 million, reflecting a "value" 200 times that of an oncology nurse.



Source: ONS; The 99% Organisation

Figure 1

## UNFETTERED MARKETS ARE LESS EFFICIENT AND INCREASE INEQUALITY

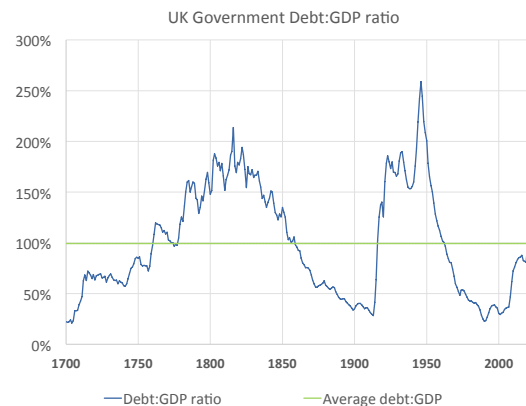
Under market capitalism, GDP growth has been lower (2.4%; 2% per capita -UK figures) than that during the post-war period (3%; 2.6%), justifiably referred to as the "Golden Age of Capitalism" even weathering the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the oil price shocks. In the "Golden Age", the proceeds of that better growth were also more fairly distributed. If we sliced the national "cake" in the same way as we did in 1980, most people would be almost twice as well off today as then. Even with slower growth, we are richer than ever in terms of GDP, yet a growing proportion of the population is getting poorer. As Figure 1 shows, most people are poorer today than in 2007 (lower median gross income) as a result of the imposition of austerity in 2010. The Covid Pandemic has exposed just how threadbare the "safety net" has become after years of erosion.

The belief in markets has led to the selling of public assets at below intrinsic value and a tax system that has reduced taxation on wealth and high incomes whilst raising it on everyday spending, such that the poorest 10% pay over 40% of their income in tax (Equality Trust).

## UNTRUTHS USED TO JUSTIFY AUSTERITY ARE LEADING TO MASS IMPOVERISHMENT

Remember when George Osborne said that the worst thing that the Government could do to people on low incomes would be to bust the public finances by having a welfare system the country couldn't afford?

Austerity was justified on the basis of the state of the public finances – ie the level of public (not private) debt to GDP. Though society as a whole was richer than it had ever



Source: Bank of England; The 99% Organisation

Figure 2

been, mysteriously, we could afford far less than we could before. The narrative that the post-war social contract was unaffordable took root. Austerity was hard but necessary. The process of "levelling down" gathered pace. Even as we were told "there's no magic money tree", the Bank of England was creating almost £1 trillion of new money to save the banking system.

As Figure 2 shows, our two most successful economic periods in terms of growth (post industrial revolution and WWII) began when debt was at its highest. Even post-Covid, after allegedly "maxing out on our annual credit card", the level of debt will be just average in historical terms. As Lord (Adair) Turner says in his book, *Between Debt and the Devil* "By excluding the option of borrowing for public spending, the Government has caused unnecessary harm to both the economy and individuals". And it has meant that we were less well-prepared for new shocks such as the Covid pandemic.

Taking the long-view, if these trends are allowed to continue, impoverishment will spread further up the social scale as middle-class incomes decline. The fall in home ownership is one measure of this process. In stark terms, by 2050, the UK's median wage could fall almost half way to today's poverty income (Figure 3).

## TRANSFER OF POLITICAL POWER TO THE WEALTHY

How could the narrative of unaffordability have become so widely accepted when it is based on untruths?

Over the last four decades, the wealthiest have been able to shape policy in the interests of themselves and their businesses. The transfer of wealth has coincided with the transfer of political power. We have seen that power used to



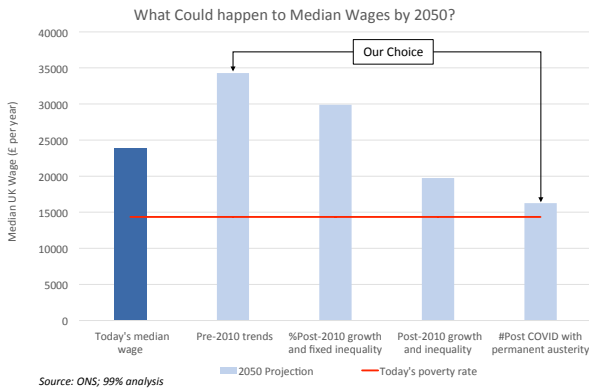


Figure 3

shape public perception of reality in a way that is against the interests of the overwhelming majority – the 99%.

There are four key levers of power that it is easier to pull if you are extremely rich: access to elite education; access to the social circles of the rich and powerful; ownership of major media outlets and access to policy-makers. In addition, the ownership and operation of digital platforms has been ceded to the political economics of private surveillance capital. This has provided further tools in the armoury of the already wealthy and powerful. Individuals with extreme wealth have been able, if they choose, to have an impact on the dominant narrative that is disproportionate to their numbers. They do not have more than one vote at the ballot box but they are able to influence the votes of millions.

Some examples of the exercise of this power involve interventions that are subtle, such as happened with the escalation of the vilification of Jeremy Corbyn between the 2017 General Election (when he could be largely ignored – the election was only called because he was perceived as an obvious loser) and GE 2019 (when it ensured he would be). In this case, the process involved a combination of furtive and subconscious interventions, twisting the truth with constant repetition. This was overlaid onto the long-term process setting one group within the 99% against another, pitting those portrayed to have advantages against another group to whom these advantages are no longer available. Further impoverishment becomes justified in the name of fairness between groups divided in order to rule: “shirkers versus strivers”; “Baby Boomers” versus “Generation Rent”; those in the public sector with “gold-plated” pensions versus those in the private sector whose pensions have been eroded; immigrants versus low paid workers etc. As Market Capitalism prevailed, traditional jobs were destroyed and replaced by the gig economy. Those “left behind” increased in number. Add to this the move away from universality in the social security system, rebadged as welfare, and the scene was set.

## BREXIT: THE RISE OF THE SOVEREIGN INDIVIDUAL

Brexit: in which its unscrupulous advocates single-mindedly pursued power for themselves and enrichment for their patrons, using both covert and overt methods to peddle blatant lies. Their message to “take back control” still resonates with many people who feel that they have lost control over their own lives. The use of the language of “sovereignty” was designed to ignite feelings of nostalgia



Figure 4

for past greatness. Yet the only sovereignty actually being pursued was the personal sovereignty of the few wishing to avoid interference by state bodies in their personal accumulation of wealth. The last thing they wanted was to allow someone into power whose mission was to unite the 99%.

If you doubt this could be true or seriously contemplated, then I will refer you to the book entitled *The Sovereign Individual* by James Dale Davidson and William Rees-Mogg, in which mass democracy is dismissed as being control of Government by its employees, put on the payroll by the welfare state, enabling them to dispense with the bother of reporting to work. Or take a look at *Average is Over* by Tyler Cohen, a vision of what control by a small minority in a free market ‘hyper-meritocracy’ would mean. The vast majority will earn little or nothing living in shanty towns and pacified with cheap or free fun “that is so plentiful it will feel like Karl Marx’s Communist utopia, albeit brought on by capitalism”. Far-fetched? The current plot line in the everyday story of country folk has victims of modern-day slavery provided with games consoles and controlled by regulating access to them.

## FACT-BASED EVOLUTION TO SOLIDARITY AND ABUNDANCE, OR THE MARCH TO SERFDOM?

We’re not as far down this road as its advocates would like but sufficiently far to enable Jacob Rees-Mogg to feel “uplifted” by the charitable efforts of food banks, showing “what a good and compassionate country we are”. The direction of travel is clear – towards mass impoverishment with democracy threatened. Figure 4 depicts possible future alternatives. Hayek warned that an active government would mean *The Road to Serfdom*; we can now see that it is the market fundamentalism he advocated that is leading us down that road. Scenario 3, Solidarity and Abundance within a peaceful democracy would, I am sure, be the aim of most of us. To achieve this, we need to clean up capitalism and ditch the narrative of unaffordability. To take this forward, cross-party, I recommend taking a look at 99-percent.org, and the book of the same name, an FT Book of The Year, written by Mark E Thomas.

*I take sole responsibility for the views expressed here, acknowledging with gratitude the input of ideas and information from Mark and other friends in 99-percent.org*

Lynne Jones was Labour MP for Birmingham, Selly Oak, 1992–2010



UK Parliament

## IPSA HAS A TERRIBLE REPUTATION SO WHY WOULD A SANE PERSON JOIN IT?

Helen Jones

**“Why on earth do you want to do that?” That was the reaction of most of my friends when I told them I had applied to join the IPSA board.**

IT WAS AN UNDERSTANDABLE QUESTION. If you mention IPSA to most MPs or former MPs you are lighting a blue touchpaper: stand back and prepare for an explosion as they respond with a long list of failures, time wasted and late payments.

IPSA has a dreadful reputation. Set up in haste, it began by treating all MPs as if they were crooks, and refusing to take account of disabilities or the needs of children. The introduction to the new system was laughable, mainly because most of us could not read what was on the screen, and its failure to make payments on time meant that many MPs, especially those newly elected, were in serious debt.

Since then, there have been other barmy ideas floated, like the notion that MPs would be paid only the average rent for zone three because they should be treated like London commuters (in spite of the fact that many of them commute hundreds of miles to get to parliament in the first place), or that they should give

up their flats in the summer and find new ones when parliament returned in the autumn. No one seemed to pay any attention to the practicality of these ideas, the extra costs they would generate or whether they would help MPs do their job. The very idea that IPSA should help democracy to function, rather than administer a continuous punishment beating, seemed alien to those who worked there.

Yet IPSA is changing. The current chair is clear that IPSA’s customers are MPs and that it must deliver for its customers.

I want to help bring about that change. The point of having a former MP on the board is to help people understand how MPs work and what the demands on them are. Claims take up far too much time for MPs and their staff and some are no longer claiming certain expenses because of the detail required. It is impossible to track queries, so staff find themselves explaining again and again, to different people, what their question is and getting different advice every time. When claims are published, not enough is done to explain that most of these are not expenses in the usual sense and go nowhere near MPs’ pockets. I know no one who objects to having their claims published, provided they are explained properly.

I could go on and so could everyone else who has ever dealt with IPSA but I see my role as making sure that the board understands these problems. I shall keep in touch with those now in parliament to ensure I know what the current issues are, and I shall keep pressing for the expenses system to be simpler, less time consuming and clearer both for MPs and the public. A modern democracy requires an expenses system where lack of personal wealth is no barrier to doing the job. That is what we should be aiming to achieve.

Helen Jones was MP for Warrington North, 1997–2019

## SURVIVING CANCER



A couple of years ago, in the Commons, Eric Martlew, the current Chairman of the Association of Former Members of Parliament, approached Boris Johnson – then Foreign Secretary – to lobby him about the need to put more money into research into pancreatic cancer.

“Why are you doing this?” Johnson asked. Eric explained that he had had cancer. Johnson was one of the many MPs he approached.

“I thought people died,” Johnson replied.

This is a major misconception, Eric says “I don’t blame him for that.”

To publicise the importance of early detection, Eric revealed to his local newspaper, the Cumberland News, during Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, last November, that he is a cancer survivor. He visited his GP in spring 2011 for a routine asthma check and mentioned that his urine was the colour of ‘Newcastle Brown Ale’. Eric was sent for scans and it was revealed he had jaundice and would need a minor operation due to a bile duct being blocked by a tumour. He was then sent to Freeman Hospital in Newcastle for further tests. An eight-10-hour serious operation followed and after 10 days in hospital he returned home. He then had six months of chemotherapy. But after regular checks in the aftermath of his treatment, Eric has not seen a medical professional about the cancer for more than four years.

“To have any chance of survival from

pancreatic cancer, it has got to be caught early,” Eric told the Cumberland News. “The sooner it is the better. People aren’t aware of the symptoms. It’s things like jaundice, stomach ache, back ache and unexplained weight loss.”

Pancreatic cancer is the deadliest of all common cancers, with more than half of people with the disease – 10,000 people diagnosed annually in the UK – dying within three months of diagnosis. Unlike with other cancers, progress has been slow. Survival has barely improved in 40 years. Surgery to remove the tumour is the only potentially curative treatment, however only 10 per cent of patients are able to have the operation.

**Pancreatic Cancer UK run a free and confidential support line solely staffed by specialist nurses. Call 0808 801 0707 or email nurse@pancreaticcancer.org.uk, 10am–4pm Monday–Friday.**

# 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



**MIKE GAPES**  
Ilford South, 1992–2019

AFTER MY DECEMBER 2019 kamikaze mission my first task was to evacuate my Commons office, arrange for 28 years of accumulated papers to be transferred to my terraced house in Ilford, to make my long-standing loyal Commons staff redundant and to close my recently

opened new constituency office and sack my very good new team. That horrible process took until the end of January. I managed a much-needed 10-day Saga cruise on The Nile. I got back at the end of February, had a few meals with old friends, visited some galleries and museums and watched my beloved Hammers, but then came the first COVID lockdown. Plans to visit France, Sweden and Spain and a long October holiday in New Zealand all had to be put on hold. Tickets for the 2020 Lords Tests and the One Day match against Australia went unused as did my Middlesex Membership. I added Sky Sports to my BT subscription and became an avid follower of the IPL Cricket. I binge watched all 73 episodes of Game of Thrones, and all episodes of The Thick of It. I keep up my knowledge of foreign affairs, defence and security by attending four or five virtual events a week at Chatham House and RUSI, but the accumulated files from Parliament are still largely unopened. I also Zoom with a Pub Group and the Redbridge Rotary Club. I've experimented with baking banana bread and sour dough. I try to walk regularly in Valentines Park, a jewel in the centre of Ilford, and have bought an exercise bike. I am currently inspecting my small back garden daily to count how many daffodils planted in November have emerged, and to watch the squirrels and birds. I learned to play Bridge as a teenager but had not played at all for more than 30 years. Now I am playing every few days with two former Parliamentary colleagues. And five of us former Independent Group MPs have a book coming out in March.



**ANNE MILTON**  
Guildford, 2005–2019

I WAS A VERY LATE STARTER in politics so to this day, I still feel extremely lucky to have been an MP. It was only 14 years but what a fascinating time in Parliament – in Opposition on arrival and a Minister in both the Coalition and Conservative Governments.

Leaving was somewhat sudden, but not unexpected and I felt I had done what needed to be done with no regrets – I was ready for a new life. Passionate

about further education, and the life chances of young people and adults who get left behind, it's a privilege to be working with several organisations in the Further Education sector. With skills now tripping off the lips of every politician this work is pivotal to rebuilding the economy. And as a former nurse who worked in the NHS for many years, I am acutely aware of the close correlations between education and health.

I now have more time (unheard of as an MP) so now a Trustee of Surrey University Students Union and working with my local theatre on their Development Board. As a Founder of The Company of Nurses I can also give more time to our journey to become a full Livery Company.

My four children have more of my attention (phone calls rather than texts between meetings), and more time to garden and read. Lockdown was well used chairing meetings across the country from my dining room, clearing out my wardrobe (suits, jackets and high heels needed culling), 15 years of papers and secrets now filed (will anyone ever look at them?) and contentment at the end of the day from a job well done.



**PETER HEATON-JONES**  
North Devon, 2005–2019

The plan was hastily-conceived, but seemed watertight: stand down from Parliament, go travelling, look for new opportunities. Starting in, say, March 2020. What could possibly go wrong?

It was triggered by changes to family circumstances, coupled

with a new electoral cycle which pushed me unexpectedly beyond a milestone birthday. Suddenly, the prospect of another five years did not appeal. Better to be honest, leave while I'm a mere stripling and seek new adventures. That was the theory. In practice, it was scuppered by The Thing.

Early in 2020 I received a tempting offer of a job in Australia. But leaving home didn't feel right at the time, so I declined. 'Leaving home'. Remember that?

Lockdown One was spent improving my old cottage which I'd neglected during the Westminster years. Lockdown Two coincided with quarantine after an overseas trip which had started back in the halcyon autumn days when travel was briefly possible. And Lockdown Three? Well, the ink was just drying on a deal with a consultancy firm. But that's now on hold, so the search for new challenges continues. Meanwhile I'm involved with several voluntary groups and do some media things too.

The worst aspect of giving up Parliament was the fear of letting people down: the voters, your staff, the party. I needn't have worried. Our new candidate got a thumping majority and my brilliant team quickly found new jobs. The final redemption came when the Conservative Association invited me to become their President. I was dead chuffed.

## A GOOD READ



### THE PRIME MINISTER OF DOCK GREEN

Nicholas Bennett

#### *James Callaghan, An Underrated Prime Minister?*

by Jasper Miles and Kevin Hickson

Published by Biteback

THE 1970s was, possibly, the worst of the century. Nixon, Ford and Carter, punk, the three-day week, the Winter of Discontent, hot pants and flares, orange and brown décor – truly a decade taste forgot. Jim Callaghan's premiership had the misfortune to be part of it, bookended by Wilson and Thatcher.

Now, more than forty years later, there comes a reassessment of his time in office. James Callaghan, a series of 21 essays, largely by academics. Overall they provide a fair assessment and picture of the man and his government.

Jim Callaghan had been an MP since 1945 and a front bencher for most of his thirty years in Parliament when, at the age of 64, he defeated four other candidates to become Labour Leader and Prime Minister in April 1976, following the unexpected resignation of Harold Wilson at the age of 60. Like Gordon Brown, he followed after a long serving leader – albeit one whose time in Downing Street had been interrupted by the Heath government.

Although Jim Callaghan had left school at 17 and had not attended university – a factor which rankled with him – he was the only leadership candidate who had been Home Secretary, and Foreign Secretary, and Chancellor of the Exchequer. His

record in those offices had not been particularly distinguished but he certainly had experience. He also had the great advantage of looking prime ministerial. Tall, broad shouldered, silver haired, with a deep, pleasant voice, wearing sober dark suits and heavy framed spectacles he was straight from central casting. At ease at the dispatch box, he regularly got the better of Margaret Thatcher, the new Conservative Leader, with a mixture of patronising put downs and ready wit. A social conservative with a strong sense of patriotism, he was described by Peter Hennessy as someone whose values “remained fixed at around 1948... a kind of composite Clem Attlee and Ernie Bevin.” Dominic Sandbrook in his essay takes up Kenneth Baker's description, no doubt mindful of Callaghan's years as advisor to the Police Federation, as ‘The Prime Minister of Dock Green’. The first Labour leader born to a working-class family since George Lansbury and a former trade union organizer – what could go wrong?

Callaghan inherited a poor of hand of cards, but the authors argue, convincingly I think, that he played them well. A government about to lose its parliamentary majority has its problems made worse by a fractious and rebellious Parliamentary party, a Left dominated National Executive Committee (NEC), a looming economic crisis, and a trade union leadership unable to quell wildcat strikes led by militant shop stewards. His government survived for three years before losing a motion of No Confidence in March 1979, by one vote.

His management of his colleagues in government was a mixture of firmness and cunning. When dealing with the ever-threatening-to-resign-but-never-doing-so Tony Benn, he faced him down. In a cabinet containing three former Chancellors, four ex-Presidents of the Board of Trade and one former Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, he used pre-cabinet bi-lateral discussions with senior colleagues, particularly regarding the IMF cuts, to get his way later. This collegiate style of management was limited. He was no fan of open government and conducted secret meetings with selected ministers behind the full cabinet's back.

Appropriately, for a former Royal Navy petty officer, he turned a Nelsonian blind eye to those parts of the Labour

*Callaghan inherited a poor of hand of cards, but the authors argue... that he played them well*

programme with which he disagreed and managed to prevent the NEC producing a left-wing manifesto for the 1979 election.

Callaghan's premiership was dominated by the 1976 economic crisis and the need to seek help from the IMF. His one major initiative, to reform education, ran into the opposition of what Michael Gove described many years later as ‘the Blob’. Bernard Donoghue, Callaghan's Head of Policy, later described the DES as ‘little more than a post-box between the teachers' unions and their local authority employers.’ His plans for Scottish devolution were thwarted by a 40% approval requirement inserted by one of his own backbenchers. Otherwise, even with the benefit of the Lib-Lab Pact, the government's precarious parliamentary situation meant that most of the Government's attention was devoted to responding to issues as they arose rather than dictating the agenda.

One of the great ‘what ifs’ was whether had Callaghan called a General Election in the Autumn of 1978 would he have won? Several of the essayists believe that he might have just been returned. Foolishly he allowed his aides to build speculation and then at the last moment his nerve failed, and he postponed the election in the hope that the economic situation would continue to strengthen. Ironically for a man who prided himself on his close links with the trade unions, it was their refusal to accept the Government's 5% pay increase limit which led to the Winter of Discontent. His political judgement seemed to desert him when he returned from a summit of international leaders in sunny Guadeloupe to a cold, strike-bound Britain and, in a TV interview, made light of the problems the country was facing. To his credit his defeat on the motion of no-confidence followed his refusal to require a dying Labour MP to attend Westminster. Probably, in his heart, he knew that even had he narrowly scraped back to power he would have faced another parliament with a hand to mouth majority.



## SPORT CAN BE FOR GOOD, OR EVIL

Gerry Sutcliffe

### *Pitch Battles* *Sport, Racism and Resistance*

By Peter Hain and Andre Odendaal

Published by Rowman & Littlefield

SPORT TO ME HAS ALWAYS BEEN a pleasurable pastime, either playing or watching a countless number of different sports. Many happy hours and years have revolved around sporting highs and lows.

This book, by my former colleague and parliamentary football teammate Peter Hain and Andre Odendaal, questions the role of sport in the wider aspects of life, politics. It reinforces the view that sport can play in positive

environments, but also how destructive and malevolent it can be in a negative construct.

Set mainly against the evil of Apartheid in South Africa and the ramifications of political activism in the UK and beyond that led to cricket and rugby tours being cancelled and a long hard struggle to defeat the regime, which led to in some cases death or imprisonment, this detailed and descriptive compendium of facts and actual memories of those involved exposes the callous nature of those who could have and should have done better in the governance of sport and governance in its wider democratic sense.

It was interesting to remember the treatment of Basil D'Oliveira, who was described as a non-white England cricket player, and how he was offered a bribe – which he rightly refused – not to go on tour, and how some in the game saw that as a reasonable compromise.

The book goes on to look at the institutional racism caused by British colonialism through the development of the British empire. Whilst it was a good thing that new sports were emerging from developing nations the inability to allow freedom of individuals and communities to integrate through sport perpetuated the 'us and them' conflicts. The book also touches on the racism and fascism of the German regime of

the 1930s and the conflict surrounding the success of Jesse Owens.

After the turbulence and the entry into a brighter future following apartheid under the leadership of Nelson Mandela the book looks at how sport is used as an ingredient to bring a nation together. It reminded me of how the London Olympics and Paralympics brought the UK together in 2012. It was my pleasure to attend the opening and closing ceremonies at the games that showcased the UK not only in the performance of our athletes but also our culture and history.

The authors move on to the challenges facing sport today in a globalised society, the role that money and profit play in generating vast sums of revenue for elite sportsmen and women through broadcasting revenues, and the inequality that exists between grass roots sport and the continuing gender and disability inequalities.

The growth of the Me Too campaign and the Black Lives Matter movement are used as an illustration to reveal the continued need to improve our awareness that these issues are still with us and need to be addressed. In a Covid stricken world, where access to sport is denied to most of us, this might be the time to remember the power of sport to do good. This book is a painful reminder of past failures but offers hope for reflections for a different future.

## A CAREER WITHOUT PAIN

Nicholas Bennett

### *Amongst the Supporting Cast*

By Tim Sainsbury

Published by Everyman

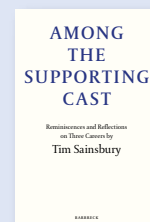
TIM SAINSBURY, one of three great grandsons of the founder of the Sainsbury supermarket chain, enjoyed a comfortable upbringing as a schoolboy at Eton, followed by national service as an officer and then three years as an undergraduate at Oxford before joining the family firm. Shortly after joining the Conservative Party candidates list, he was selected for the safe seat of Hove and elected in a by-election a month later, having, he admits, never fought a political election or held any office in the Party, even as a ward chairman.

His autobiography is in four parts. Sadly the section on his nearly 25 years in Parliament is strangely colourless.

The 1974–79 Parliament with its minority Labour administration and Lib-Lab Pact passes with barely a mention, Jim Callaghan's name is not even featured.

His climb up the ministerial ladder was slow. In the first Thatcher Government he is a PPS, in the second a Whip. He obtained departmental ministerial office as a Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Ministry of Defence in the third Thatcher Government in 1987. A sideways move to the FCO in 1989 is followed by promotion to Minister of State in the DTI in 1990. Thereafter he spends a lot of time travelling abroad and, as the departments he serves in have little legislative work, he spared most of the tasks which fall to ministers of his rank of steering bills through committee.

There are few revelations about ministerial life. As an avowed Europhile and member of the Tory Reform Group, he feels uncomfortable at the DTI under Peter Lilley and he has no time for Neil Hamilton, one of the junior ministers in



the department. Lilley's replacement as Secretary of State and President of the Board of Trade by Michael Heseltine is clearly much more to his liking. As Heseltine recuperates from a heart attack, Sainsbury gets the opportunity to act as Secretary of State pro-tem. Having decided he would retire from Parliament at the age of 65, he returned to the backbenches in 1994 and was knighted the following year.

We do learn that Heseltine is a considerate and decisive Minister. However, Sainsbury does also reveal that Heseltine could not be persuaded to socialise in the Smoking Room or in the Tea Room. "He did not find this an attractive activity, regarding it as somewhat of a waste of time." A surprising omission in so ambitious a politician.

Tim Sainsbury has now left the Conservative Party and supported the Lib Dems in the 2019 General Election.

## UNITED IN THEIR SEXUALITY

Denis MacShane

### *The Glamour Boys. The Secret Story of the Rebels Who Fought for Britain to Defeat Hitler*

By Chris Bryant

Published by Bloomsbury

THIS IS A RICH, fascinating look into Parliamentary history which any serving or retired MP can only enjoy. Chris Bryant is already written a two-volume "Biography of Parliament" as well as a biography of Labour's post-war Chancellor, the very left, very rich, very austere Sir Stafford Cripps.

Now he turns his attention to an assortment of MPs who lived with a secret that that would have killed their careers and sent them to jail had it got out. To be gay in the 1930s was to dance permanently with the danger of discovery, exposure, and press publicity.

There was only one way out if that happened – resignation and then an inevitable prison sentence as our judges adored the sound of their own voices sending 56,000 men to prison for loving other men.

Some took their own lives. Yet there was a flourishing gay community in London available to MPs when in Westminster in the 1920s and 1930s with clubs, bath houses, and quiet arrangements between two men who kept two addresses but spent nights, and holidays together.

Some of the most brilliant, and best educated (Eton and Oxford) MPs feature prominently in Bryant's history. Some like the bi-sexual Bob Boothby who won £40,000 damages from the *Daily Mirror* in the 1960s when he befriended the Kray Brothers who set up young men to service the ageing Boothby, who was the lover of Harold Macmillan's wife, Dorothy, as shown in 1960s episodes of *The Crown*.

Labour knew about Boothby and the Krays' pimping for him but since the prominent Labour MP and NEC member, Tom Driberg, was attending the same gay sex parties, the prudence of Labour which did in for Tory grandee John Profumo, was kept on hold for Boothby in case Tories put Driberg into the frame.

The MPs Bryant discusses are Conservative or Liberal, except for

Harold Nicholson who was elected as National Labour MP in 1935 – and held it until 1945, as there was no election in 1940. Nicholson was a bi-sexual upper-class diplomat turned writer, who tried first to stand for the Tories – and then a Labour peer related to Nicholson's writer wife, Vita Sackville-West, arranged a chance for him to be a Ramsay MacDonald supporting MP.

What these MPs had in common was an interest in foreign affairs. They all enjoyed trips to Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s to see the political turmoil in Weimar Germany and the arrival of the Nazis. Berlin was also the gay capital of the world – until Hitler turned on the gay Nazis who helped him win power and ordered a persecution of gays, who were sent to Dachau or if they were prominent Nazis were simply murdered.

Bryant refers to the MPs he writes about as "queer" and details the filthy attempt by Conservative Central Office to discredit them once these upper-class Tories – some of them gay Jews – woke up to the menace of Hitler.

When they criticised the appeasement of the Tory government Neville Chamberlain called them "The Glamour Boys" and got his press team to put smears into the press emphasising the unmarried status of the anti-Nazi MPs.

Bryant's sub-title of "the gay British politicians who fought to defeat Hitler" is over-generous. Amongst these gay Tory MPs were prominent supporters of General Franco like Victor Cazelet who refused any support for those defending the democratically elected government of Spain. Another bi-sexual MP, the Liberal Robert Bernays, spoke in the Commons to attack Clement Attlee who was calling for stronger action against Mussolini after the Italian fascist strong-man sent his army into to invade and annexe Abyssinia, today Ethiopia.

The MPs Bryant writes about were not ready to take on fascism in Spain or Italy. Franco criminalised homosexuality and gay men and women were brutally



*This is a packed 400 pages of stories about what it was like to be a Tory MP at a key moment of parliamentary history*

treated during his dictatorship.

In January 1939 Chamberlain was trying to get Winston Churchill deselected and Bryant recounts the efforts to remove the "Glamour Boy" MPs who stood with Churchill and wrote and spoke about the menace of Hitler's populist racist nationalism

This is a packed 400 pages of stories about what it was like to be a Tory MP at a key moment of parliamentary history. One of them, Jack Macnamara, also managed to become the commanding officer of the fashionable territorial army unit, the London Irish Rifles, whose better looking privates would leave their Chelsea barracks to stroll around St James' or Hyde Park when it got dark and rich gay men came looking for company.

Macnamara hired as his Commons assistant the 24 year old Etonian Guy Burgess, a most promiscuous queer. Burgess famously went on to spy for the Soviet Union and fled to Moscow. There his friend, Tom Driberg, by now a prominent left Labour MP, scouted out the cottage lavatories where Burgess could find men during the later years of Stalin.

For any MP, in or out of the Commons this is a book about an extraordinary group of elected members united in their sexuality and in their courage in taking on the establishment and calling out the Nazis for what they were.

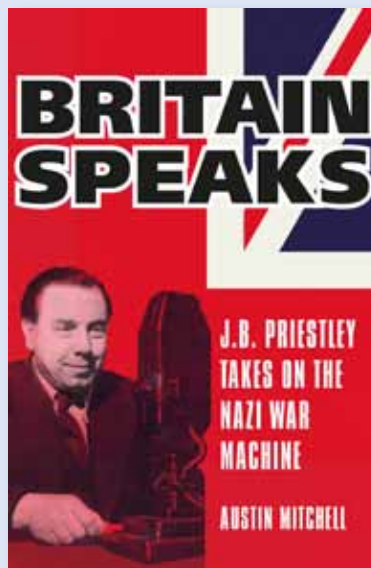
## FIGHTING HITLER, ON THE RADIO

Peter Bradley

### *Britain Speaks: JB Priestley on the Nazi War Machine*

*Introduction by Austin Mitchell*

Published by Great Northern Books



*Priestley was a skillful propagandist. He set out to convince Americans that our fight was theirs*

CHURCHILL'S ORATORY was as compelling at the microphone as at the Dispatch Box. But what of Britain's second most popular wartime broadcaster? 17 million listeners – almost as many as had tuned in to Churchill's "we shall fight on the beaches" speech the day before – gathered round their radios for the first of J.B. Priestley's Postscript broadcasts on 5 June 1940. The series averaged 14 million before, under pressure from Churchill himself, the BBC ended it in March 1941.

Priestley's offence had been to insist on a war aim – the building of a new, post-war Jerusalem – at odds with the Conservatives' attachment to the status quo. They were less exercised by his weekly Britain Speaks talks, perhaps because their audience was overseas. Priestley was a patriot and an admirer of Churchill's leadership, but he strongly believed that to defeat Nazism, Britons must be offered a future worth fighting for, "to attack the root causes of this catastrophe, to make this a better country, to try to make this world a nobler planet".

The rhetorical styles of the patrician Prime Minister and the Bradford-born author were contrasting but complementary, the one eloquent and inspirational, the other reassuringly down-to-earth. While Churchill extolled heroic sacrifices made in "blood, toil, tears and sweat", Priestley celebrated the day-to-day endurance of ordinary folk, of bombs and blackouts, of rationing and hard graft. He painted a picture for his listeners in America and 'the Dominions' of the cheerful stoicism with which Britons, everyday people like them, were confronting Nazism. Their inevitable victory, he argued, was being

won not in the country houses, but in the factories of "those scores of gloomy towns half buried in thick smoke".

Priestley was a skillful propagandist. He set out to convince Americans that our fight was theirs, that Britain was not, as the isolationists claimed, the effete, defeated nation of "hunting squires and hat-touching villagers", but the courageous, resolute defender of democratic values – and that the English Channel was America's front line. By the time he made his final Britain Speaks broadcast in August 1943, both the USSR and the USA had entered the war and the tide had turned.

In reclaiming Priestley's transcripts from the archives, Austin Mitchell provides us with an invaluable commentary on tumultuous times and an important reminder that the 'total war' was fought on the shopfloor and in the fields as well as on the frontlines, and by women as well as men. It reflects too the hunger for change which fueled Labour's post-war landslide.

Not least, it documents how, in times of national crisis, when objectives are clear and leadership decisive, citizens can find common cause in confronting existential threats and, once they are overcome, in working together for a better future.

## Letters

### REMEMBERING MARIA FYFE

I am very sad to learn about the passing of Maria Fyfe, who was a feisty and doughty Labour campaigner for good causes, and one I remember as though it was yesterday.

When I was a Scottish Office Minister with responsibility for Housing, Maria put the case to me for modernising tenements which had deteriorated very close in her constituency of Maryhill, to a Glasgow Canal. I discussed this matter with Civil Servants who were not wholly persuaded, but the point which I made was that as I was Minister for Housing I should make a visit, in response to Maria.

On the day of the visit I arrived early as did Maria, and we could see for ourselves that the tenements were in need, and required attention. Of importance the Civil servants concerned did realise that this was an important issue, and also that resources could be made available, albeit over a period of time.

After a General Election in 1997 I stood for the Scottish Parliament, and was elected as an MSP in 1999, and Maria asked me to come and attend the date for marking the completion of work to those tenements in Glasgow. I went as an MSP, and she was full of cheerfulness. She was a role model for many women entering politics.

She will be much missed by her friends and colleagues.

Yours sincerely

*James Selkirk*

*Conservative MP for Edinburgh West,  
1974–1997*

### DOLPHIN SQUARE

Two authors, Simon Danczuk and Dan Smith, are writing a book about the famous Dolphin Square apartments in Pimlico and some of the characters who have lived there. If you have any reminiscences about any of its inhabitants or of notable goings-on there from over the years, we would love to hear from you (either on or off the record).

Contact in confidence via email ([simondanczuk@live.co.uk](mailto:simondanczuk@live.co.uk)) or phone (07798 742015).

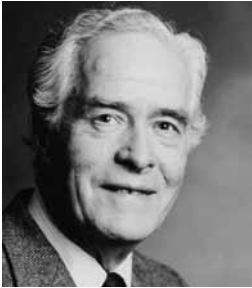
## TRIBUTES

### RON ATKINS

13 June 1916–30 December 2020

Labour MP for Preston North, 1966–1970 & 1974–1979

*Remembered by Joan Walley*



ANY OBITUARY for a former colleague who left the House as long ago as 1979 is asking a lot from our band of retired MPs. So it's a bit daunting to be asked by our editor to rise to the challenge and submit a few words for Ron Atkins who sadly passed away peacefully at home last month aged 104.

His longevity and staunch commitment to the Labour Party and to the people he served in parliament and in the council chamber of Preston though is indisputable. All those who had the good fortune to work with him and know him testify to his lifelong dedication to his principles, belief in social justice, commitment to the railways and to his utter determination to make the world a better place.

Ron left the House a good eight years before I got there. It's clear though that during his three terms – 1966 to 1970, February 1974 to October 1974, and lastly 1974 to 1979, he relentlessly pursued the causes so close to his heart. He lost the highly marginal seat of Preston North by just 29 votes to Robert Atkins.

But he didn't just make his mark in parliament. His public

service as a Preston councillor between his parliamentary stints both as a ward councillor and 'elder' from 1980–2010 when he finally stepped down aged 93 – as former MP and current mayor of Preston David Borrow affirms – made a huge difference to the quality of life and quality of civic engagement in Preston, where he led by example. He was particularly proud of his role as the chairman of the city's Planning Committee

When I first entered the Commons I became aware of a significant trend for some MPs' offspring to continue the family tradition of seeking election. Happily, Ron's daughter and my former neighbour Charlotte was successful in her bid to become MP for Staffordshire Moorlands in 1997. Having picked up snippets from Charlotte about her dad it is clear that he followed up in the council chamber in Preston where he left off at Westminster. It is surely a fitting tribute to his lifelong service that Preston Council is today at the forefront of promoting new ways of working to achieve community health and prosperity. Whether through his own family or the wider Labour family, Ron's actions live on and we can only be thankful that my generation of members had backbench role models like Ron Atkins to persevere and lead on how to achieve intergenerational change. Our thanks for Ron's life and our condolences go to Ron's immediate family including his daughters Charlotte and Liz.

### LORD (MICHAEL) SHAW OF NORTHSTEAD AND OF LIVERSEDEGE

9 October 1920–8 January 2021

Conservative MP for Brighouse & Spenborough, 1960–1964; Scarborough, 1966–1992

*Remembered by Michael Meadowcroft*



Colin Waters/Alamy Stock Photo

MICHAEL SHAW was a popular, long serving Conservative Member of Parliament, representing initially the highly marginal seat of Brighouse and Spenborough from 1960 to 1964 and then Scarborough from 1966 until his retirement in 1992. He was very much of the old school: the loyal backbencher 'knight of the shires' always immaculately turned out

and one of the last regular wearers of a bowler hat. He served as Parliamentary Private Secretary first for John Hare as Minister of Labour and later for John Davies, successively the Minister of Technology, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Michael Shaw was born in Leeds, attended Sedbergh School and then studied accountancy, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 1945 and advancing to FCA in 1952 and becoming a partner in the family firm of W H Shaw. He was briefly Chairman of the Yorkshire Area Young Conservatives in 1950. He married Joan Mowat in April 1951. The first election he contested, in Dewsbury in 1955 was called at short notice. His hurried adoption meeting coincided with the birth of their first son, John.

He lost that election to Labour by over 7,000 and switched

to the next door constituency of Brighouse and Spenborough which he lost in 1959 by just 59 votes. Within six months, the newly re-elected Labour MP died from a heart attack and Michael narrowly won the by-election, with a majority of 666. He lost in 1964, again narrowly, and he then took the opportunity of Sir Alexander Spearman retiring from his Scarborough and Whitby seat after twenty-five years in parliament to secure the nomination as his successor. He held the seat for twenty-six years.

In parliament he served on the Select Committees on Members' Salaries and Members' Interests. He was knighted in 1982. In 1974 he was one of the appointed Conservative members of the European Parliament, serving until the first direct election in 1979. His loyalty to the Conservative Party was demonstrated two years after retiring from the Commons when, despite having said that he was looking forward to spending time with his family, he responded to party leader, John Major's, request to go to the House of Lords. Created Baron Shaw of Northstead on 3 September 1994, he resumed his regular journeys to Westminster.

Michael, Joan and family lived in the historic Duxbury Hall in Liversedge, until they moved to more amenable accommodation in Winchester in 2015 when he retired from the House of Lords. He died on 8 January, aged 100, leaving his wife, Joan, three sons and five grandchildren.



## MAUREEN COLQUHOUN

12 August 1928–2 February 2021

Labour MP for Northampton North, 1974–1979

Remembered by Sally Keeble



MAUREEN COLQUHOUN made an indelible mark on British politics during the five years she served as MP for Northampton North.

As the first openly lesbian MP, she and her partner Babs Todd, endured venom of an intensity that should have seared the conscience of the Labour establishment.

Instead she was threatened with deselection. Yet she withstood the abuse, and remained in public service until the age of 86, with an unswerving dignity and good grace.

A committed feminist and anti-racist, and trained economist, she first served as a councillor in Shoreham where she lived with her husband, Keith Colquhoun, a journalist. She was known for packing the public gallery with her supporters, and the Conservative administration tried to shut her down by keeping her off any committees.

She was elected in February 1974 as Labour MP for Northampton North, making her the town's second woman MP; the first being Margaret Bondfield, who went on to become the UK's first woman cabinet member.

Parliament wasn't ready for Maureen's feisty style. With fewer than 30 women in the House, she described it as a "maleocracy." She once harangued the deputy speaker for failing to call a single

woman MP to speak during an unemployment debate. "I should like to be assured that Mr Speaker's department does not think that women members should be restricted in debates to their own areas of understanding as defined by men. I am referring to subjects like social services and mental health."

She campaigned for progressive causes, bringing forward "The Balance of the Sexes Bill" to get more women onto public bodies and another to provide greater protection for sex workers. It was while working on the latter that she met and fell in love with Barbara, Babs, Todd and the couple set up home together. Their house-warming party was infiltrated by a *Daily Mail* columnist, and under pressure from his bullying, she came out.

That led to her local Labour Party deselection, but with a general election in prospect, Labour's National Executive reinstated her, out of expedience rather than principled support for Maureen's courageous stand.

Her response to losing her seat in the 1979 election was typically robust. She spent some years working for Labour MPs, became a councillor in Hackney, and continued her public service on the National Parks Board and local council after she and Babs moved to Ambleside. They remained devoted to each other until Babs' death last year.

Some 40 years after the deselection attempt, Northampton North Labour Party sent her a letter of appreciation for her contribution to public life and the Labour Party.

She is survived by the couple's son and three daughters and a wide network of friends and admirers.

## MARIA FYFE

25 November 1938–3 December 2020

Labour MP for Glasgow Maryhill, 1987–2001

Remembered by Ann McKechin



THE FIRST THING you remembered about Maria was her voice – unusually strong for one set at a high tone – frequently accompanied by warm hearty laughter. Her good friend, Johann Lamont, former Labour leader at Holyrood, described Maria at her funeral service as a "whirlwind in a tweed coat who despised deference

or hierarchy." You could never mistake her commitment to socialist principles, but she made friends easily across the political spectrum. Maria's integrity, openness and unstinting advocacy of feminism helped to encourage many women to pursue an interest in politics and campaigning. Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon paid tribute to her as a "feminist icon". The current gender composition in the Scottish Parliament is a legacy from Maria's fight for 50/50 representation, both within the Labour Party itself and during her service in the Scottish Constitutional Convention.

Maria's passion for social justice was forged in the city of her birth and one which she was to represent so ably as a local councillor and then, as only the tenth female MP elected in Scotland, for the Glasgow Maryhill seat for fourteen years. Her

victory in 1987 was bittersweet: her husband Jim, whom she first met at an early anti-apartheid demonstration, died suddenly between her selection as a candidate and the General Election, leaving her as a single mother of two sons still completing their education.

A decade later as I started to take my own tentative steps towards a political career, I recall being shown the photograph taken in Glasgow the day after that election to celebrate the record number of 50 Scottish Labour MP's. Maria was the only woman.

Maria did not shy away from difficult political topics or, on occasions, disagreeing with Labour's front bench on issues such as single parent benefits. At the Labour Conference in 1996, which I attended for the first time, as delegate for the neighbouring constituency, she encouraged me to join her at a fringe meeting addressed by David Ervine, controversial leader of the Progressive Unionist Party, because she realised the imperative of understanding the views of all sides if peace was to be sustained in Ireland.

I could not have been more fortunate to have succeeded her in Maryhill. Maria was an incredibly popular figure across the constituency – and always at hand to offer me support and quiet wisdom. Her lifetime of campaigning did not stop when she left Westminster. She led the successful bid to erect a statute to another socialist feminist Glaswegian, Mary Barbour, who organised the rent strikes during WW1 that led to the introduction of the first ever rent control legislation. Maria will be sadly missed by many.

## BRIAN BINLEY

1 April 1942 – 25 December 2020

Conservative MP for Northampton South, 2005–2015

*Remembered by Brooks Newmark*



I WAS BRIAN BINLEY'S contemporary in Parliament for ten years and, for a while, his whip. To a whip, he was often a pain in the you-know-what, outspoken and a straight talker. I suspect compromise was not in his vocabulary. He just did what he felt was right. As a constituency MP, he was brilliant. He understood what made his constituents tick and

he spoke up for them. Often loudly.

The Brian I knew loved people, food and drink – not necessarily always in that order – and everyone in the parliamentary party loved Brian. He would light up the room when he entered, always with a broad grin. He was often to be found in the Members' tea room or in Strangers' Bar engaging in debate.

From 1988 until he was elected to Parliament, Brian ran a marketing business, BCC Marketing and subsequently Beechwood House Publishing, in Wellingborough. This experience enabled him to bring his knowledge of the challenges faced by small businesses to bear in Parliament. In 2006, he became Chair of the Conservative Party Enterprise Group and set up a Commission to investigate the decline of Britain's high streets. In 2010 he was elected to the Business Select Committee, on which he was a vociferous critic of the part-privatisation of Royal Mail.

Brian was ambitious for his constituents, not for himself. It's

fair to say he had little if any interest in a ministerial career. Nevertheless, he was a loyal member of the party he joined the Party in 1958 (the year I was born!). He was active in the National Young Conservatives in the late 1960s and Party Agent in Kidderminster in 1968 to 1977. After moving to Wellingborough in 1997, he was elected to Northamptonshire County Council, and served as a Cabinet Member until he won Northampton South in 2005. He was elected to the Conservative Party Board in 2007.

Brian was a traditional Conservative in every sense. He was strongly Eurosceptic, opposed same sex marriage, campaigned to relax the curbs on smoking, was a delegate to the Council of Europe, and was highly critical of the European Court of Human Rights. Married and divorced three times, with two sons, he campaigned hard for Fathers4Justice to enable separated fathers a role in bringing up their children.

In 2013 Brian revealed he would be undergoing chemotherapy for lymphoma, and would not be standing for re-election. But, ever the optimist, he said "life doesn't end when you leave politics." From 2015, he was a Director of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership. He was also a Director of Northampton Town FC, about which he quipped "I am really saddened that my success in other areas has not been met with the same degree of success in the sphere of Second Division Football."

Brian died in Northampton General hospital on Christmas Day, aged 78. The Parliamentary Party will miss Brian. His constituents in Northampton will miss Brian. But most of all I will miss Brian. Rest in Peace.

## JOHN POWLEY

3 August 1936 – 16 October 2020

Conservative MP for Norwich South, 1983–1987

*Remembered by Patrick Thompson*



LOCAL NEWSPAPERS DESCRIBED Thursday, 9 June 1983, as the day "Mrs Thatcher's landslide swept across Norfolk". The biggest Conservative triumph was John Powley's election as MP for Norwich South, with a majority of 1,712. He defeated John Garrett, who had held the seat since 1974. Norwich South had been held by

Conservatives in the past – Geoffrey Rippon (1955–1964) and Dr Tom Stuttford (1970–1974) – but it has not been won by the Conservatives since John Garrett regained it in 1987, by just 336 votes.

Kathleen and I first met John and Jill Powley during the 1983 contest and we became good friends. He worked very hard and effectively for his constituents and supported many organisations in Norwich. We campaigned together for the complete dualling of the A11 road (only just completed after nearly 40 years!) We made many visits together and every Christmas were welcomed warmly by the staff at the Royal Mail sorting office in Norwich. John greatly admired Margaret Thatcher and on his initiative a Norwich-made handbag was presented to her at Westminster.

Before 1983 John had served on Cambridge City Council and

Cambridgeshire County Council. In 1984 the Times Special Report on Norwich stated "Politically Norwich is an enigma. It has had a strong Labour majority on the City Council for 50 years, but has two Conservative MP's plus a Conservative Member for the European Parliament." A large proportion of our constituency case work required interaction with a strongly Labour-held Council. His advice and help on these matters was invaluable.

In his maiden speech he strongly backed the sale of council houses, a popular policy at the time, emphasising his support for a "substantial improvement in the percentage of owner-occupation in the city of Norwich". He attacked Norwich City Council, saying that he was "prepared to give it a good kick up the backside if it did not improve matters". He always spoke directly and powerfully. In the same speech John displayed his good sense of humour when he castigated Private Eye for gross exaggeration in describing him as 'owning a successful chain of electrical and TV rental emporia.'

After his narrow defeat in 1987 John Powley resumed his leadership role in local government. He was chairman of Cambridgeshire County Council from 2011 to 2013 and was honoured with the title of alderman for his distinguished service.

He was an accomplished golfer and I enjoyed at least one game with him until it was obvious that my golf was well below his standard. I really missed him when he left the Commons. It was good that we were able to keep in touch over the years.

**RAY CARTER**

17 September 1935 – 2 July 2020

Labour MP for Birmingham Northfield, 1970–1979

*Remembered by Peter Snape*

MY APPOINTMENT as West Midlands whip In 1975 led to my first real conversation with Ray who was one of my flock, as the Member for Birmingham Northfield. He was quick to remind me that we were both ex sappers, and that as a former sergeant in the Royal Engineers, he ‘wasn’t going to be messed about by

a humble corporal’. As Ray was one of our delegates to the WEU & Council of Europe my opportunities for ‘messing him about’ were somewhat limited.

The following year, incensed by the lack of financial support for a neighbour’s thalidomide affected child, Ray, having topped the ballot for Private Members’ Bills, introduced his Congenital Disabilities Bill which, with support from Labour’s Disability Minister Alf Morris, he skilfully piloted onto the statute book – no mean feat given his weekday commitments in Europe and his constituency responsibilities. That will forever be his Parliamentary legacy.

Subsequently Jim Callaghan appointed Ray a Minister in Northern Ireland, giving his Regional Whip even less opportunity to ‘mess him about’. These were fraught times for the Government, which meant even Northern Ireland ministers

having to fly back at short notice for late night votes when the relationship between the ‘usual channels’ broke down. Ray was never one to complain although having spent the day in Northern Ireland, the late afternoon on an aeroplane and the evening hanging around for an after-midnight vote, he would have had every right to do so. With a wife and three children, who he saw all too rarely, attacked by both sides at the height of the troubles, surrounded by security, Ray had a life even the most ambitious at Westminster didn’t envy. It was a measure of his qualities that I can’t remember him ever suggesting that things were getting him down.

Although Ray never said so publicly, losing his seat in 1979 must have been a traumatic experience for someone who had worked so hard. Jeanette and his children perhaps understood better than some of his constituents the reality of Ministerial office and the pressure of the constituency/Belfast/Westminster merry go round. Again it was a measure of the man that he took defeat at the polls with typical dignity and wry humour.

I bumped into Ray in the Central Lobby in the mid-nineties. He was by then a director of an oil company and had been appointed CBE some years earlier. I jocularly suggested that losing his seat back in 1979 had been a blessing in disguise. He smiled ‘driving home from the count in the early hours of the morning back in 1979 the blessing was pretty well hidden’.

**LORD (DAVID) STODDART OF SWINDON**

4 May 1926 – 14 November 2020

Labour MP for Swindon, 1970–1983

*Remembered by Walter Sweeney*

I CAME TO KNOW Lord (David) Stoddart through the Freedom Association, the libertarian non partisan pressure group founded in 1975 as the National Association for Freedom by Viscount De L’Isle, Norris McWhirter, Ross McWhirter and John Gouriet. Lord Stoddart and I both served on the Council

of the Freedom Association for many years and Lord Stoddart remained on the Council right up until his death.

Lord Stoddart was in many ways traditional “old Labour”. The son of a coal miner from the Rhondda Valley, David Stoddart left Henley Grammar School with no qualifications at the age of 16 and worked for Post Office telephones, British Rail and eventually the Central Electricity Generating Board where he joined the Electrical Trades Union. He was elected to the County Borough Council of Reading in 1954 and served for 18 years, chairing various committees and spending 5 years as Council Leader. In 1972, he was elected as M.P. for Swindon. He served as a Labour Whip in the Commons and then in the Lords, when he was given a peerage in 1983 after losing his parliamentary seat.

He was a very active member of the Lords, sitting on the Labour benches until 2001, when he was suspended from the Labour whip following his objection to a Conservative defector

being parachuted into a safe Labour seat and his support for a Socialist Alliance candidate. He was expelled from Labour in 2002 and sat as an independent Labour peer for the rest of his life.

Lord Stoddart had strong libertarian views, supporting smokers against the “nanny state” and supporting those who wished to go hunting against the abolitionists. The fact that he neither smoked nor went hunting did not stop him from supporting the rights of individuals to live their lives the way they chose. However, Lord Stoddart’s unwillingness to bend the knee to an authoritarian regime was most clearly shown in his consistent opposition to the U.K.’s membership of the European Economic Community or the European Union. In 1962, he opposed joining what was then known as the “Common Market”. From 1985 to 2007, he chaired the cross-party Campaign for an Independent Britain. He worked closely with Lord (Malcolm) Pearson of Rannoch to fight against European integration. He never wavered in his support for the U.K. as an independent nation state, and did not care how unpopular this made him with Europhiles, of whatever party. In his own words, he was condemned first as a Bennite left wing extremist and later as a right-wing xenophobe, but throughout his long parliamentary career, he remained supremely rational and consistent in his support for Winston Smith against “Big Brother”. I shall miss him for his wise counsel, steadfast convictions and unusual common sense.



# THE HOUSE OF COMMONS MEMBERS' FUND

## What is the Members' Fund?

The Members' Fund is a benevolent fund that assists former Members of Parliament and their dependants who are in financial need. It was established in 1939, when there were no pension arrangements for Members, to provide former Members with benefits in lieu of a pension. Former Members and certain dependants can apply for assistance, particularly in times of financial hardship.

## What are its current aims and how is it funded?

Its aims are to continue to make annual grant payments to existing claimants and to provide one-off payments to former MPs and/or their spouses, children and any other financial dependants who are experiencing financial hardship. All current Members automatically contribute £2 per month by deduction from their salary.

## How is it managed?

It is managed by a board of Trustees, who are either serving Members appointed by the House, or former Members.

They consider all applications for benefits and grant suitable awards after they have looked at all the circumstances of the applicant, particularly their financial circumstances. All matters related to the Fund are handled on the basis of utmost confidentiality.

## Who may benefit from one-off payments?

Any former Member or any person who appears to the Fund's Trustees to be, or to have been, a financial dependant of a former Member.

## How do I apply for assistance?

If you would like to apply for financial assistance from the Members' Fund, please contact the HCMF Secretariat using the contact details below. You will be sent an application form requesting further information about your financial situation and reasons for applying and you will be required to provide documentary evidence of your finances. The Trustees will then consider your case and you will be notified of their decision in due course.

## Enquiries and further information:

The HCMF Secretariat  
House of Commons Members' Fund  
Pension Secretariat  
Corporate Services  
House of Commons  
LONDON SWA1 0AA

E-mail: [hcmf@parliament.uk](mailto:hcmf@parliament.uk)

Phone: 020 7219 2106

Fax: 020 7219 2554



## A NOTE FROM THE SCOTTISH BRANCH

An update from Gordon Banks, Chair of the Scottish branch

The Scottish branch has been restricted by the same operational difficulties as the UK association: due to Covid our contact with members has been reduced. We have however issued our first Newsletter recently.

In the Newsletter we asked members if they would like to form a WhatsApp group and also sought views in respect of holding Zoom executive and all-member meetings. As requested in the newsletter, please advise me if you feel these would be positive moves.

Likewise, members were advised of

our latest executive meeting and the discussion surrounding our pensions and the current administrators Buck. If anyone in the Scottish branch has an issue please let me know and we will take things forward in any discussions we have with Buck.

We also advised our branch members of the current position with regards to opening a bank account. The Bank of Scotland who we initially started the process with have put a hold on processing all such applications due to Covid but my contacts in the Royal Bank

of Scotland have agreed to process our application for a Community Account. This application is now underway.

Contacts that our Vice Chair and I have made over the past period who have expressed an interest in joining the UK Association and thereafter the Scottish branch have been passed to Sally / Adrian, our UK Membership Secretary, for further contact.

Hopefully the numbers of the Association and the branch will grow as a result.

[Gordon.banks@cartmore.com](mailto:Gordon.banks@cartmore.com)

## ASSOCIATION CONTACT DETAILS

Sally Grocott, [grocotts@parliament.uk](mailto:grocotts@parliament.uk), Telephone 020 7219 8207

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