

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



SPRING 2023

SCRAPPING THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Is it necessary, or is it even a good idea?

ALSO IN THIS EDITION...



3 POLLY TOYNBEE
to be guest speaker at the Association AGM



8 SALLY KEEBLE
The hounding of Maureen Colquhoun



15 JERRY HAYES
The chaotic reign of Liz Truss



17 ELEANOR LAING
Betty Boothroyd, my generation's inspiration



Baroness Liddell says yes, but take care.
Baroness Stuart says no. pp5-7

SOCIAL MOBILITY THE FUTURE LOOKS BETTER THAN YOU MIGHT EXPECT, SAYS GREENING

Andy McSmith

“There are reasons to be cheerful,” according to Justine Greening, as she talked about the prospects for social mobility in the UK.

There are, of course, reasons to be pessimistic too. When an economy is booming, new opportunities open up, and there is social mobility – but when it is going through a bad patch, as the UK has been for several years, it is a truism that it is the most vulnerable in society who are the ones most likely to remain stuck in whatever circumstances fate has dealt them.

But that is not happening in the UK, despite Covid, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and anything else that is holding up growth, according to Justine Greening, who was guest speaker at the December all-member meeting of the Association.

Instead, she said: “What you are seeing is a country that is now really trying to grapple with how do we, as a democracy, deliver better, fairer opportunities for more people in our country, irrespective of where they started.”

Justine Greening was Secretary of State for Education until Theresa May tried to move her to another department, during the first Cabinet reshuffle of her premiership, which would have meant that she also lost her other job title as Minister for Women and Inequalities.

“Having come from a working-class background, I did not want to step away from social mobility. The Prime Minister wanted to put me in a different department – which she absolutely had the right to do – and, I wanted to stay working on social mobility. And so, I decided I would leave the Government.”

Out of office – and from 2019, also out of Parliament – Justine launched the Social Mobility Pledge, which has had a run of success in persuading some very big names from the world of business to focus on social mobility.

There is, she believes, a vast wasted resource of people whose social circumstances are preventing them making the contribution of which they are capable. A socially mobile Britain could generate in a year enough extra wealth to resolve huge problems like the energy crisis.

Justine had seen how, after some prodding by the Government, the big companies reacted to the problems of climate change. “On climate change, the Government did all sorts of stuff, but fundamentally the heavy lifting was in changing how the companies behave. I thought ‘Well, they’ve done climate: I want them to do people.’”

She asked three things of the businesses that have signed up to the Social Mobility Pledge. One is to get into schools and talk about careers. “Because, let’s face it, teachers can tell you about a



Justine with Association Chairman Eric Martlew at the All Member meeting in December

Greening was brought up in Rotherham but had to leave because the kind of work she wanted to do was not on offer there

career in teaching but it is a little bit of stretch to ask them to talk about completely different careers.”

The second ask is that “they open up their doors to much, much more work experience” – and not just to young people with good family connections. “The reality is that if you’ve got parents who have got the connections and can get it all organised then you can get work experience, but for most people, that’s not how life works,” she said.

The third ask is that they take a second look at their recruitment practices “to make sure they weren’t weeding out talent.”

Justine also stressed the importance of providing right kind of work experience, or training, or education. A university degree can be a bonus in London, where there is a wealth of opportunities, but less so in Cumbria. Greening was brought up in Rotherham but had to leave because the kind of work she wanted to do was not on offer there. She spent 15 years as an accountant, in business and industry.

Though she agreed that “there is one thing we need to fix, and that is the education system” – she criticised governments for thinking that social mobility is all about improving schools, when what can matter most is what the young experience outside of school hours.

Generally, the best performers “had in common: they all had adversity in earlier life; the second, they had all had a paper round or a Saturday job; they had all been in a sports team, or an orchestra or something like that. In other words, what marked out successful people was a track record in problem solving from an early age, a strong sense of reward, and ability to work in a team.”

Justine warned: “What we have been doing has not worked. It’s mad. We can’t lock people out of the ladder of opportunities. We haven’t fixed the education system for them, but it’s not just that’s the problem. The other problem is that we need to be absolutely purposeful about what we are trying to achieve in education. We need to get our heads around what people need to be successful. Make sure it’s relevant”.

“Otherwise, I might as well be judged on whether I can do the foxtrot, which I would be rubbish at.”



ASSOCIATION NEWS

Laura Blake

SALLYING FORTH



IT WAS WITH GREAT SADNESS that we said farewell to Sally Grocott when she retired in the Summer last year. However, we are delighted to be able to tell you

that in recognition of all the support Sally has given the Association over the years, we have made her an Honorary Member and look forward to meeting up again at our member meetings and Summer and Christmas receptions.

TRANSATLANTIC CONVERSATIONS (FORMERLY PARLIAMENT TO THE PEOPLE)

There was an overwhelming response of some 35 candidates from our members to be part of this programme.

"Transatlantic Conversations" is a programme co-sponsored by the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress and by the American Trust for the British Library. TC brings together in moderated dialogue two former Members of Parliament (one Conservative, one Labour) and two former Members of Congress (one Democrat, one Republican) to compare and contrast elected officials' lived experiences as well as the legislative processes in both the United Kingdom and the United States. On April 24, 2023 the John W. Kluge

Center at the Library of Congress and the American Trust for the British Library are pleased to welcome Baroness Ann Taylor, member of the House of Lords and former Labour Member of Parliament and former Leader of the House of Commons; Steve Norris, former Conservative Member of Parliament; Tom Graves, former Republican Representative from Georgia; and Donna Edwards, former Democratic Representative from Maryland for this conversation. "Transatlantic Conversations" will be livestreamed and recorded. All our members are invited to join the event by logging in to the webinar. Either type in this link in your address bar – https://loc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_VCADb-HmRRX00ohqfOSxe0A – or email me and I will resend it to you electronically.

We are hoping that there will be further opportunities to work closely with our US counterpart, the Association of Former Congressmen in the future. I am aware that the American Trust for the British Library and the Kluge Centre would like this programme to become an annual event.

PARLIAMENTARY PASSES

The Association has recently learnt that two members were prevented from renewing their parliamentary passes. This was because of a wrong interpretation of the rules. Anyone else who has had a similar problem should contact me at Blakelb@parliament.uk and I will do my best to assist.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 27th April 2023

ALL MEMBER MEETING

4pm – IPU Room off Westminster Hall.

We are looking forward to hearing from **Polly Toynbee** talking to us about a lifetime observing politics and social policy and her new book *An Uneasy Inheritance: My Family and Other Radicals* which is a memoir and analysis of social class. She may even have some tips for members on memoir writing!



Thursday 13th July 2023

PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST AGM

3.30pm – Cttee Room G, House of Lords

ALL MEMBERS' MEETING

4pm – Cttee Room G, House of Lords

Our guest speaker will be **Jacqui Smith**, a British broadcaster, political commentator and former Labour Party politician. She was Member of Parliament for Redditch from 1997 to 2010 and served as Home Secretary from 2007 to 2009. She was the first woman to hold the position as Home Secretary.

The All Members meeting will be followed by the Summer Reception in the State Apartments.

ANNUAL SUMMER RECEPTION

The date of our next Annual Summer Reception is on **Thursday 13th July** at 6pm through to 8pm. We send our thanks again to our Patron, Mr Speaker, who has kindly agreed that we may hold it in the State Apartments in Speakers House. Partners are also welcome, but no guests please.

As we are all aware, costs have been going up dramatically over the last year. We have kept our Summer Reception ticket price the same for nearly 10 years now, but regret to say that this year we will need to raise the ticket price to £40 per head to help towards its costs. We hope this will not deter members from attending, as it is always a treat to be able to meet up and enjoy the State Apartments.

If you wish to attend, please complete and return the form below. Upon receipt and payment I will forward you a formal invitation for the event.

I would like to attend the Annual Summer Reception on Thursday 13th July 2023 6–8pm

NAME _____

I would like to bring my partner (NAME) _____

Please pay "The Association of Former MPs" Account No. 50281506 Sort code 20-47-39.

Barclays Bank, Kensington and Chelsea P.O. Box No. 4599. London SW3 1XE. Reference: "Summer" the sum of £40 per head

Please return the form either by email (Blakelb@parliament.uk) or post to me Laura Blake, Association of Former MPs, House of Commons, Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, LONDON, SW1A 2NE



Queen Elizabeth House

A NOTE FROM THE SCOTTISH BRANCH

Gordon Banks



THE SCOTTISH BRANCH met on 16th February 2023 in Queen Elizabeth House in Edinburgh and we are extremely grateful for the continued hospitality from the Secretary of State for Scotland and his staff, who looked after us with great care and thoughtfulness.

On the day, a planned meeting of the Executive of the branch was reduced to a discussion between the Chair and Vice-Chair due to an absence of other Executive members. This was extenuated by the resignation of our Treasurer, Anne McGuire due to her permanent relocation to Barra and the difficulties this poses, and our newly appointed Secretary Lindsay Roy being on holiday at this point.

The All Members meeting was sparsely attended. However, in the business section of the meeting we dealt with items including:

1. Filling vacant officers' position
2. Future meetings and speakers
3. Funding
4. Recent activities of the UK Association

After the business section was completed we were pleased to be addressed by Lord Offord, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for the Scotland Office.

Lord Offord, spoke frankly about pressing parliamentary and political issues facing Scotland including the resignation the First Minister, the campaign to replace her, the actions of both the Scottish and UK Governments in respect of the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) bill, his role as a Minister, the purpose and function of our Branch and the political future facing Scotland.

After his contribution, the minister kindly dealt with questions from attendees on a range of matters including expanding on the foregoing issues and the impact of Brexit on fishing and farming communities in the southwest of Scotland.

A meeting of Office Bearers and Executive members will be held in the coming weeks and all relevant parties will be notified accordingly along with Sir David Hamilton who has offered to assist in the short term.

Our next All Members meeting will be held in the summer and all branch members are encouraged to attend this. Notification will be issued in due course.

Can I also encourage branch members to consider attending, where possible, the planned UK Association events in Westminster on 27th April and 13th July, the latter being our summer reception in Mr Speaker's Apartment

Gordon.banks@cartmore.com



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

John Austin



THE THE SERIES OF WINTER EVENTS with the Parliamentary Studies students at Exeter University went ahead as planned with the following speakers: Adrian Sanders (in person) on Whips and Rebels, Sir David Hanson (online) on Codes of Conduct for MPs and Ministers. Unfortunately, a session with Debra Shipley on How Backbenchers can make a difference had to be postponed due to rail strikes but will be rescheduled later this year. A further, larger in-person event with Sir Vince Cable for the Department of Politics and the Centre for Elections, Media and Participation was held in January on economic policy making in government.

We continued our link with Westminster University with Helen Jones speaking on the Blair/Brown years and with Brunel University where Tom Levitt spoke on Accountability to Parliament.

A new contact has been established with Nottingham University and, in November, Ian Lucas talked about the work of Select Committees. We also responded to an approach from the Collyer's 6th form College in Horsham where Sir Vince Cable talked and answered questions about careers in Parliament and politics.

We continue to work with the Edinburgh Political Union at Edinburgh University and, in December, sessions were held with former MEP Julie Ward (in person) on the rise of the far right, and Sir Hugh Bayley (in person) on UK Aid to developing countries.

Some of our members are also engaged in talks to schools organised by Speakers for Schools and a summary of activity during the current academic year will be included in our next report.

Our AGM will be held to coincide with the Association's All-Member meeting and reception scheduled for 13th July.

Reforming the House of Lords



THE BROWN COMMISSION, AND THE BACK STORY

Andy McSmith

A Commission chaired by Gordon Brown has produced an ambitious proposal to replace the House of Lords with an Assembly of the Nations and Regions.

The new Assembly would be less than a quarter of the size of the current Lords, with around 200 members, directly elected.

Like the Lords, the new assembly would have no role in forming a government, nor in determining levels of tax and spending, nor could it reject legislation, under most circumstances. But it would scrutinise and amend, as the current House of Lords does, plus it would have certain powers to safeguard the constitution, and to consider specifically the views of the nations and regions of the UK.

The Assembly would have a new power to throw out legislation that relates to “constitutional statutes” – in other words, it could prevent an elected government from breaching certain pre-defined constitutional laws, principles and conventions. Where there is a

dispute about whether it is exceeding that power, the Supreme Court could adjudicate.

Some might say that we have been here before. In 2000, a Royal Commission chaired by Lord Wakeham, the former Conservative Chief Whip, called for a second chamber that could be an ‘effective check’ in the House of Commons, without challenging its authority, and would give the English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland a ‘formally constituted voice’.

In 2002, Robin Cook, Leader of the Commons, put five proposals before MPs, ranging from an upper house that was 100 per cent elected, to one that was wholly appointed, with three hybrids. Each proposal was voted down.

When the Coalition Government was formed in 2010, the Agreement which both parties signed promised to “bring forward proposals for a wholly or mainly elected upper chamber on the basis of proportional representation”. In 2012, the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, presented a Bill that proposed that, over time, there would be 360 elected and 120 appointed members of a reduced upper house. The Bill failed, after a dispute with Labour over procedure and a rebellion by backbench Conservative MPs.

Labour’s election manifestos in 2015 and 2019 promised ‘an elected Senate of the Nations and Regions’.

And since 1999, governments have

It would be hard to find anyone who would argue in principle to leave the House of Lords exactly as it is

nibbled away at Lord’s reform. The biggest change was the removal of all but 92 of the hereditary peers. The composition of that group of 92 is kept up to date by elections on a very limited franchise, creating the bizarre anomaly that the only ‘elected’ members of the House of Lords are men with titles they have inherited from someone in the family.

More recent reforms make it possible for a member of the Lords to resign, or to be expelled if he or she has brought Parliament into disrepute. This most recent reform was not respectful. There are four peers, including a shadow minister, who have spent time in prison.

It would be hard to find anyone who would argue in principle to leave the House of Lords exactly as it is. Recent experience suggests that while small changes can be brought in without too much pain, any attempt at radical change runs a high chance of failure.

But is the time nearly ripe for serious reform? In the following pages, Baroness Liddell says, cautiously, yes – but not so as to cause Parliament to lose sight of more urgent matters, while Baroness Stuart says that she had come to believe that it is better not to have an elected second chamber at all.

continued on p.6 ➔



Reforming the House of Lords



A REFORMED HOUSE? – YES. AN ELECTED SECOND CHAMBER? – NO!

Gisela Stuart

In March this year, Lord Grocott asked a question about the regional representativeness of the House of Lords. Ministers did not challenge his assertion that the South-East region, outside London, had something like 20% of the membership.

In other words, more than the east Midlands, the west Midlands, Wales, the north-west and the north-east combined. More questions followed. What about the bishops, the hereditaries, the trade unions, the third sector, other faiths and last, but not least, local government? As always, every single contribution had merit, but collectively they failed to go to the core of the problem.

What is the House of Lords for? The options range from being a Chamber of expertise which scrutinises legislation, a body that reflects the geographical and regional interests of the four nations, a guardian of constitutional checks and balances and for some, it could be the chamber that represents the United Kingdom, if we were to create an English Parliament.

Once we have answered the question of function, the composition will flow as a logical consequence. Everyone is in favour of reform in general, but in practice even the smallest steps which challenge the status quo are fiercely resisted.

We still have by-elections for hereditary peers, and Prime Ministers and party leaders show little appetite for giving up their power of patronage. Paradoxically,



the SNP's refusal to make nominations, is creating problems of a different kind.

Reform of the House of Lords is not going to win the next general election for any party, and I don't expect any Prime Minister picking a fight over constitutional arrangements which won't win votes. But even doing nothing will come at a cost. The House of Lords will grow in numbers, behave more and more like the Commons without the democratic legitimacy, and Scotland and the regions of England will continue to be under represented.

But there are some things which can and should be done now.

First, at the next State Opening, when Black Rod summons the Commons, the Speaker of the House, the Prime Minister and the Party leaders should be accompanied by the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. If this is the Parliament of the United Kingdom, then all the First Ministers should be present to hear His Majesty's speech.

Second, whilst newly appointed members should be entitled to retain their titles for life, their right to participate in the legislative process of the second chamber should be time limited. I would argue for 20 years maximum, with a first break after 10 years, to be renewed for another ten years as long as there is evidence of having participated in proceedings. The right to vote in general elections would be restored, once a member has given up the right to participate in legislating.

Third, regional elected mayors should be given the right to nominate representatives for their cities and regions. The individual membership could change and rotate, but the Bishops Benches illustrate that there is a model that could be adapted. 26 seats are automatically reserved for the Church of England. Only Canterbury, York, London, Durham and

I am no longer persuaded by a wholly or even partly directly elected second Chamber

Winchester are always represented, the remaining 21 seats are allocated according to seniority. The question of whether the Church of England should have this privilege at all, will have to wait for another day. In addition, if there is a blatant absence of nominations of members from a particular party or part of the four nations, the House of Lords Appointments committee should have the power to redress that imbalance.

In the long run, and as part of a wider review of our constitutional arrangements, the Lords should more clearly represent and reflect the component parts of the United Kingdom and their total numbers should be capped at a ratio to the number of MPs in the House of Commons.

I am no longer persuaded by a wholly or even partly directly elected second Chamber. It challenges the supremacy of the Commons, blurs the lines of accountability and responsibility without increasing voters' representation and is most likely to benefit the patronage of political parties.

We should strengthen the House of Lords' guardianship role. Retaining the power of veto over extending the life of a Parliament, it should also have sole power to grant referendums if it considers that the question involves a matter which is either irreversible or of great national importance.

In the meantime we should retain the obscure process of by elections for hereditary peers as a constant reminder that Lords Reform is unfinished business.

Baroness Stuart of Edgbaston was MP for Birmingham Edgbaston, 1997–2017. She entered the House of Lords in 2020

IT WON'T BE SIMPLE, BUT IT HAS TO BE DONE

Helen Liddell

Getting rid of the House of Lords will not be quick. That was the lesson of last time there was a change in the role of the Lords. And out of 820 members, we have to convince a majority to vote themselves out of existence.



In the 21st Century, is it right that we should have 92 Hereditary Peers having influence over our laws?

Should it be a priority?

Yes, if the cost of living crisis has been fixed and the NHS has reached the sunlit uplands and the jobs crisis has been resolved and we have established a new relationship with Europe. And the trains run on time All of us who went through the last reform know it is time consuming, disrupts the Parliamentary calendar and looks like navel gazing to people who want immediate help with the turmoil of their lives.

Is it needed? Oh yes.

The Brown Commission has scoped out an alternative, an elected second chamber called the Assembly of the Nations and Regions, but there are many gaps in that idea that need filling.

How would elections take place, especially when many parts of the UK do not yet have devolved institutions? What electoral system would be used? The idea that elected representatives from other nations and regions could take part leaves open how to guarantee a second chamber with the self confidence to challenge the status quo.

Like many, I am nervous about an elected second chamber. Having been an MP, I am concerned that those who also have an electoral mandate could challenge the authority of the Commons. And I am not alone in that fear, and neither is it an exclusively British anxiety. Out of 79 different systems around the world for filling a second chamber, only 20 are wholly directly elected. Spain has a chamber that is directly and indirectly elected, Italy has a mix of indirectly elected and appointed. Ireland has directly and indirectly elected, and appointed.

I like the idea of a hybrid chamber, a balance of elected and appointed. One major reason for looking at appointed members is to preserve the expertise for which the House of Lords is recognised.

There are disabled members, scientists, a former Governor of the Bank of England, senior diplomats, senior military, and many more in the current House who bring great value to a revising Chamber. Standing for election would not occur to them.

We also need an Appointments Commission that is freed from the influence of a PM and has statutory backing. Every member of the new Chamber should be subjected to the same level of scrutiny as crossbench members now. Those of us who come into the present second chamber on the recommendation of a Party leader are only expected to have paid our taxes and stayed out of jail! That is not acceptable.

In the 21st Century, is it right that we should have 92 Hereditary Peers having influence over our laws? Some are very committed and knowledgeable and an elected and appointed system should ensure they have a chance at continued membership, but in the modern world it is absurd that they should have the power to decide on our laws just because an ancestor was a friend of Henry VIII. The irony is that they are the only ones elected, given the strange system of by-elections among their own number.

There is the even more difficult issue about the 26 Bishops and Archbishops. There are serious constitutional issues around their place in the State, but I recall that in past negotiations the Church felt 16 could work.

The Institute for Government has scoped out some quick changes not needing legislation that could get us started, allowing immediate priorities for the country to be dealt with. Put in a size cap that is no greater than the size of the Commons is one of them, with a 'two out, one in' limit on membership. And before the end of that first Parliament, we can move to the legislation that takes

us to a proper democratic outcome for a second chamber.

The Brown Commission is right to say that the overcentralised system of Government in the UK makes many feel like 'second class citizens in their own country'. Putting in place a much more decentralised system of Government that recognises the needs of different parts of the country will be a step to reinvigorating the political system in the United Kingdom, but we have to be confident it will work.



Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke was MP for Monklands East, 1994–97 and Airdrie and Shotts, 1997–2010. She joined the House of Lords in 2010



Mitropix/Alamy Stock Photo

THE HOUNDING OF MAUREEN COLQUHOUN

Sally Keeble

A public tribute to Maureen Colquhoun has been held in Northampton – forty years after the local Labour Party sought to deselect for the crime of being a lesbian.

Maureen Colquhoun was an MP for a little over five years, but left an enduring mark on British public life and politics as the first open LGBTQ+ MP.

The vitriol heaped on her for coming out in 1976 was enough to deter others. No MP voluntarily came out until Chris Smith did, in 1984. And Angela Eagle, who gave last month's memorial lecture in Northampton, said that when she was considering declaring her sexuality in 1997, Maureen's advice was, "Don't."

Even by political standards, the treatment of Maureen was brutal, and her subsequent erasure from our collective consciousness cruel. Angela who gave the first major public tribute to Maureen as part of LGBTQ+ history month, spoke movingly about her role:

"As I look at the confident assertion of many LGBTQ+ identities especially amongst the younger generations now living their lives more freely, more openly, and more joyfully, I know that we have Maureen's pioneering example to thank for the progress."

The event in Northampton came over 40 years after her Constituency Labour Party tried to deselect Maureen, and six years after the constituency sent a letter of appreciation to Maureen who continued to serve as a Labour councillor in Hackney and then the Lake District, until finally bowing out of elected politics at the age of 86.

Angela described the socially conservative Britain at the time Maureen was elected. Sex between consenting gay adults – outlawed by a piece of legislation promoted by a previous Northampton MP – had been legalised only seven years previously. The 1970s was the decade of

the Labour Government's Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Employment Protection Act and the decade Women's Liberation was founded. After the October 1974 General Election the number of women MPs peaked at 4.3 per cent, 27 out of 635 MPs.

Parliament was not kind to Maureen, a feisty and outspoken politician, who dubbed it a "maleocracy."

"She deplored the strong expectation, not least coming from the Speaker, that women were expected to deal with 'women's issues,'" said Angela, "when they were just as anxious as any other MP to speak on a far wider range of topics. In choosing which issues to highlight, Maureen was well ahead of her time and a genuine feminist pioneer."

She promoted private members bills to provide gender equality on public bodies and to end discrimination against sex workers. It was passage of the former that she met the woman who was to become the love of her life, Barbara "Babs" Todd, Editor of *Sappho*. She left her husband Keith, and the two women set up home together.

Cue media mayhem. Angela described how, "It was the occasion of a joint housewarming and birthday party for Barbara in March 1976 which led to Maureen being outed by Nigel Dempster in his vicious *Daily Mail* gossip column."

"In her memoir Maureen notes that one of the party guests had been blackmailed for information about the relationship. She says: 'There was never, not once, ever any attempt to hide our relationship, and I have always sought to give us status as a couple, for I believe it to be, as I do all gay relationships, as valid and entitled to respect as any other relationship.'

Complaints to the Press Council failed to stop the media harassment of Maureen, Babs, their children, friends and family. Angela described the attempts by the local party to deselect Maureen, as well as the lack of active support from her parliamentary colleagues.

"When I was considering whether to come out 22 years later," said Angela, "Maureen's appalling experience weighed heavily on my mind. Journalist Linda McDougal later asked Maureen what her advice to me would have been had I asked her for it. Maureen's response was unequivocal. 'Don't do it.'"

After losing her seat in the 1979 General Election, Maureen continued to be active in politics, and she and Babs married in 2015 at the ages of 85 and 82 respectively.

The local Party sent a letter of appreciation to Maureen in 2017. At last month's tribute event, Lucy Rigby, Labour's current prospective parliamentary candidate for Northampton North, read out the note that Maureen wrote to Mairi Todd about it:

*'Dearest MaiMai and Kay,
You can imagine my surprise after all the heartbreak.*

But it's undeniably here, and I'm Happy!!!

Much Love, Maureen'

Maureen was succeeded in Northampton North by the extreme right-wing, anti-European Conservative, Tony Marlow whom I had great pleasure in ousting in 1997. Since the memorial lecture I have been approached to work on a project about Maureen.

Sally Keeble was MP for Northampton North, 1997–2010



THE CHURCHILL ARCHIVES

John Cockcroft

Purpose-built in 1973, to house some 3000 boxes of Sir Winston Churchill's papers, The Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge is a world-leading collection of 20th Century history.

Nestled within the grounds of Churchill College, itself the National and Commonwealth Memorial to Sir Winston, it encompasses air-conditioned reading rooms, secure storage rooms, a sophisticated conservation laboratory and a sorting room whereby raw historical documents are placed into boxes.

The heart of the centre's mission is to preserve and provide access to the materials in its care. Whilst The Churchill Papers form the original hub of the collection they have served as the launch pad for a larger endeavour that is still very much alive and ongoing: a wide-ranging Archive of the Churchill era and the years following covering those finds of public life in which Sir Winston played a personal role or in which he took a personal interest.

Today the Centre holds the papers of almost 600 – and growing – key historical and political figures; contemporaries of Winston Churchill, including friends and family, sitting alongside major political, military and scientific figures such as Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Neil Kinnock, Rosalind Franklin, Sir John Cockcroft and Ernest Bevin.

Allen Packwood, director of the Churchill Archives Centre since 2002, became involved as a young archivist in September 1995 – one of a team brought in to help catalogue and exhibit Churchill's papers. Packwood describes the centre as a repository and research centre. He says: "We are open to anyone wanting to undertake research in the archives. We

are now one of the biggest repositories of modern political papers in the UK – housing politicians, diplomats, advisors, scientists. We remain the closest thing in the UK to a US Presidential library."

Packwood emphasises the centre's pivotal historical role is also contemporary, dynamic and evolving; it is continually collecting papers from former politicians and peers.

Fundraising is a key aspect of the director's role. In addition to having its own endowments, the centre receives grants from specific trusts and the US is an important source of funds for the centre. Churchill's mother was of course American, and the great man himself visited the States in 1895, 1900, 1929 and 1931, and frequently during the war and thereafter.

Today, this wonderful centre has 15 team members working to collate and organise the raw materials, including two conservators looking after the physical well-being of the documents. Packwood explains: "We are now thinking about the next phase, including digitising the collections so that we can have preservation copies while also ensuring the documents are more widely available and accessible.

"As we continue to collect we are taking in material that is formatted as emails or word docs but our new digital preservation system is allowing us to store this material safely."

John Cockcroft was MP for Nantwich, 1974–1979



THE CANDID CANDIDATE

Hugo Summerson

Political Incident No. 3

YOU LEARN A LOT during campaigns.

Conservative Associations in non-Conservative constituencies usually have little cash. The election appeal brings in something, and that's about it.

So it was in Barking in 1983 – how to get the message across to the voters on a few hundred quid.

Before the election I stayed with friends who took me to a fair. Floating over the fairground were several advertising blimps. Light bulb! – I'd have one in Barking.

I made enquiries and found that hiring a blimp for a fortnight was just within budget. But it needed a suitable site. One of our members told me that the landlord of the pub beside the Town Hall was a supporter. I went to see him. Would he allow a pickup to be parked in his yard for tethering the blimp? He was enthusiastic.

The blimp duly arrived, was inflated and went aloft. It floated serenely right over the Town Hall, the banners on both sides proclaiming in huge letters "Summerson Conservative for Barking".

That blimp caused more than a flutter. Thousands saw it – "it's like a great blue whale!" someone cried –and Labour's majority fell by 3,000.

After polling day the blimp was removed. Then the hire company called me.

"You know that blimp you hired?"

"Yes."

"It's got quite a few little dents in it.

Any idea what caused them?"

"No. Hail, perhaps?"

"They're all on the underside."

Strange!

I called the Association chairman, one of three Conservative councillors in Barking. He laughed and laughed.

"Labour councillors were up on the Town Hall roof with airguns every night" he told me.

So what I learned in that campaign was that if you want to puncture – silently – a blimp flying a hundred and fifty feet up airguns will not do. You need a harpoon.

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

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



ALISTAIR BURT
Bury, 1983–1997; North
East Bedfordshire,
2001–2019

MORE BY ACCIDENT THAN DESIGN, which I suspect is familiar to most of us, I have a pattern of life offering something new, some use of past experience and every now and again that which was a holy of

holies in our lives, a ‘weekend’.

I am the Pro-Chancellor of Lancaster University, a thriving, excellent teaching and research institution, and chair the University Council. It takes me back to my northern roots regularly, and I love to throw the tent in the back of the car and head to a campsite after Council to walk on the Lakeland fells.

I valued my time at the Foreign Office and DFID highly, and now use that experience working with policy think tanks and conflict resolution groups, giving me the opportunity to return to the MENA region from time to time. I am still the UK’s Commissioner on the International Commission on Missing Persons, a treaty-based body working to ensure closure, and justice, for the families of those missing through conflict.

Eve continues to work in Parliament with a new business offering support in staff recruitment and appraisal, and I chair the Association of Conservative Clubs, so we stay in touch with political life.

It’s not all been plain sailing. I miss it, particularly the shared experiences of life with friends, and it has taken time to replace a Commons vocation of thirty-two years. But the occasional weekend with no diary commitments is not yet taken for granted!



WALTER SWEENEY
Vale of Glamorgan,
1992–1997

AFTER MY HEAVY ELECTION DEFEAT in the 1997 election, when my miniscule majority of 19 votes disappeared in the first vibration of the swingometer, my wife Nuala and I decided to move to Yorkshire where I had lived

before we met and before I was selected as PPC for the Vale of Glamorgan in 1989.

We sold our house quickly. Nuala, a consultant radiologist at the Royal Gwent, gave six months notice and soon found a similar post in Yorkshire. Meanwhile, I moved back to my old house in the attractive market town of Beverley where I became a house husband, looking after our (then) two daughters aged two and one. Nuala visited us every weekend, driving a round trip of 520 miles. Despite the strain on Nuala, this was a happy time for

me as I was able to bond with the children whom I had hardly seen while working as an MP.

One week after losing my seat, I put up a brass plate and resumed general practice as a solicitor. A phone call to the CPS procured two days a week of agency prosecuting and the rest of the week was spent doing conveyancing and private client work. At age 73, I am still a consultant and provide locum cover for solicitors on holiday.

In 2005, we bought Newbegin House, a 12 bedroomed Georgian property in the middle of Beverley, and after extensive renovations, opened a five star gold B&B which last year won an award from the Good Hotel Guide as B&B of the Year. I also run a 5 star gold self catering cottage.

Our three daughters have all graduated and have their own house in London.



PETER BRADLEY
The Wrekin, 1997–2010

JUST AS ELECTION TO WESTMINSTER marks a high point in any political career, so, as every MP eventually discovers, exiting can feel like a sharp descent, even a decline.

But that sense of lost direction can become a blessing. Once I’d recovered my bearings, I realised I was freer than I’d been

since my student days to think my own thoughts and do my own thing.

I spent some time reflecting on and writing about what I’d learned in politics. Then, drawing on those lessons, I co-founded a charity, Speakers’ Corner Trust, which reflects them. It’s my belief that democracy is only as good as we collectively make it. It demands active citizenship: if we do not rise to that challenge, politicians, no matter how able and well-intentioned, are bound to fail.

And neither citizenship nor democracy can flourish without free, open debate. SCT was established to encourage people back down their garden paths to exchange, face-to-face with their neighbours and their elected representatives, their ideas and opinions about the issues that matter to them.

After ten rewarding years as SCT’s director, a return to the creativity I’d valued as a young man became increasingly important to me.

I spent five years researching and writing *The Last Train*, which was published last year (and generously reviewed by Louise Ellman in *Order Order*). Now I have multiple writing and other projects on the drawing board.

I wouldn’t have foregone my time in Parliament. But I’m grateful to be able now to pursue the creative bent which I’d side-lined so many decades ago.



LAURA SANDYS South Thanet, 2010–2015

WHEN I LEFT PARLIAMENT I was branded a former MP – on the whole a real turnoff to potential employers, unless of course you want to be a lobbyist! Well, I had done that before I was in Parliament and was not going back there.

So, what did I really know about? Luckily I was in Parliament for only five years so still retained some knowledge of the world outside and, having had a career in energy, wanted to focus totally on climate, energy transition and renewables – and also food.

I uncovered the geek in me and worked with Imperial College and the Energy Systems Catapult to develop new policy ideas and be radical, branding my company Challenging Ideas. I hoped not to disappoint. Since then, I have been very lucky to be appointed to several boards that want the geek rather than the politician, but sometimes like a bit of the politics thrown into the mix.

I have been very pleased to be asked by Government to chair some taskforces again, not because I had been in Parliament but because I had become much more technical and deep about subjects.

In addition I set up a charity called the Food Foundation that has gone from strength to strength fighting for free school meals, policy to address obesity and healthy diets – so a great outlet for campaigning and making trouble.

My advice to former MPs is to rebrand as quickly as possible, show that you can add value from your real-life expertise and then the political acumen and knowledge becomes an attractive added value – but not the main pitch!



KITTY USSHER Burnley, 2005–2010

I 'RETIRED' FROM THE COMMONS in 2010, aged 39, because I didn't want that life for my children, then aged 2 and 4. It was the right decision, and I'm pleased to say we got the private, secure family life we wanted, but it was also an emotional wrench.

I eventually went back to public duty in a different way, spending two years teaching maths in inner-city secondary schools on Lucy Kellaway's *Now Teach* programme for career changers; a brilliant and cathartic experience on the front line that I highly recommend. Our attempts to wean ourselves from Burnley football club were less successful: the whole family remains regular attenders at Turf Moor.

Work-wise, I feel lucky to have had the chance to broaden my experience. I learnt to run a business as CEO of Demos think

tank and then used that knowledge to set up my own research company conducting data-driven public policy research projects for large corporates and charities. We ended up specialising in the implications for employers of having team members stuck on low pay. (For the record, part-time promotion routes are crucial.)

More recently I've taken on two non-executive directorships for contrasting financial services companies – the UK board of the fintech Revolut, and as an asset manager for the Local Government Pension Scheme. Then last year I finally went back in-house, as chief economist for the Institute of Directors, where I'm enjoying continuing my explorations into the workings of the UK economy alongside our community of entrepreneurs.



DAVID HOWARTH Cambridge, 2005–2010

I ABANDONED the Commons in 2010, immediately returning to my former job as a full-time academic at Cambridge. I founded a masters' programme on public policy, wrote a book about what lawyers really do (clue: it's not litigation) and produced

many academic research articles, both in my original field of civil liability and in constitutional law, an area in which my experience in Parliament has been invaluable.

I'm now Professor of Law and Public Policy at Cambridge and Head of the Department of Land Economy. The Department's work covers environmental law and policy, planning, housing and regional policy, and real estate finance – a real mixture, but one that brings me back into contact with topics I worked on in Parliament, such as climate and energy policy, and others that take me back to my time as the leader of a local authority.

I try to give lectures across the year groups, which currently means teaching constitutional law to first years, contract law to second years, the relationship between law and economics to third years and a course on Legislation to masters students.

I have found time for some public service, including eight years as an Electoral Commissioner, which occasionally brought me into contact with the new hyper-partisan political world of screaming social media and bizarrely confected outrage, but which was mainly about overseeing sensible decision-making by dedicated and impartial public officials. I also carried out some tasks for the Commons authorities, including helping with the implementation of the Cox Report on bullying and harassment.

As for politics I have confined myself mainly to giving advice when asked. But occasionally issues arise that the media think I should be talking about publicly and sometimes I give in to the temptation, most recently on the appalling Elections Bill, with its threat to the independence of the Electoral Commission, and before that on Boris Johnson's undeclared décor donations. When that happens, people ask 'Do you miss it?' My answer is always, 'A bit, but then I remember Twitter'.

LEAVING PARLIAMENT "SMOOTHING THE CLIFF EDGE..."

John Austin

My paper on the difficulties faced by MPs leaving Parliament was submitted to the Administration Committee's Inquiry into General Election Planning with an addendum based on the responses that I had received from our members. In November, I gave further oral evidence to the Committee in closed session and followed up some matters in correspondence. The Committee published its Report* in February.

The Administration Committee agreed with our assertion that the House authorities had a 'duty of care' to serving MPs, as well as when they leave, and has made a number of proposals to assist the transition to life after Parliament in line with our suggestions. The Report notes that "Many find themselves on a financial and career cliff edge following the loss of employment and are confronted with the task of seeking a new career identity and sense of purpose".

The situation is different from the time when most of our members left Parliament, as several changes had already taken place. The Members Services Team (MST) was created after the 2019 General Election, and has recently expanded to give added support to Members and their staff. There have also been changes in IPSA.

There have been many changes to improve the experience of Members when they join the House but the Committee acknowledges that there remains a significant gap in the way the House Service supports Members when they leave; a time that can be one of the most challenging.

At the last election defeated MPs had served for an average of less than nine years and the Committee notes that "for most, this career does not end in retirement or wealth".

The challenges

The Committee has set itself 5 challenges:

- Improving the accountability and preparedness of the House Service and IPSA;
- Valuing and recognising departing MPs' contribution;
- Provision for professional career transition support to departing MPs;
- Creating a professional development service that equips MPs with appropriate skills;
- Modifying the winding-up process & timescale and ensuring support into career change.

The impact of leaving

The Association's Executive welcomes the Committee's recognition of the emotional and psychological impact of defeat or leaving the House, not only on MPs but those in their support network including family and staff. The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service have committed to provide support for departing MPs until another appropriate service is in place and MST is willing to work with the Association to look at the best way of supporting departing MPs.

The Administration Committee also felt that the contribution of Members to public service and democracy was not sufficiently recognised.

The Report recognises the difficulties faced by retiring and defeated MPs in planning for their future and acknowledges the lack of career transition support. In response to our suggestion that "discretionary grants for education, training, employment

advice and for skills assessment" be made available to former MPs, the Committee suggests that training should be offered to MPs during their time in Parliament that takes account of the difficulties faced by many MPs when making the next step in their career.

Winding up allowance

Many of the comments received from our members related to the unsatisfactory nature of the winding-up allowance, the lack of flexibility and the tight timescale, the unnecessary bureaucratic processes and the poor response of IPSA. IPSA confirmed its disappointment at the standard of service that some outgoing MPs received and committed to working more collaboratively with the House Service. The Committee also acknowledged our concerns about data protection issues when transferring active constituency casework to a successor following an election or boundary changes.

The Report records some interesting comparisons regarding loss-of-office/redundancy payments with other Parliaments, and also with other UK legislatures. The Committee felt that the loss-of-office payment should be treated as a redundancy package and not be linked to the winding-up process.

In response to the problems experienced by some of our members with the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund, due to the complexity of the scheme and the tax implications and benefits, the Committee suggests that members should have access to sound financial advice funded by the scheme.

Duty of care

The Committee shares our view that the political parties also have a duty of care to departing MPs.

The key conclusions and recommendations can be summarised as follows:

The House Service, IPSA and the political parties must recognise their duty of care and work together to ensure Members receive the support they need when they leave Parliament and establish how this will be achieved by the end of 2023.

The House Service should work with former members to ensure they have access to appropriate well-being services.

The House Service will work with the Association of Former Members to raise awareness of its work and a member, or members, of AFMP Executive be consulted on shaping the wellbeing and practical support for outgoing MPs.

Recognition of service

The contribution to public service by departing MPs should be recognised and marked appropriately, possibly with an event or presentation of a medallion of service.

The House Service should gather or commission empirical data on the trajectory of MPs leaving the House.

* *Smoothing the cliff edge: supporting MPs at their point of departure from elected office* First Report (2022-23) of the House of Commons Administration Committee (HC 209) published 8 February 2023

Proven programmes encouraging career planning operate in other sectors, public and private, and the House Service should work with a service contractor to develop and provide a career transition programme to support outgoing MPs.

Planning for the future

Career coaching should be available to sitting MPs to help identify their skills and experience and areas for development and future career planning which should form part of a comprehensive career development programme from the day they arrive in Parliament.

The House Service should work with accredited providers including universities and colleges to provide certified micro-qualifications capturing the core skills which MPs use.

IPSA should continue to improve the training of its staff dealing with former Members. The winding-up process needs reform to provide greater flexibility. IPSA should conduct a review of the winding-up periods in 2019 and set an evidenced based timetable for the next election with the ability to extend it on a case-by-case basis.

Continuity of casework

The House should provide options on ways to ensure the continuity of active casework where a constituent's elected representative has changed due to a general election or boundary changes.

It should not be assumed that departing MPs have alternative sources of income to shoulder costs incurred in the winding-up process. The loss-of-office payment should be treated as a redundancy package to support MPs in transition from the House and payment should not be contingent on the completion of the winding-up task.

IPSA should provide examples of comparable redundancy schemes in other sectors to test the loss-of-office payment system for MPs and use as a benchmark for a future review.

Pensions advisers needed

In view of the complexities of the McCloud judgment and its impact on the Members' Pension Scheme, IPSA should fund the training of three pension advisers to ensure members of the PCPF have access to financial advice on their pensions for which they should pay a fee.

PCPF should work with the House and the party Whips to ensure Members are aware of the pension situation and any changes.

The Report has now gone to the House of Commons Commission for consideration.

I am grateful to members who submitted information and opinions to me (which I hope to have fully incorporated in my evidence), and to the Chair (Sir Charles Walker MP) and members and staff of the Administration Committee for their courtesy and assistance and also the Speaker and representatives of IPSA and the MST for meeting with us and listening to our concerns.

I believe the Report of the Administration Committee fully addresses the concerns we expressed and, in its recommendations, goes further than I had expected. If implemented, the recommendations will be of great benefit to sitting and future MPs and I hope they will show appreciation by joining the Association when their time comes.

John was MP for Woolwich 1992–97 and Erith & Thamesmead 1997–2010.

If you would like a copy of the full report please contact Laura Blake, blakel@parliament.uk.

BOWLS IN A FRAGILE WORLD



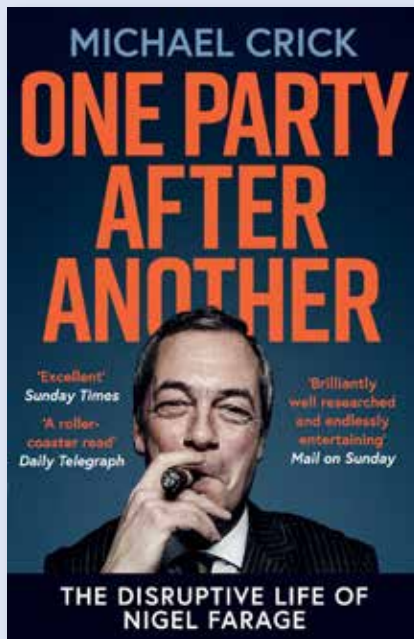
Debra Shipley, artist (and ex-MP) created paintings and three-dimensional works which aim to be beautiful, and to draw into focus the urgent need to protect the planet from the man-made pollution that is threatening a global crisis.

"My interest in bowls has spanned over 50 years," she says. "I have a small personal collection which, for me, represents people around the globe. I originally studied Anthropology, and the

ways in which people interact with their environment continues to fascinate me. My bowls are made from material locally available to me – junk mail, discarded, envelopes, packaging. They have no practical purpose but will, I hope, take on a motivational one."

The exhibition will be on show in the Old House Museum, Bakewell, Derbyshire, from April to November.

A GOOD READ



A SURFER ON THE ANTI-EU TIDE

Denis MacShane

*One Party After Another:
The Disruptive Life of Nigel Farage*

By Michael Crick

Published by Simon and Schuster

FOR ANY MP OF ANY PARTY the impact of Nigel Farage this century has been enormous. Now we have a 600 page well-researched, well written biography by Michael Crick, whose political reporting over four decades has been top-notch.

Everything you wanted to know about Farage from his missing testicle to his drinking, womanising, and amazing expenses he was able to claim as an MEP are set out in detail.

Farage is a creature of Britain's failure to settle its relationship with Europe from the moment Denis Healey, the Labour Party's International Secretary in 1950, sent a memorandum to Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin explaining why the UK should have nothing to do with the nascent European partnership of the European Coal and Steel Community.

Crick concludes: "It's hard to think of any other politician in the last 150 years who has had such an impact on British history without being a senior member of one of the major parties at the time."

Really? In 1997, before anyone had heard of Farage, Bill Cash threatened to sue me for saying he wanted to leave the EU. I was protected by Commons privilege but when I entered the Commons in May 1994 I was amazed at the rising tide of hostility to Europe.

Labour had been the anti-European party between 1950 and 1990. Now the Conservatives were determined to be more Bennite or Footite than Tony or Michael in hostility to Europe.

Did Farage create that? The BBC promoted him at every opportunity. BBC Question Time, the most watched political

For aficionados of this era in our political history this book is unbeatable and a terrific read for all who enjoy the political game

show, had 50 MEP panellists, in the decade 2010 to 2019: 47 from UKIP/Brexit Party (22 times Farage), and 3 Conservative Party MEPs (each time the anti-European Daniel Hannan), but not a single Labour, Liberal, Green, SNP, Plaid or even a moderate Conservative MEP. Every time the public saw an MEP on this programme, it was one who sought to denigrate the EU.

Yet despite massive boosting by the BBC and other media Farage could never win a seat in the Commons. Everyone enjoyed his cheeky chappy mocking and scorn for Europe but no-one would entrust a law-making mandate to him.

Labour had introduced a foolish version of proportional representation for elections to the European Parliament which gave Farage, UKIP and the BNP a boost. But no-one except the MEPs themselves took the EP seriously. In all EU member states EP elections like local council elections were protest votes against the national government party.

Like Joe McCarthy in the US, or the Le Pens, father and daughter in France, Farage was good at playing on fears of malign occult foreign powers controlling our democracy.

He did not cause Brexit. David Cameron did with his unilateral decision to hold a populist plebiscite. Every 21st century referendum in an EU nation with Europe on the ballot paper was lost, bar one in Spain. I sat in every Commons debate on Europe between 1994 and 2012. The hostility to Europe grew steadily after Labour won in 1997. William Hague followed by IDS, Michael Howard and David Cameron all followed the strident, populist anti-EU line of Rupert Murdoch, Conrad Black, Lord Rothermere's editors, and the Barclay Brothers.

Farage was their useful idiot, a showman of great skill but never a politician as the word is normally understood. He was always personally pleasant. He commiserated with me after I got into trouble over MP expenses. The demonisation of him by pro-Europeans was silly. If we failed to make our case that was our fault. And the pro-Remain campaign of 2016 was the worst-run campaign in British political history.

We are now in the eighth year since the Brexit vote. Like a Moloch, Brexit has swallowed up David Cameron, Theresa May, Liz Truss, Boris Johnson, Jeremy Corbyn and Nigel Farage and spat out the remains into the dustbin of history.

Brexit is proving to be seriously damaging to UK interests and no-one in politics defends it. Perhaps Nigel Farage does but no-one listens to him anymore. For aficionados of this era in our political history this book is unbeatable and a terrific read for all who enjoy the political game. But slowly one can sense that in Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer adults are back in the room. Putting right the damage of Brexit will take a political generation or longer. But unless Britain wants to opt for the Ottoman or Habsburg fate of slow decline we will need to rebuild a relationship with Europe. And when that happens Farage will be a footnote in political history.

Denis MacShane was MP for Rotherham, 1994–2012.

His book *Brexit: How Britain Will Leave Europe*, written in 2014, predicted the referendum result.

LIZ TRUSS: THE CIRCLING SEEDS OF DESTRUCTION

Jerry Hayes

Out of the Blue

by Harry Cole and James Heale

Published by HarperCollins



What emerges from this book is that Truss is single minded, publicity obsessed and utterly ruthless

I MAKE JUST ONE REQUEST. When history is being re-written, when Truss and her allies claim that she was never given a chance, that she was a victim of the anti growth alliance, wokery, Harry, Meghan and the orthodoxy of shape shifting lizards who run the Treasury; read this book. Unlike Truss's prescient tweet, it hits the ground running.

This book documents how the seeds of destruction circling this woman were staring politicians straight in the face and saying boo, yet for a toxic mixture of revenge, advancement and delusion they chose to ignore the bells, klaxons and red warning lights that tripped wherever she trod. As she said to a visitor at the Foreign Office, 'I think I would be a very good PM there are just two problems: I am weird and I don't have any friends'.

According to Cole and Heale, most ministers were frustrated that she wasn't a team player and leaked so much that Hammond froze his Chief Secretary out of the loop. This was the beginning of her obsessive hatred of Treasury orthodoxy and eventually the culling of officials who were Not Quite Our Type. She told Mark Littlewood of the IEA to lead a march against them, 'make sure you call for everything to be slashed and burned'.

Dominic Cummings, never a man to see a belt without wanting to kick below it, was particularly generous with his vitriol. 'Truly useless...mad as a box of snakes...about as properly crackers as anybody I've met in Parliament....a human hand grenade....she caused chaos rather than get things done'. And without any sense of irony he adds, 'she was the only minister I ever shouted at in Number 10 (because of) her compulsive pathological leaking'. There lies the problem, or one of them. According to the authors when she gets bored, she causes mischief.

To her credit Truss has the occasional moments of self-awareness. 'My whole life has felt surreal....Theresa May (is) such a pacifist, whereas I embrace the chaos. I'm a thrill seeker....there's a danger in politics of being too risk adverse.' And finally, 'I don't know what happens, drama seems to follow me wherever I go. You don't say.

After all, she stiffed the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg over child care. She trashed Michael Gove, of whom she was extremely envious, calling him a 'wood burning Gove' and caused diplomatic havoc by totally ignoring Number 10's orders to move cautiously in trade talks, causing American officials to exclaim, 'what the fuck?'

So, what makes Truss tick? According to a Department for Education official, 'she is not always interested at looking at the evidence'. Which probably explains the havoc wreaked at

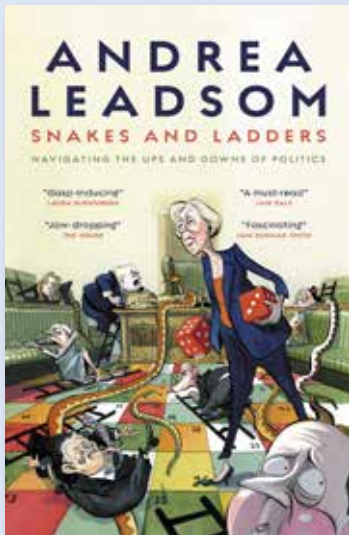
every department she has served. At Justice, where she was the youngest Lord Chancellor since hanging judge Jeffries, her failure to support the judiciary from 'enemies of the people' slurs in the press, caused former Lord Chief Justice Lord Judge to remark that she had 'caused a constitutional crisis'. And she had been tasked to clean up the MOJ known as 'HMS Shitshow'..... At least she gave us comedy gold at the despatch box, 'last week I was at HMP Pentonville which now has patrol dogs whose barking deters drones'. There was not a dry pant in the House.

What emerges from this book is that Truss is single minded, publicity obsessed and utterly ruthless. During the leadership election her spokesman told The Times, 'Rishi Sunak....not fit for office. His aggressive mansplaining and shouting private school behaviour is desperate, unbecoming and is a gift to Labour.' There is a lovely vignette where Kwasi Kwarteng, never a man to miss his mouth with his foot, rang Alastair Jack voicing his fears that Johnson was on his knees. 'If it all goes wrong what happens? Are you a Liz guy?'. Unfortunately, Jack was on speakerphone sitting next to the chief whip.

If you thought that Johnson's Number 10 made clown cars resemble a stately Rolls Royce, one cabinet minister commented that Truss's was 'like Lord of the Flies'. Matt Sinclair, her chief economic advisor was withering. 'Usually, the chancellor's team are economists who are trying to do politics, Kwarteng's team were political aides trying to do economics'.

This book is a fascinating account of the Conservative Party sleep walking into a nightmare. I asked Cole and Heale when they first realised that Truss was batshit crazy. They politely declined to answer. Gentlemen to the last.

Jerry Hayes was MP for Harlow, 1983–1997



FORGET FRIENDSHIPS: WHAT COUNTS IS WHO WINS

Peter Heaton-Jones

Snakes and Ladders: Navigating the Ups and Downs of Politics
By Andrea Leadsom

Published by Biteback

THE GWR SERVICE from Tiverton Parkway to London takes around two hours – my default method of returning to Westminster after a weekend in the constituency. When I boarded that train one Monday morning in July 2016, Andrea Leadsom was within touching distance of becoming Prime Minister. But by the time we rolled into the capital, she was gone – withdrawing from the contest in the eye of a media storm. As I arrived at Paddington, she was facing her Waterloo.

Andrea Leadsom lifts the lid on those events, and much more, in *Snakes and Ladders – Navigating the Ups and Downs of Politics*, which is just out in paperback. “This is it. I’m going to be Prime Minister!”, she exclaimed to her husband on making it to the final two in the race to succeed David Cameron. But the excitement was short-lived. Leadsom gave a now infamous interview to *The Times* in which she said (in effect) that she’d make a better PM because she’s a mother, unlike Theresa May. The fallout caused her to withdraw from the contest, and May was effectively crowned, just I was passing through Reading.

Cameron had gone after failing to win a certain referendum, and Brexit is a constant presence throughout Leadsom’s book. May’s tenure at Number 10, as I remember only too well, was a torrid time on the Tory benches. Friendships were lost, loyalties trashed. The biggest bust-up of the era was, of course, between Boris Johnson and Michael Gove. In her book, Leadsom puts a new spin on these events. No spoilers, but in essence she claims to have been used by Gove to manoeuvre against Johnson, forcing him out of the leadership election.

Dominic Cummings comes off pretty badly too. “I came to despise [his] bullying ways”, she writes, and says he was one of four Downing Street SpAds who “each wielded more power and influence than is healthy in a democracy”. Ouch.

Then there’s John Bercow. Leadsom was Leader of the House when, it is claimed, he muttered the words ‘stupid woman’ at her from the Speaker’s chair. Leadsom tells a great anecdote about how she challenged him over the incident, and then swept off in her ministerial car, leaving him hanging.

Leadsom’s take on all this is faintly depressing: “Again, the lesson of politics at the highest level is that it overrides normal friendships and loyalties. Political allegiances count, and backing the winner is the most important currency.”

This is an entertaining insider’s account. True, if you’re looking for searing analysis or excoriating verdicts, this is not the book for you. But nor is it designed to be. Andrea Leadsom is, well, just too nice for that.

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



THE LONG REACH OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Debra Shipley

She, You, I
By Sally Keeble

Published by Eleanor Press

FIRST, AND FOREMOST this novel is a page turner. Right from the prologue I wanted to know what happened next, and that desire didn’t stop until the final sentence. Indeed, I was left wanting to read the next book by Sally. I ask a lot from the novels I read; I want a book to be enjoyable, something I don’t want to put down; I want to be engaged and involved with the narrative, entertained and simultaneously informed. For me, *She, You, I* gave me everything.

There are many reasons why *She, You, I* is a compelling read, not least it is very well crafted. The narrative guides the reader through the lives of women in the second half of the 20th century, introducing threads which speak of family, love, violence, loss, poverty and wealth, all with a lightness of touch which means that the reader comes to understand things not actually stated. This subtlety of writing makes it both delightful to read and informative. The polished quality of the narrative gradually introduces the reader to the long-reaching consequences of domestic violence, carefully and cleverly exploring some of the little considered or little understood outcomes. This is a type of violence which can time-travel and affect the lives of people many generations later.

However, the cleverness of the writing means that the reader is never explicitly told that this book is about the long-lasting harm which such violence can ignite. Instead, the reader becomes increasingly aware of ever-harming damage embedded in daily lives – the result of long-ago and long forgotten violent behaviour. This alone would make this a great novel, but there is yet more to this book – issues of class and race are introduced with plot lines which are full of surprises. The Chinese story line is particularly revealing and facilitates a pivotal moment in the book. Delightfully quirky events and twists in the story raise questions about relationships, friendships and identity for the reader to seriously mull over and reflect upon, whilst laughing out loud at certain other situations.

I would recommend this book for all readers, it isn’t a niche novel, instead it’s a good read for all, an ideal gift for yourself, your friends and your family.

Debra Shipley was MP for Stourbridge, 1997–2005

TRIBUTES

BETTY BOOTHROYD

8 October 1929 – 26 February 2023

Labour MP for West Bromwich, 1973–1992; Independent MP for West Bromwich and Speaker, 1992–2000

Remembered by Eleanor Laing



UK Parliament

BETTY BOOTHROYD was unique in several ways. Most notably, she was the only woman ever to have been Speaker of the House of Commons. As a pioneering politician, overflowing with wisdom, kindness and personality, she was also an inspiration.

She presided over the House with natural authority. What a wonderful

voice she had. When Betty issued an order, you obeyed!

As a new young Whip, she summoned me to the Chair and gave me good advice about how to conduct a division. I was overawed. I still give that same advice to new Whips today.

My abiding memory, however, is not of Betty in the Chamber but of Betty entertaining in Speaker's House at one of her soirees. At the end of the evening she announced that we would finish with a chorus of "Knees up Mother Brown". There were few volunteers to join her so she beckoned with her sparkling eyes at the youngest women and it was clear that we were under orders to come forward and dance. That was thirty years ago, and I was thirty years younger than Betty but even then she could kick much higher than I could. I will never forget that evening. It was traumatic. And it was fun!

I was sitting on the opposition Whips bench, next to the Chair, when Betty made her valedictory speech. I vividly remember holding back the tears. Emotions were running high. She held the House enthralled, her dignity, pride and affection emanating in equal measure from her words. As the genuine sadness at her imminent departure resounded around the benches, Betty paused her prepared speech, raised her head and said, "Be happy for me!". My tears turned to a smile and I thought, "What a lady! What a performance! What a way to go!".

She did not go, of course. She just moved to the other side of the Palace – and frequently came back to the Commons Tea Room for lunch. I greatly valued the advice she continued to give me when I became Deputy Speaker.

Betty was not only a great Speaker, she was a great Parliamentarian. Throughout her career she shone like a beacon in the Chamber. There were very few role models back then who might encourage a young woman to fight against the tide to try to be elected to Parliament. Betty was not only articulate, clever and determined, she was also elegant, amusing and feminine. That is what made her such an attractive role model. My generation of female politicians will always be eternally grateful for her pioneering spirit and for the shattered glass ceilings she left behind.

TOM PENDRY

10 June 1934 – 26 February 2023

Labour MP for Staybridge and Hyde, 1970–2001

Remembered by Andy Reed



UK Parliament

LORD PENDRY was a veteran of the Labour years in Westminster. An MP for three decades and Peer for another 25 years he will be known by many former colleagues as a political heavyweight – and bruiser, thanks to his boxing career.

I first met Tom Pendry on a shadow ministerial visit to my marginal Loughborough

constituency in 1996 in his role as shadow sports minister. We quickly discovered a shared passion for sports policy and struck up a mutual connection which lasted nearly 27 years.

Sadly for Tom, he was not made the Sports Minister when we entered government in 1997. He was the only shadow minister not to be appointed to a government post, but he did enjoy being known as "The best Minister of Sport we never had". He always cheered me on to pursue my political interest in sport. We created a mutual support group of sports mad MPs who were overlooked for the Sports Minister job!

His passion for sport – boxing and football in particular – should not be defined by that one decision alone. Tom went on to serve the world of sport as Chair of the Sport APPG and in his role as President of the Football Foundation Ltd. He was

diligent and hard working on the issues he took up.

But Tom's career was more than his love of sport. His life spanned the full cycle of post war politics. His memoirs *Taking it on the Chin* highlighted a colourful character who had been a boxer, a solid Labour trade unionist, agent, an MP and Peer. He had spent time in the whips' office in the 1970s and as a Minister in Northern Ireland. The combination of his trade union, and whip's experience showed itself at the AGM of every Sports APPG. Tom always made sure he 'had the numbers' to see off any would-be challenger to the role.

Of course, he would often claim to have persuaded Tony Blair to pursue a political career over lunch in a London restaurant. He had a story and anecdote for nearly every occasion. He also famously took up the case of his constituent Harold Shipman who had complained about cuts in drug funding.

I finally saw him in the Lords during the build up to the debate on Assisted Suicide in the Autumn of 2021. He had been an opponent of abortion and now assisted dying. He was always self-confident in his own views and wasn't easily moved from those positions! This meant he was a steady and persistent campaigner. It was a pity for Tom that he spent so much of his life in opposition. He was of course first and foremost a politician who wanted to change the world. He will be missed by us all.

ROBERT KEY

22 April 1945–3 February 2023

Conservative MP for Salisbury, 1983–2010

Remembered by Andy McSmith

Allstar Picture Library/Alamy

ROBERT KEY was not the sort of MP who set out to make waves. He was a diligent junior minister in three Government departments, Environment, National Heritage, and Transport in 1990–94, and on the back benches continued loyally backing John Major, at a time when loyalty was not the height of fashion in the Tory party. I got to know him

slightly soon after he had begun his career as minister, when he told me – rather optimistically, I thought – that the Government had become alert to the urgency of the ‘green’ agenda.

He was a pleasant, cheerful to talk to, and from what I hear he was also a very diligent constituency MP, but never the sort to pass on insider gossip to a journalist.

One of his most inspired decisions was to hire as his researcher a young woman recently arrived from war-torn Bosnia.

Arminka Helic went on to be William Hague’s adviser, and is now Baroness Helic, a Tory peer. She tweeted: “My first job in Parliament was as a researcher to Robert. The kindest and the most wonderful person. An employer who cared about his staff as much as he cared about his constituency. He will be missed.”

Having largely avoided controversy during his time in the Commons, Robert Key suddenly caused a frisson in Salisbury shortly after the 2019 general election, when he announced that, though he was still a paid-up Conservative, he had ‘lent his vote’

to the Liberal Democrat candidate, because he did not consider Boris Johnson – or Jeremy Corbyn – fit to be Prime Minister.

He added that leaving the EU had been a “disastrous decision” that had made the country poorer, that as a Conservative, he was ‘ashamed’ to be living in ‘Food Bank Britain’ and he was concerned by the Conservative drift to the ‘extreme right’ and Labour’s to the ‘extreme left.’

John Glen, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, who successfully fought to hold Salisbury for the Conservatives in 2019, cannot have been altogether pleased to know that he had got back without his predecessor’s support, but he wrote generously of the MP in whose footsteps he has followed.

He wrote: “For 27 years in Parliament he represented the people of Salisbury with dedication, distinction, and a strong ethos of public service. Rob was the very best of Salisbury, always thinking of what was in the interest of our city – from his three ministerial roles in Government, his position as a member of the General Synod of the Church of England, and his work with Salisbury Cathedral.

“I was delighted to see Rob receive the rare honour of Freedom of the City from Salisbury City Council at the Guildhall in December 2017 – a fitting tribute to his service.

“Many Salisbury residents will sorely miss Rob’s unique contribution to our public life but will always be grateful for the impact he had on all our lives.”

He leaves a wife, Sue, and three children.

ALAN HURST

2 September 1945–31 January 2023

Labour MP for Braintree, 1997–2005

Remembered by colleagues

ALAN HURST was one several people who woke up one morning in 1997 and realised to their own astonishment that they had begun a new career as an MP. For almost 30 years, he had been a councillor in Southend-on-Sea, where he practised as a solicitor. He was also an Essex County Councillor, and agreed to go through the motions of standing as

Labour candidate in Braintree, which the Tory incumbent, Tony Newton, had retained in 1992 with a majority of 17,494. That disappeared, in a swing to Labour of nearly 15 per cent. Alan even held on in 2001, with a majority of just 358.

As a councillor, he had a formidable reputation locally for his oratory, and for his ability to deliver a long speech without notes. His style of delivery, honed more than half a century ago, has been described as ‘old fashioned’.

During his time in the Commons, he never held a government job, but for four years he served on the Agriculture committee. From 2001, he was a member of the Speaker’s Panel, the group of

MPs selected by the Speaker to chair committees that scrutinise legislation and other general committees.

Sally Keeble, who was also on the agriculture committee, remembers him as “a greatly valued and respected colleague.” She says: “He had a quiet integrity and huge commitment to his community which he served as an MP, solicitor, and previously as a councillor. We both served for a while on the same select committee, where Alan impressed with his good humour, diligence and courtesy – qualities which enabled him to win and keep a challenging seat for Labour. He was a gem.”

Ivan Henderson, who held the neighbouring seat of Harwich said that “Alan was a very level headed politician and would always approach things with a great deal of thought before speaking and committing himself to anything, he came across as a quiet man and a real gentleman.” And Michael J. Foster, former MP for Hastings and Rye, described him as “a man of integrity with a deep sense of duty. He was also extremely courteous in all his dealings. A gentle soul and an engaging smile and personality.”

In 2016, he was appointed an ‘Honorary Alderman’ of Southend.

ALICE MAHON

28 September 1937 – 25 December 2022

Labour MP for Halifax, 1987–2005

Remembered by Dawn Primarolo

Allstar Picture Library/Alamy

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND Alice has died.

All those who knew her will have been saddened to hear of her recent passing and countless others will have reason to be grateful for her contribution to The Labour Party, UNISON (previously NUPE) and of course the communities she represented in Halifax.

Alice made friends across the political divides in Westminster. She was a good and loyal friend, who was always prepared to help out. Those of us who were MPs at the same time will remember fondly her sense of fun, infectious laughter, and sharp wit.

When Alice was elected in 1987 there were 21 women Labour MPs, just over 40 women MPs in the House of Commons from all Parties. Alice campaigned throughout her political career for women's rights and was eloquent in her defence of abortion rights, defending a woman's right to choose.

As a member of the Health Select Committee from 1991 to 1997, she was a powerful advocate for the NHS, speaking from her considerable experience as a former nurse. She was a champion for peace, a campaigner for social justice and equality, an advocate for justice in Kashmir and Palestine and a formidable and consistent voice against the war in Iraq. Despite

her criticism of NATO, she served on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly from 1992–2005, chairing one of its sub-committees with distinction, gaining respect from all.

Alice was prepared to stand by her firmly held views and was direct in expressing them. If that meant disagreeing with the Labour Government's policy, then so be it. And she did more than once. She enjoyed her role as PPS to Chris Smith MP when he was Secretary of State for Culture but resigned only a few months into the role over the cut to Single Parent Benefits. When she disagreed with you, she told you why. I know because as a Minister I was a beneficiary of her "advice". But she was never personal, only political.

She passionately believed that our role as MPs was to serve the best interests of working people, guard and extend their rights, ensure that everyone was able to fulfill their potential and strive for peace in the world. She hated injustice and couldn't bear to see inequality. She was a committed socialist and believed in the power of democratic change. As a nurse, trade union representative, trade union studies lecturer and then as an MP, she was determined to make a difference. In her constituency she was loved and respected.

Alice practiced what she believed – that what each of us does – how each of us acts, is fundamentally important to building trust and a better future for all.

JANET ANDERSON

6 December 1949 – 6 February 2023

Labour MP for Rossendale and Darwen, 1992–2010

Remembered by Bridget Prentice

David Willis/Alamy Stock Photo

IT'S TOO EASY to say Janet was a force of nature. Of course, she was, but more than that – she was a force to be reckoned with.

I first came across Janet when I applied to be the Labour candidate in Lewisham East, where she lived. I asked her to support me. She said No. She had already pledged support to Barbara Follett and there would

be no changing her mind. Yet we became firm friends, travelling to and from Westminster together discussing the affairs of the day and who we thought was going up and who was going down. And Janet didn't hold back in her assessment.

There was nothing boring, deferential or safe about Janet. If you crossed her, you knew about it. On the other hand, she was the most fearfully loyal of friends, quite prepared to go out and do battle on your behalf. She would tell you when she thought you were wrong but she would equally change her mind when the facts told her otherwise. Her raw honesty won her so many friends.

Many of the 1997 intake – particularly women – have stories of how Janet helped us through the early days. It was a big sisterly quality that was so hugely appreciated. Dinner with Janet was a feast. She was a great cook (as well as an accomplished pianist)

and she would cook as if she were feeding the five thousand.

She was fun to be with – her waspish wit having us howling with laughter. As Minister for Film, she met a famous British actor who had threatened to 'leave the country if Labour won (the 1997 election). She marched up to him at a reception with the words 'Are you still here?'

The first woman to be Vice Chamberlain of Her Majesty's household and taken prisoner on State Opening Day. Despite her working-class, northern background she was confident and entertaining in the presence of aristocracy. She decided that the daily letter to the Queen should change in style. It would no longer be simply a report of the Parliamentary programme – Janet said the Queen knows that already.

Instead, she wrote a whimsical gossip account of life in Westminster which, by all accounts, the Queen loved.

She threw herself into the issues that she felt strongly about. Organisations that she campaigned for have lost a strong and effective advocate. She has left many legacies, not least the provision of free TV licences for the over 75s.

But most of all, we will miss her as a friend – strong, funny, smart, loyal and generous.

However our loss is nothing compared to that of her husband Jim (Dowd), children and grandchildren all of whom she loved fiercely and with pride.

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MEET OUR SPEAKERS



Elected in a special election in June 2008, **Donna Edwards**, a Democrat, became Maryland's first African American woman in Congress and served five terms until 2017.



A Conservative, **Steve Norris** served as Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Departments of Environment, Trade and Industry and the Home Office before being appointed Minister of Transport.



Tom Graves has been a small business owner, a real estate investor, a Georgia State Representative and a Republican member of Congress. He was a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee.



Baroness Taylor of the Labour Party was first elected as a Member of Parliament in 1974 and has continued to serve in government for over four decades. She was the first woman to serve as Government Chief Whip.

April 24, 2023
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Thomas Jefferson Building – Kluge Center (LJ119)
10 1st Street SE, Washington, DC 20540

*This program is free and open to the public.
This program will be livestreamed and recorded.*

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