

# Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



WINTER 2020

## DEFENDING THE INDEFENSIBLE

Why I represented  
the serial killer  
Dennis Nilsen



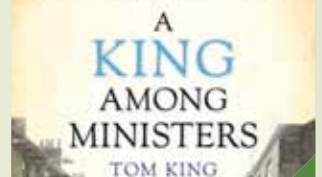
Sir Ivan Lawrence QC on the trial featured in the acclaimed ITV drama *Des*, with David Tennant as Nilsen p.4 & 5

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# OUR NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**Eric Martlew**  
*Chairman*



**Nicholas Bennett**  
*Vice Chairman*



**Sir Graham Bright**  
*Treasurer*



**Sarah McCarthy-Fry**  
*Deputy Treasurer*



**John Austin**



**Gordon Banks**



**Andrew Bingham**



**Victoria Borwick**



**John Corrie**



**Elizabeth Peacock**



**Lawrie Quinn**



**Adrian Sanders**



**Baroness Ann Taylor**



**Nigel Evans MP**  
*Commons Liaison*



**Lady Sally Grocott**  
*Administrator*

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE** who returned their completed ballot paper for membership of the Executive Committee. These were counted in September, when seven members were elected, and the result e-mailed out. The seven met by Zoom in October to discuss co-options, increasing membership to the required thirteen, and ensuring as far as possible a balanced committee in terms of party, region and gender. Nicholas Bennett was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman and Sir Graham Bright agreed to continue as Treasurer at this difficult time, with Sarah McCarthy-Fry agreeing to assist as Deputy Treasurer.

I am delighted that we have such a committed and enthusiastic Executive, whose members work entirely voluntarily and who are determined to ensure that our Association goes from strength to strength. Total membership is very strong at 440 despite the very sad loss over the past year of many valued colleagues.

The full committee will meet in December, again by Zoom, to discuss the way forward. I must place on record my sincere thanks to Lawrie Quinn for his technical expertise in setting up our virtual meetings. It is so disappointing that our usual Christmas meeting

and reception can't take place this year and we all just hope that come the New Year it will be possible to make plans for future events. In the meantime I want to thank Andy McSmith, our Editor of *Order Order*, for his work in producing such a professional, informative and varied magazine. He has excelled himself with this bumper Winter edition.

And finally, if you are not receiving notices and updates from me, then you haven't supplied me with an up to date address!

**Sally Grocott, [grocotts@parliament.uk](mailto:grocotts@parliament.uk)**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Eric Martlew writes:

I should like to take this opportunity to thank colleagues for electing me as Chair. I have been actively involved in the Association since its inception; indeed, I attended the initial debate in the House of Commons, when Joe Ashton spoke about the need for such a body.

I was then asked by Speaker Martin to become involved – not a request you could refuse if you wanted to be called in future debates. I, therefore, became one of the two sitting MPs on the Executive.

I should like to place on record my thanks and gratitude to the retiring Chair, Elizabeth Peacock, and I'm sure I speak for us all. Her wisdom has served the Association well. As Chair she ensured that the Association continued to progress and develop. This was achieved by a mixture of hard work, charm and ability. It was a pleasure to serve as her Deputy.

I would also like to thank those members of the outgoing executive for their time, commitment and dedication.

I retired from Parliament in 2010, and as there have been four General Elections since then, I am conscious that some members will not know me or my background.

In 1987 I was elected as Labour MP for Carlisle. Prior to this I had been in local government, health, and I worked in industry for 21 years.

I was chair of Cumbria County Council and also of Cumbria Health Authority and worked for Nestlé as Human Resources Manager.

Post retirement, people in these sectors in which I was involved had the opportunity to meet up with former work

colleagues. This, however, was definitely not the case with former MPs, who by the very nature of the job, were scattered throughout the country.

The formation of the Association has rectified this to a degree by encouraging people to attend our meetings where we have attracted prominent speakers, by our social events where old acquaintances can be renewed, and through our excellent magazine, *Order Order* edited by Andy McSmith.

Over the years, from a standing start, we have achieved notable successes.

We reduced the qualifying service time for parliamentary passes for former MPs from 15 years to eligibility now after a full term in office. We appoint trustees to the Parliamentary Pension Fund and to the House of Commons Members Fund.

Only this month we have been asked by IPSA to inform our members that there is a vacancy on their board for a former MP.

One of the major achievements in recent years has been the creation of the Scottish branch of the Association. Living in Carlisle, nine miles south from the Scottish border, I am aware of the long trek to London.

I would hope that this could be a template for Wales, N Ireland and the English regions. This will not be easy. The Scottish branch only came into being by the dedicated efforts of Gordon Banks and John Corrie, so any further expansion will need similar people to drive it.

From the very beginning the Association has always believed that the expertise of the membership, with regard to democracy and the workings

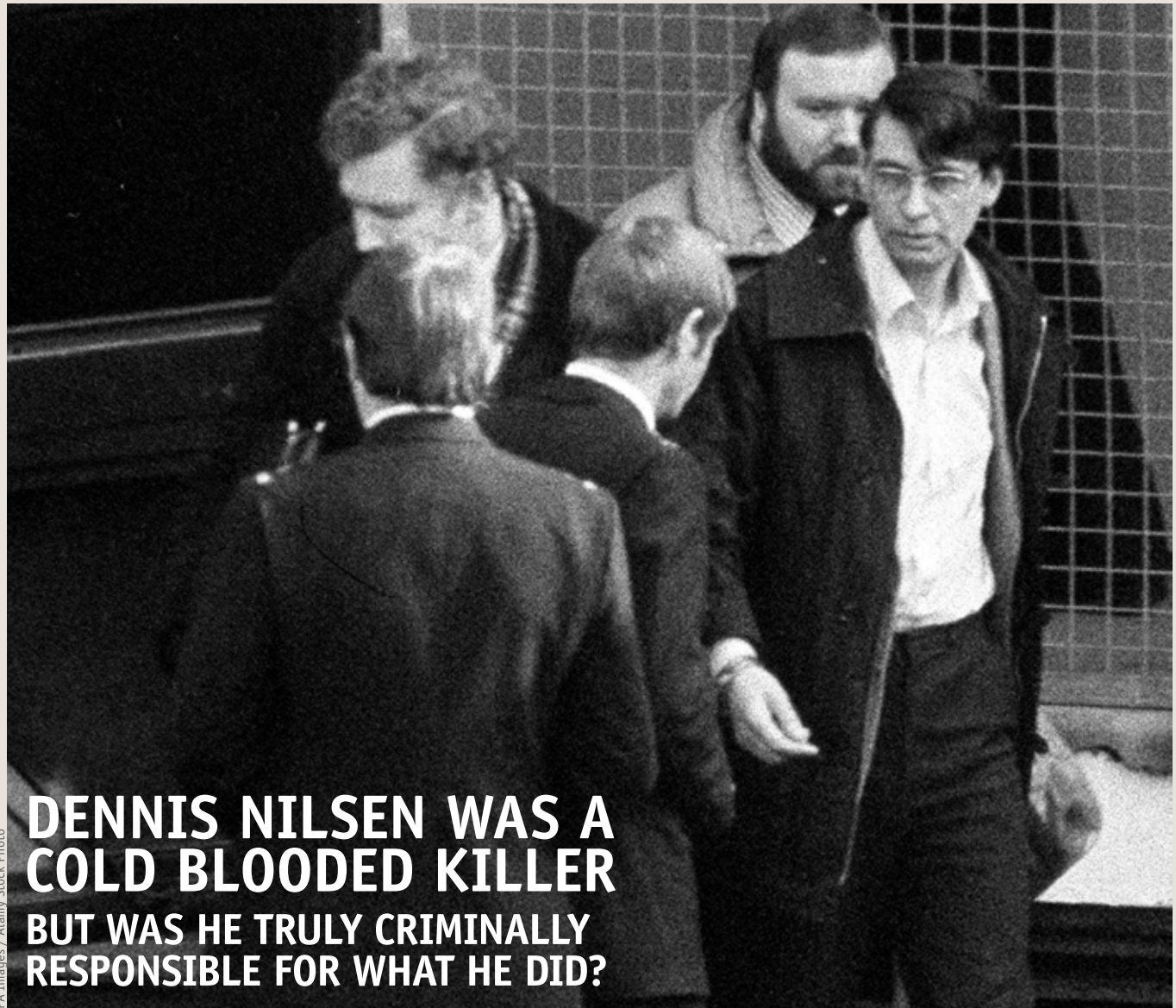
of parliament, should be widely shared. This was a particular passion of the late Eric Moonman, who was instrumental in encouraging and organising former members to go into universities and 6th forms to discuss the workings of parliament.

The embryonic scheme was subsequently developed into the Parliamentary Outreach Trust, by the vision and commitment of John Austin, which not only takes the parliamentary educational message to the UK but also has similar events overseas. The Trust is an independent body but was initially funded by the Association and has much shared membership.

The one constant factor throughout our Association's existence has been Sally Grocott whose role has included being our administrator, mediator, social secretary, editor and, most recently in our recent elections, returning officer. (And probably many more!) Both personally, and on behalf of us all, can I thank her for the marvellous and professional work she has done over many years. Long may it continue.

During my term as chair I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

I realise that many of us are still actively involved in politics in one way or another and I'm conscious that some tribal differences will still surface. But over the years the Association has always struck the right balance and as Chair I intend to continue this tradition. Having given some thought there is one thing that I am sure unites us – the feeling we all had when we sat on those green benches for the first time.



PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo

## DENNIS NILSEN WAS A COLD BLOODED KILLER BUT WAS HE TRULY CRIMINALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HE DID?

Dennis Nilsen in 1983 leaving Highgate Magistrates Court

One of this autumn's most successful television dramas was ITV's three part series *Des*, starring David Tennant as the 1980s serial killer, Dennis Nilsen. Episode 3 was taken up by the court case, in which Sir Ivan Lawrence QC, who defended Nilsen, was played by Pip Torrens.

Writing exclusively for *Order Order* Sir Ivan explains why he continues to believe that although it was right and necessary that Nilsen was confined for the rest of his life, the Guilty verdict was a mistake.

I am often asked how, as a QC with a criminal practice, I can defend someone I know to be guilty. Of course, I am not allowed to run a defence of innocence if my client has told me he, or she, is guilty. So people ask me how I could defend Dennis Nilsen, the serial killer, when he had admitted to 15 killings.

The answer is that in court he did admit his guilt to killing all the victims: but he was in effect pleading guilty to the lesser crime of manslaughter by reason of his "diminished responsibility". That partial defence arises when the offender was suffering from such abnormality of his mind as substantially impaired his mental responsibility for his acts – a degree of craziness less than insanity. The Prosecution did not accept this defence. And that was what the Nilsen trial at the Old Bailey, in 1983, was all about.

Nilsen did not give evidence, and so the trial was comparatively short. There were no witnesses to the actual killings, but Nilsen helpfully filled over 50 notebooks explaining who he had killed, how he did it, and why he had done it – with sketches of some

*The facts of the case could scarcely have been more gruesome, and the jury must have been sickened to hear them*

of the bodies. He also spent several hours admitting his guilt to the police. Several potential victims either escaped or were let go by Nilsen, and their evidence, on charges of attempted murder, provided additional background, and was not denied by him.

The facts of the case could scarcely have been more gruesome, and the jury must have been sickened to hear them. Dynorod was called to a house in Cricklewood to remove what were thought to be pieces of chicken meat from the drains, which turned out to be human remains. The police found the remains of three bodies at that house, and of twelve more in a house that Nilsen had earlier lived in. Other remains were found in fields and at a bus stop.

Nilsen had explained to the police, and his biographer, how he had picked up young men in public houses, or at the employment

exchange at which he worked as a civil servant, and had taken them home. There he strangled and drowned them, sexually fantasised with their bodies, buried them under the floor boards of his house, leaving them there sometimes for months to rot, brought them up over time to sexually fantasise with them again, and when the smell became too bad, he chopped the bodies up and buried or otherwise disposed of the pieces. He boiled heads on his cooker – before walking his dog – and removed the skin and tissue from the heads when he returned home. This behaviour went on over three and a half years, while Nilsen went daily to work as a job interviewer at a local employment exchange.

The issue at the trial was whether this behaviour was that of a normal, though wicked person, or of someone out of his mind at the time. The jury found, by a ten-to-two majority, that Nilsen was not out of his mind at the time of these actions. How on earth, you may ask, did that happen?

Well, I had called two psychiatrists, both medical experts of considerable repute, to give evidence that this behaviour clearly indicated “diminished responsibility”. But when cross-examined by the Prosecution, both said that they were not so sure. The first expert said that whether Nilsen was suffering from “diminished responsibility” was a legal matter for the court to decide, not him! The second said that Nilsen was suffering from what he called “borderline false-self-as-if-pseudo-normal-narcissistic-personality-disorder” where the sufferer was sometimes normal and sometimes paranoid or schizoid, and the strain of keeping the paranoid at bay led to psycho-sexual violence and absence of feeling when people were treated as objects. But he could not bring himself to say this was “diminished responsibility”, only that he could not see how anyone could be said to have the murder requirement of “malice aforethought” if he had no feeling, because feeling was a necessary part of motive and intent.

The refusal of these expert witnesses to say what they had told us they would say was not the end of the Defence case, for the Prosecution expert, also of high repute, who was called to say that there was no “diminished responsibility”, found that he could not be sure about that either! He said that he did not really understand Nilsen, for whom he had some sympathy, and he would not call the retrieval of bodies for the purposes of masturbation a sexual act. He did not think that there was much that was strange about Nilsen’s behaviour. Although prisoners on remand who committed suicide would be suffering from mental disorder, that did not, for some reason, apply to Nilsen – although he had originally thought otherwise. He had also originally thought that Nilsen had been suffering from mental disorder, and had made a statement to that effect, but he had changed his mind because he had wrongly thought that mental disorder and abnormality of mind were the same thing!

So these eminent psychiatrists were all over the place. They must have been hardly comprehensible to the jury. They contradicted each other and even contradicted themselves. The words of Sam Goldwyn came to mind: “whoever goes to a psychiatrist needs his head examined”!

In my final speech I tried to cut through all the confusion.

*The words of Sam Goldwyn came to mind: “whoever goes to a psychiatrist needs his head examined”!*

“We have” I said, “an old Latin phrase in the law: it is ‘*res ipsa loquitur*’ and it means that the facts speak for themselves. If you think that this man, who strangled and drowned 15 young men, none of whom had harmed him in any way, and what he did to the bodies afterwards, was perfectly normal, then you will convict him of murder. But if you think that at the time he did any of this he must have been almost as mad as a hatter, then the only rational verdict you can come to is manslaughter by virtue of diminished responsibility.”

The jury was out a long time, considering that simple issue. On 4th November 1983, after mulling over the matter for a day and a half, they came to a majority verdict of 10 to 2 that Nilsen was guilty of murder on all those counts. It occurred to me that they might have thought it too dangerous to find him guilty of manslaughter, because then he might be in the hands of the very psychiatrists they had been hearing from, and he could be walking the streets again in no time!

Nilsen took the verdict philosophically. “I am convinced that I deserve everything that a court can throw at me”, he told Brian Masters, his biographer. In fact he served 35 years in prison, dying in 2018.

I thought that the trial and verdict were profoundly unsatisfactory. Not because Nilsen had been removed from circulation for the rest of his days, which was inevitable and justified, but because after all the advances that have been made in medical science and in rationalising the criminal trial process, we still seem to be incapable of apportioning appropriate degrees of criminal responsibility for crimes committed by people suffering mental abnormality. The medical experts still do not know what the law means by “diminished responsibility”.

A slight improvement was made in 2003, but it did not get to the root of what went wrong with the Nilsen prosecution. The trial judge, Mr Justice Croom-Johnson told me that he was going to reconcile the law to the medical analysis, but sadly he died before he could do that. I suppose that the reason why no rationalisation has been achieved is that usually there is agreement by the psychiatrists on both sides if there is “diminished responsibility”. Where, as with Nilsen, the Prosecution do not agree with the Defence psychiatrists, then whatever the defendant is convicted of, he still goes to prison for the rest of his days.

On several occasions in my 23 years as an MP, my experience of what was wrong with the criminal law did lead to improvements in the law – such as the introduction of tape-recorded interviews by police of suspects. Sadly, I cannot claim any such success with the Nilsen trial. Anyway, today, it must be well-nigh impossible for any MP to find the time to be a barrister practising daily in the criminal courts.

**Sir Ivan Lawrence was Conservative MP for Burton, 1974–1997**



I started my business, a builder's merchant in Central Scotland, in 1986, having worked in the construction industry from the age of 18. We currently have two depots, and employ around 28 people. I have seen difficulties, and recessions and especially the financial crisis of 2008, but all of these have to some degree or other been similar – they had financial issues at their root. What we are now going through is a health crisis whose impact on world economies is unprecedented.

## COPING WITH COVID: A BUSINESS VIEW

By Gordon Banks

It is a crisis that not only demands solutions from the health service, and social care. It requires business support to prevent a total economic meltdown which would result in our inability to deliver the very health and social care solutions the pandemic needs.

Businesses create jobs, provide employment, hope and opportunity for staff. Additionally, through taxation, businesses and their employees provide the basis for any government to govern and deliver the necessary social programmes we all want and need.

The last six months haven't been easy for anyone. Perhaps the next six will be just as difficult. The pandemic, lockdown, emergence from lockdown and reintroduced restrictions have us all confused and many of us worried. It's no different for business, and with the trade deal deadline with the EU looming, things don't look to be any rosier in the immediate short term.

### Who is in charge?

In Scotland there was a great deal of confusion at the beginning of this crisis. Who spoke for Scotland, who did we listen to Sturgeon or Johnson? Businesses including many in my sector were less than sure, and the media didn't help.

We closed at the end of March, not through lack of customers but as a result of being told to by the Scottish government as well as through health concerns in how we could keep our employees and customers safe in a period of unprecedented challenges.

All but five of our employees were furloughed, with those of us still working doing basic cash collection, providing support to customers working on emergency contracts and after a short while questioning how quickly we could return to "normal" work in a way that was safe for staff and customers. But it had also to be in a way that was socially

*...we simply didn't know what to expect. This was uncharted territory. It was bonkers!*

acceptable to our customers, who range from individuals to the UK's largest house builders.

We had to close, we were told we had to by the First Minister, but conflicting information was emerging from England where some businesses in our sector remained open.

On checking the regulations and how they applied in Scotland it was clear that we could indeed continue working. In fact High Street shops selling some of the same product ranges as you would find in a builders merchant never closed.

The First Minister was telling me in my role as head of building supply business to stay closed, but she didn't have the powers to enforce our closure.

If it was so important for us to stay

closed then the regulations adopted by the Scottish government should have been amended to forbid our opening. That would have been clear and without argument.

As things panned out, we re-opened after about three weeks operating a call/click and collect system. To do this our five retained staff worked on a new system designed to try and keep the wheels turning. We were never sure in the early days if someone would come and try and close us down. It didn't happen.

At a time when the vast majority of our major customers were not working we simply didn't know what to expect. This was uncharted territory. It was bonkers!

### A DIY boom

The public were desperate. Shops were closed, holidays cancelled, people were on furlough with in many cases reasonable incomes and the weather was decent. Ideal conditions for home improvements.

We began to bring staff back off furlough to try and match the demand but – never knowing how long it would be till the bubble burst – we took measured steps along the way. Yard staff, delivery drivers and more people to answer the phones that rang constantly from 7.30am to 6.30pm!

Of course when we returned at first we had our own stockholding, which we could sell, but very soon that was depleted, and the challenge was how to replace it. What was in demand was DIY material, slabs, sands and aggregates, cement, postmix, decorative aggregates, timber, fencing, decking, plaster, plasterboard and associated products.

Some of our suppliers re-opened and we could tap into their stockholdings, which is of course what we did.

A number of our English based manufacturers / suppliers were also operating fully but with social distancing criteria in place the demands on them were huge. This wasn't a bubble centring on Cartmore Building Supplies.

We ploughed our way through May and took around five times the income we would normally take to non-trade or non-account customers at this time of year. June followed a similar pattern and working 14 hours a day was the new norm.

It was like 1986 all over again, doing any and all jobs, no-one able to be pigeon holed. That's why I have always felt it vital that a business has staff who are multi-functional as it's in times of crisis that these pan business skills are so important.

I have to say our opening was well received. Only two people questioned why we were open, but as these were customers buying products I think they knew the answer! There was demand and if we could meet it safely, we should. We needed to protect all the jobs in the business in the best way possible.

But once the majority of the sector returned there became real difficulties that still persist.

### Trouble on the supply side

Major house builders were selling homes fast. Was this pent up demand? Everyone presumed it was. Additionally there was still a significant DIY requirement. However, something was happening in the supply side.

Major companies such as Marshalls PLC, announcing a loss of 15% of its employees – 400 jobs, Cemex mothballing a cement plant with the loss of 110 jobs, Ibstock and Forterra – brick manufacturers – mothballing production at a cost of over 600 jobs, Cemex selling off a chunk of its empire in the UK to Breedon to form Pinnacle Construction Materials, and Travis Perkins's 2500 job losses are the ones that caught the headlines.

What all this led to was a comprehensive shortfall in available products. When linked to business having to adopt new working practices, which invariably led to reduced productivity, a serious crisis developed.

Some businesses took the opportunity to implement (planned) structural changes under the Covid headline, perhaps as there was a recognition that the fall out would be less severe on them as a company than if it had been a decision put into action in a normal trading environment.

So many products have been or are currently on what the industry calls allocation – this simply means rationing.

Since June, cement, insulation board, aerated blocks, plaster, plasterboard,

*Decisions on what happens in the UK marketplace are often taken thousands of miles away. We are not in control of our own destiny.*

jointing sand, post mix, insulation and sheet materials are some of the core items that have been or are on official allocation.

Many other products have elongated delivery periods of up to 8 weeks for what are normally bog standard items with a usual 4 to 5 day delivery period. Indeed at the time of writing we have some architectural masonry items that have been on order since February that are still outstanding – whilst securing fencing and timber related materials is literally a lottery.

It's not a lot of good having fence posts without post mix to put in the holes or, have fencing rail without access to slats.

If I could have secured a continuous supply of multi finish plaster between April and August I would have had hundreds of new customers and made a lot of new friends!

Many of the sawmills who supply the UK market from Ireland and further afield and who began back in around June, still took annual summer closures creating increased shortages and lack of economic output.

This shortage of supply exists today in so many items and is causing significant distress to the sector.

Is this a new problem or is it coming to a head now and is a result of something longer in the making?

### Once famous names

Well, when I started in the industry the UK had major blue chip companies such as Blue Circle Cement, British Gypsum, Ready Mixed Concrete (RMC) to name a few. But where are they today? These and others exist in one form or another but their ownership has changed and they are now generally trading divisions of international multi business conglomerates.

The UK construction supply sector is largely controlled by these huge multi-nationals where once major UK businesses ran the show. ➔



Decisions on what happens in the UK marketplace are often taken thousands of miles away.

We are not in control of our own destiny. We are an outpost in many empires, changed days indeed.

Decisions to close brickworks in the past and have facing and engineering bricks on 12 month allocation reduces choice, reduces competition and drives up prices.

And if demand wasn't there we wouldn't see a few smaller independent companies trying to move in to areas and take up the slack that some of the multi-nationals don't appear to either recognise exists or care about.

So in short some of the problem has been caused by a lack of competition in the market place so that in Scotland when Marshalls close a production plant at Falkirk, it leaves one major grey slab and kerb manufacturer in Central Scotland (where most of the demand is) producing items that are commodity products and as such don't lend themselves to being transported cost effectively hundreds of miles. But that is in effect what is now happening. Low cost items being hauled from St Ives to Fife on an artic lorry, which probably goes back to St Ives empty.

Scotland used to have a significant amount of clay brickworks, now we effectively have one. Concrete block availability in certain parts of the country is restricted by geography to one or sometimes two potential manufacturers.

### The problems

So the shortages we are now seeing in a host of products will do a number of things

1. Reduce economic output at a time when it's more needed that ever
2. Result in increased prices due to a shortage of available product
3. Reduce the number of manufacturing jobs in the UK
4. Increase our reliance on large multi-national conglomerates where decisions on UK output or even existence can be taken many thousands of miles away; in short a lack of local accountability.
5. Reduce the ability of the construction and housing sectors to lead a sustained attempt to grow longer term the UK economy.

I have long held the view that the construction and housing sectors could be the 21st century's answer to the coal mining industry of previous decades by employing huge numbers of staff.

We need people of all skill levels, graduates in engineering, accountancy, architecture and surveying, practical people in varying sectors of technology, trades people with important skills of which there is a real crisis, HGV drivers, forklift and material handling drivers, warehouse workers and labourers.

We need such a cross section of a workforce that quite simply there is something there for most people.

But I fear the future challenges may be less about the available workforce and more about restrictions in availability of products to meet our needs.

### *All is not well in the construction sector at present*

And with control of so many sectors now held internationally in very large organisations it is difficult to make quick and necessary decisions to plug gaps in what may be a regional market to some but our whole market to those of us working in the sector in the UK.

At the time of writing, shortages of supply still exist, allocation – I hate that word – is very real and restricting output and quality of product is also an issue in certain areas where little or no competition exists.

### A gale in our faces

When we all need a fair wind behind us what we face is a gale blowing in our faces as we try to support the economy, protect and grow jobs and create a future for young people.

The biggest challenge I see is that product availability is not being managed to meet demand, demand must meet product availability.

The result is likely to be increased levels of shortages of products, rising prices of domestically produced items and additional imports from multi nationals stationed out with the UK market. Will Brexit help, I think not.

All is not well in the construction sector at present.

**Gordon Banks was MP for Ochil and South Perthshire, 2005–15**





**In New Zealand's recent general election, dominated by Covid, the Labour Party, led by Jacinda Ardern, became the first party to win an outright majority since the introduction of proportional representation.**

**Win Griffiths, who was compelled to spend longer than planned in New Zealand, explains this success.**

## TEAM NEW ZEALAND BEATS COVID 19

**W**e should have been home on April 3rd. Covid 19 kept us in New Zealand, visiting family, until August 13th! Stuck in New Zealand, frustrated – but lucky – as it was one of the few countries to deal successfully with Covid 19.

At the time of writing, (October 4th), 1,854 people have contacted Covid in New Zealand, of whom around 300 were in quarantine or self-isolation, and 25 have died.

Given the difference in population, equivalent figures for the UK would be 27,810 cases and 375 deaths, when actually by that date, the UK had had 480,017 cases, and 42,347 deaths. On these figures, living in the UK makes you more than 17 times more likely to have been infected, with considerably greater than a hundred times more likely to have died from Covid.

New Zealand and the UK went into lockdown on the same day, March 23rd, when New Zealand had 102 cases – equivalent to 1,530 in the UK – and the UK had 6,650 – equivalent to 443 in New Zealand.

New Zealand published a 4 level alert system with clear instructions on its purpose and with citizen actions so that 'people can see and plan for the kinds of restrictions they might face'. Three days later, New Zealand was at level 4.

The UK lockdown was announced with virtually no preparation, nor any real warning about the rules, in a pre-recorded announcement by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, that lacked any human inter-action.

Contrast Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern: it was live, there were press questions and she struck a tone of positive engagement while introducing tough restrictions. From the start she saw this as a test for 'Team NZ'. This connection with Team NZ was maintained through her daily press conferences, ably supported by Director General of Health, Ashley Bloomfield.

'Team NZ' was kept fully informed of the progress of the virus, and the daily number of confirmed and probable cases, and deaths when they occurred. Numbers were also given on those in hospital, in intensive care units, for those who had recovered, the site of clusters (more than 10) with numbers and the daily test rate. Press questions were answered and if the answer wasn't known, one was promised for the next day and put on their website. No waffle!

There had been a lot of preparation. An incident response team was established on January 10th, the day of lockdown in Wuhan. On February 1st, an inner cabinet committee was set up to get advice from Ashley Bloomfield, who said flights from China should be banned. The next day they were, despite tourists and students being worth \$2 billion to the economy, and despite there being no Covid cases in New Zealand.

On March 12th, with only five cases, the government cancelled the Pasifika Festival, due on March 14-15, when some 200,000 were expected to converge in Wellington. On the 14th, Christchurch mosque memorial events in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland were cancelled.

Meanwhile in the UK the Liverpool Atletico Madrid in cup match went ahead on March 11th, two days after Spain had recorded 1,231 cases with 134 in Madrid. Tens of thousands were allowed to attend the Cheltenham Festival, on March 10-13.

In New Zealand, cases peaked within three weeks. Around this time Jacinda Ardern, as a gesture of solidarity, announced that government ministers and 34 government department chiefs would take a 20% pay cut for 6 months, and that MPs, mayors and councillors would have a 10% cut.

On April 27th level 4 was cut to level 3 with cases in the previous week averaging four a day (= 69 in the UK). On May 13th, 3 came down to 2, which lasted until level 1 began on June 8th.

August 11th brought a shock when four cases were confirmed out of the blue in Auckland. It's still a mystery how it happened after 102 days with no community cases. The government response was immediate. Before the end of the day Jacinda Ardern had announced that Auckland would go back to Level 3 at noon on the 12th, and the rest of the country from 1 to 2.

By 9.30 that evening our daughter, a teacher, and our two granddaughters had been messaged not to go to school tomorrow. This quick response limited the number of cases to fewer than 140 before Auckland went back down to level 2 (close to normal with social distancing and a 100 limit for weddings etc.) on September 22.

Jacinda Ardern likened her strategy to that of the All Blacks – going in early and going in hard. It worked.

Win Griffiths was MP for Bridgend, 1987–2005



Guillaume Destombes/Shutterstock.com

## WHY EUROPE'S POPULISTS ARE NOT MARCHING FORWARD LIKE THEY USED TO

By Denis MacShane

**For the last decade, academics and journalists have been in thrall to the idea that a new form of nationalist, populist identity politics was about to conquer Europe. Figures like Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders and Nigel Farage were winning in France, the Netherlands and the European Parliament.**

Writers bored with mediocre mainstream politicians bigged up more exotic parties such as the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany or pointed to nationalist clericalist parties in Poland and the Franco-nostalgia party Vox in Spain and Viktor Orbán, the proponent of “illiberal democracy” in Hungary. “National populism”, Professor Matthew Goodwin, was quoted as saying in 2018, “is unstoppable”.

Yet the most recent elections in Austria for control of the nation's capital, Vienna, in mid-October, saw a loss of 21 per cent for the Austrian Freedom Party, founded by ex-Nazis in the 1950s. A few years ago their leader, Jorg Haider, entered a coalition government and the party came close to winning the Austrian presidency on a platform of antagonism towards migrants and refugees.

Something similar happened last month in Italy, where Matteo Salvini was crunched by voters in regions like Tuscany which he claimed he would win. He walked out of the Italian government earlier this year hoping to provoke new elections as a springboard to power. This flopped as the centre-left Partito Democratico formed an alliance with the populist 5 Star Movement and installed a solid government that has guided Italy through the Covid crisis.

In Germany and France, the once rising Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National have fallen back badly in the polls. In Switzerland, the efforts by the nationalist anti-EU Swiss People's Party (SVP) to win their referendum to ban freedom of movement for EU citizens into Switzerland was defeated last month with a 60 per cent vote to uphold an open door policy to fellow Europeans.

Since 1990, the SVP had been gaining in seats and votes and became the biggest party in Switzerland entering the federal cabinet. In last December's federal elections, the SVP lost support and the referendum vote confirms the forward march of the anti-Muslim, anti-EU Swiss populists is over.

So what seems to be stopping the ‘unstoppable’? Three causes: Brexit; Trump; Covid. The UK was once a model for pragmatic stability but now looks as if it's breaking apart, with Scotland leaving and every Northern Irish citizen taking out an Irish passport, the 20 per cent drop in the pound's value against the Euro, the rapid turnover of prime ministers, and the threat of hormone-altered meat and chlorine-washed poultry arriving in UK supermarkets.

*The UK was once a model for pragmatic stability but now looks as if it's breaking apart*

The nationalist anti-immigrant populists have also suffered from their identification with Trump. Last year, Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's ideological networker in Europe, held a rally in Milan last year with Matteo Salvini, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders and the Austrian Freedom Party's Heinz-Christian Strache. They grandly announced they would conquer the European Parliament. In fact, the big winner of that election was the Greens who are likely to enter the German federal government next year as the AfD fades. Trump's clownish demagoguery has made him a global laughing stock. Other than Boris Johnson, there is not a single EU leader who wants to get close to him. If Joe Biden wins, the patron of European rightist populism will be finished and make even less attractive the appeal of European anti-immigrant nationalism.

The third factor was Covid. Swiftly, the EU moved to dump its liberal economic orthodoxy and announced the biggest programme of government borrowing and solidarity transfers between EU economies who have profited from the single currency and those with poorer populations who have struggled. In Germany, the government is borrowing €10,000 every second as Berlin embraces Keynesian economics.

In Spain, the Franco nostalgics of Vox have linked with right wing libertarians – Hispanic Claire Foxes – to demand an end to government measures aimed at controlling the pandemic. But most Spanish citizens like most Europeans accept that strong, organised, properly funded government measures to serve the national interest cannot be replaced by profit-maximising private firms who owe no loyalty to the nation or its people. There is renewed interest in fair taxes on the digi-giants, on eco taxes and asking the super-rich to pay a share.

The decline of the Brexit-Trump nationalist right is little consolation for nostalgics in traditional social democratic parties or for the liberal left. The left has a future in Europe but will not regain its 20th century hegemony. Twenty-first century democracies will be run by coalitions of parties and interests. But at least the spirit of 2016, when Brexit, Trump, Salvini and Le Pen seemed to be the shape of future politics, now seems long in the past.

Denis MacShane was Minister of State for Europe in 2002–2005



# CHURCHILL: SNAPSHOTS FROM THE COCKCROFT FOOTHILLS

By John Cockcroft

**CHURCHILL HAD NEVER BEEN A HERO** in my parents' lives until 1939. They came from traditional mill-owning, cotton-spinning, non-conformist families, with no historic regard for the Conservative Party. However, when news came over the crackling wireless in May 1940, about a message to the fleet at Scapa Flo, 'Winston is back', my father said, 'Thank goodness for that, it will change everything!'

My uncle Eric had flown Churchill back from the Somme in 1917. He had been concerned about maintaining supplies of champagne, before and after that trip.

My own awareness of Churchill really started in October 1951. Churchill had returned to Downing Street in a surprise election result and he was staying at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. He asked my father, who was chairman of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, to meet him to discuss the reopening of the Liverpool Cotton Exchange, which had been closed during the war. He was consuming weak whiskies in the middle of the afternoon.

My father said that his eldest son, John, was now interested in politics, and would he, Churchill, sign the latest copy of his war memoirs, which he did. My father brought it back to our home in West Yorkshire.



I was in Downing Street in May 1955, when Churchill finally resigned and the Queen and Prince Philip came to have supper with Sir Winston and Lady Churchill. The crowds sang 'Will ye noo come back again?' It was a very moving occasion.

When I went to Cambridge in 1955, I was following events closely, of course. My uncle, Sir John Cockcroft, stood for the Mastership of St. John's College, where I was studying. In a large electorate of fellows in a huge College, he was defeated by one vote, partly because he was still head of the Atomic Energy Authority in Harwell.

Shortly afterwards, a phone call came from Chartwell, saying: "Sorry John, about the results from St. John's – democracy is a funny thing. Not to worry, I have another college up my sleeve, which just happens to be called Churchill College and, as it's in my gift from that of the Queen, I would like you to become Master of that college." That was gratefully accepted.

My aunt was not pleased; she said to Sir John, 'We'll be living on yet another building site after Harwell and after Chalk River' (where the atomic bomb was developed in Canada).

Before that, I had a chance meeting with the great man at the House of Commons. I was with Leslie Cole, a friend of my parents, who was chairman of the Hansard Society. We were having tea in one of the tearooms at the House of Commons in 1962 and the great man walked in and he sat down next to me. It was a Black Dog day. He said, 'Pass the cruet, what's your name?', 'Cockcroft', 'Any relation to the master of Churchill College, by any chance?', 'Yes'. The conversation somehow got round to the bombing of Dresden and the other German cities, which had become very

controversial by then. On that particular day he had serious regrets and said they had not in any way shortened the duration of the war, which was the view of many military experts, of course. I argued the opposite, in order to cheer him up, really.

My next recollection of the Churchill saga was his very moving funeral in January 1965 – in particular, the dipping of the cranes along the funeral route along the Thames.

Churchill was an early influence on my views about European integration. I heard his speech in Strasbourg in 1948, on the radio, in which he said that France should take Germany by the hand and lead her back into the family of nations and we must build something new in this part of the World. It echoed vividly in my memory at the age of 11, hearing Richard Dimbleby's account of the liberation of Belsen (Auschwitz). My grandfather said, "This must never ever happen again – we must build something new in Europe."

In the 1980s, I was involved in getting speakers for the Epping Conservative Supper Club. Churchill's Constituency Agent was still alive and it was an open secret that, in 1938, there was a vote of no confidence in Churchill as a local MP, on the grounds that he hardly ever went to Epping, that he was not really interested in local constituency affairs, he drank too much, and, in particular, that he opposed the Chamberlain government's policy of appeasement. There was considerable pressure from the Conservative Whips for him to be forced to resign.

How different history would have been, if he had not been an MP in 1940.

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

# WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

We asked a selection of colleagues who stepped down or lost their seats last December what they have been doing since

## SIR DAVID HANSON Delyn, 1992–2019



ALMOST A YEAR SINCE THE ELECTION and after nearly 28 years in parliament, it has been a strange readjusting year.

This year has seen months disengaging from parliament, closing

the constituency and London offices, issuing redundancy notices and moving from the London flat. My political life consigned to a storage lock up!

So, to get away, Margaret and I took a week's tour in the USA in February seeing Presidents' homes and tombs in the Midwest and even Jesse James's house. (We know how to party – and when the Commons was sitting as well!)

The family got used to me being home seven days a week, and then lockdown struck and we were all home, rightly, seven days a week, week after week! I'm seeing more of my family than ever before, spending time with our first grandchild and as a bonus I have time to do new things whatever that may be

Our garden has now never been tidier. I've sorted out my many boxes of political memorabilia into some order. I've mooched around to my heart's content, and watched films galore at home. I've looked around for wider things of interest to, hopefully, use my experience

So with my police and justice hat on I've joined the trustee board of NACRO (care and resettlement of offenders) and now Zoom regularly in for meetings and events. I've have got involved in local voluntary groups here in North Wales. I've undertaken some consultancy work for the foreign office at Wilton Park, and engaged with companies on parliamentary training on the role of select committees, and participated in a range of Zoom calls on everything from modern slavery to refugees with groups across the UK.

I've continued supporting Labour in many ways including co-chairing Ian Murray's deputy leadership campaign and I've encouraging old MP chums (thanks) to do Zoom meetings for Delyn Labour.

In May, the email arrived from the Cabinet Office informing me of the award in the Queen's birthday honours of a knighthood for political service, leading to months of secrecy before October's announcement. A lovely surprise and source of pride

So, it has been a long road this year but I hope, at 63, it's not over yet. When COVID is defeated and the world changes back I hope to be able to contribute further, travel and enjoy good memories of the past while dreaming of the future I'm still to make

I loved being an MP with 10 general elections behind me plus 12 years in government. Whatever else happens I'll always be political. It has all been a ride I wouldn't have missed.

## TOM BRAKE Carshalton and Wallington, 1997–2019



LOSING A PARLIAMENTARY SEAT at any time is going to cause upset.

But losing your seat and emerging from the two-month winding down period which follows (during which committed and experienced staff are made redundant) into a disturbing Covid-world is deeply discombobulating.

But I am one of the lucky ones. All family members are healthy. Working from home has only occasionally been disrupted by the inadequacies of broadband. Millions of families are not in this position. The medical impact of long Covid will be mirrored by its long-term effect on the economy and people's livelihoods.

Over the last six months, looking for a challenging campaigning role has been time-consuming – but not to the extent that I haven't started to redress the unequally shared burdens of running a home. My culinary skills have developed to the extent that 'Father cooking dinner' no longer prompts speed-dialling of Deliveroo. My French and Russian have made a moderate come-back (I'd recommend 'Le Bureau'). Sunday walks aren't a race against the clock. And that half-marathon in November, whilst Mo has nothing to worry about, at least I stand a reasonable chance of finishing it.

My search came to a gratifying end with my appointment full time Director of Unlock Democracy shortly.

Unlock Democracy is a small organisation, with a big agenda: reform of the House of Lords, a fairer voting system, devolution and a written constitution to lock in our fundamental rights. With our democracy under severe pressure, these reforms cannot be postponed and Unlock Democracy will be making every effort to deliver them!

## LOUISE ELLMAN Liverpool, Riverside 1997–2019



I LEFT PARLIAMENT in disturbing circumstances. I resigned from the Labour Party last October, after 55 years, because of Labour's antisemitism, and did not stand in the subsequent general election.

I enjoyed meeting up with old friends in the early part of this year, but this was brought to an abrupt end by Covid 19. I was shielding for six months, and am now back in virtually the same situation.

I've caught up with a lot of reading and re-reading of favourite novels. I particularly enjoyed Howard Jacobson's *The Mighty Waltzer*, which took me back to my younger days.

I've developed a new, unplanned existence on Zoom. My technological ability is still poor, and I'm relieved every time an event goes as planned! As well as continuing my involvement in inspiring organisations like LIPA (Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts). Through this medium I've continued my life long interests by signing up to courses and participating in on-line discussions. It was particularly inspiring to speak to Holocaust survivor Rudi Leavor last month.

I'm no longer in Parliament, but I watch and read a lot about parliamentary activity. I've done some broadcasting on combatting on-line hate, and on current issues.

I always looked forward to seeing more of my lovely grandchildren when I left Parliament. I just didn't expect it to be done remotely or through visits under Covid regulations!

One day, Covid will recede and I will re-think my activities. Until then, it's back to Zoom!

## IAN LUCAS Wrexham, 2001–2019



WHEN I DECIDED TO STAND DOWN from Parliament, I did so to investigate more deeply issues in which I had developed a particular interest. I found that the intense day to day life of an MP militated against detailed study of topics. I now work on economic, transport and digital issues – topics which I had always pursued

in Parliament and as a Minister, but which I wanted to look at more.

In particular, I have been writing a book on digital issues and democracy, following the work I carried out on the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee from 2017. I am

on the board of the UK Fibre Connectivity Forum and work as a consultant for Cogitamus, focussing on transport and digital matters.

Personally, spending much more time with my wife of 30 plus years, Norah, has been a real pleasure though our plans to travel together have been frustrated. Our family is very important to us and the continuing postponement of our daughter's wedding is disappointing. We have, however, moved ten miles west of Wrexham, to Llandegla, in the beautiful Clwydian range, where some building changes are also holding our attention. We also enjoy together stunning local walks and a burgeoning discovery of more wildlife.

Numerous former colleagues are still in touch and we look forward to seeing those friends, and others, in person when the world allows.

## RICHARD BENYON Newbury, 2005–2019



WHILST ONLY IN PARLIAMENT FOR 15 YEARS I worked out that with time in local government and an 11-year long march to winning my seat, I have been in politics for around 30 years. So the decision to leave Parliament seemed right. Politics created a structure for your week, the absence of such structure when doing many different things with your life creates challenges. But life is fun.

Five months before leaving Parliament I agreed to chair a panel for Defra on the designation of Highly Protected Marine Areas. This was something I continued to do after leaving Parliament. We published the slightly embarrassingly titled "Benyon Review" on World Oceans Day in June.

I am Chairman of my family's property company, the Englefield Estate. It has residential, commercial and rural property in Berkshire, Hampshire, other parts of the Thames Valley and in Hackney. Property businesses have been on the front line of the pandemic as both commercial and residential tenants felt the impact of the economic downturn.

I chair a Government/Private Partnership called the UK Water Partnership, a role I took on from the former Cabinet Minister Chris Smith. The UKWP brings together research organisations, the private sector and Government to operate better in a fast changing and highly competitive global marketplace.

I am a consultant to a data harvesting analysis company that does extraordinary work around the world on land use and environmental management. I am also working for an environmental consultancy doing Environmental, Social Governance (ESG) audits for companies. ➔

**LORD VAIZEY OF DIDCOT**  
 Wantage, 2005–2019

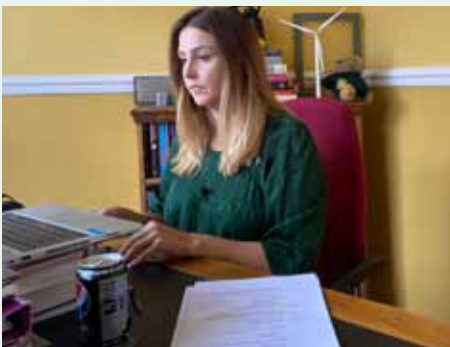


I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO JOIN the House of Lords in September and have made my maiden speech and contributed to debates. It's particularly special for me, as my Dad was also a life

peer. He was appointed by Harold Wilson on the Lavender List, so I particularly enjoyed the articles on my list that began "This is the worst list since the Lavender list!". My dad's closest friend, Frank Field, was also on the same list as me, which made it even more special.

Since leaving the Commons, I have pursued my interests in culture, technology and media. I sit on the board of the National Youth Theatre, along with David Lammy, and a couple of other arts boards. I applied to be the chairman of Tech Nation, a government quango, and was turned down without an interview, which put me in my place. On the business side, I work with an investment firm called LionTree, which does a huge amount of work in the telecoms and media world, which I love. I still get the occasional run out on media – thank goodness for Times Radio!

**MELANIE ONN**  
 Great Grimsby, 2015–2019



IT WAS EXCITING to take up the role of Deputy Chief Executive at RenewableUK in March. Offshore wind was something I'd championed as an MP, in my patch of Great Grimsby. I'd seen the benefits this innovative new industry brought

– investment, opportunity and new skills. Now I get to talk about them all the time.

It has been a huge learning curve and has coincided with great achievements for the organisation, with Government announcements on opportunities for onshore and offshore wind, new infrastructure funding and crucially more support for supply chain companies.

We've brought young people from the National Youth Theatre into the world of industry to better share experience and opportunities as well as telling the story of the importance of renewables. As Diversity Champion for the sector there's much more we can do to open our doors to a wider range of people; being more visible to new audiences is part of that.

I'm still in touch with a lot of my old friends in Parliament and I still engage with Ministers and Government departments. I now have more of my evenings and weekends back and it has been great to be able to say yes to friends' invitations, see more of my son and get a new dog. I now sit as a trustee on a local charity, been invited to be an Education Governor and have raised over £30k for local good causes. I still need to find a secure 5k route for a new ParkRun – that might have to wait until next year.

# Letters

**CROSS PARTY FRIENDSHIPS**

Reading John Cockcroft's article about cross-Party friendships (John Cockcroft, *Fraternising with the other side*, Order Order Summer 2020) brought back many happy memories.

Tony Crosland and I met regularly when watching Grimsby Town F.C. paying at Blundell Park (Tony represented Grimsby, but the ground was in Cleethorpes in my constituency). This friendship was of immense value when the sea wall in Cleethorpes burst in 1975 and Tony just happened to be Secretary of State for the Environment!

I enjoyed many a friendly drink with Eric Heffer, who I always described as my High Church Stalinist friend. One of the nicest things ever said to me were Eric's lovely words: 'I like you Brotherton, you're a properly bloody Tory'.

Above all else there was my pair and co-religionist Kevin McNamara. When during the Blair years I met Kevin and enquired as to how he was, he always replied with a chuckle 'Still hoping for a Labour Government.'

Happy Days!

Michael Brotherton

Conservative MP for Louth, 1974–1983

**PETER JACKSON**

Peter Jackson wasn't a Sheffield MP – he was my only predecessor as Labour MP for High Peak (1966–70). I only ever met him once.

He didn't just vote against the Prices and Incomes policy – the story has it that until Jeremy came along Peter voted against his own government more often than any other Labour MP.

He wasn't just a Green Party member – he stood for the Scargillites.

Tom Levitt

MP for High Peak, 1997–2010

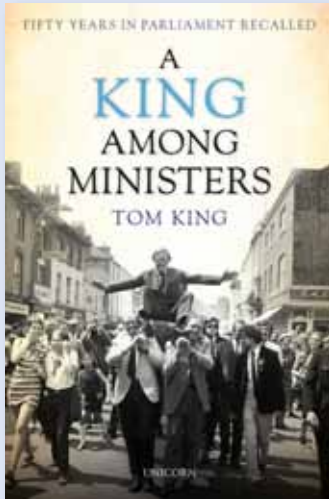
*Tom was not the only person to point out the error on page 3 of the summer edition of Order Order The late Peter Jackson was from Sheffield, but was never a Sheffield MP.*



**CAPTION COMPETITION**

In this picture you see Andy Reed, former MP for Loughborough, being fouled by none other than Alastair Campbell. Any ideas about what either of them might be saying?

## A GOOD READ



### THE SOLID GOOD SENSE OF TOM KING

David Howell

#### *A King Amongst Ministers – Fifty Years in Parliament Recalled*

by Tom King

Published by Unicorn

TOM KING WAS A MODEL MINISTER and he has written a model memoir. One hears it said that political memoirs are out of fashion, but the younger political generation would be fools not to read this one – read and learn.

For the general reader the earlier parts, pre-politics, are perhaps the best, and the most lightly and amusingly written. But that King was invaluable in government roles is evidenced by the way successive Prime Ministers appointed him to an almost endless list of high ministerial posts, in all of which he shone.

His radiant common sense, which comes through in the book, was (and is) just the quality the Conservative party warms to, while the heavy ideology and theorizing which rightly makes real Conservatives uneasy, and which infects the Party from time to time, is here, mercifully avoided. In short we have in this volume, between covers, the story of a rounded character fitting into the rounded holes of Ministerial life smoothly and with ease. Just how rounded our subject is demonstrated as much by his background as by his political life.

Tom King came to politics not from the idle aristo rich, which the Left love to caricature as peopling the Tory Party leadership, nor from the magic circle which Iain Macleod so detested, nor from the world of urban insiders, but from a solid business background (unlike most MPs), and from Somerset *profonde*. His family history belongs to the middle of middle society – the important and stabilising backbone in the nation's structure – with long antecedents and deep roots. I once heard him explain that he is the embodiment of the Union (as many of us are) with English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish traces.

Current members of the Cabinet would do well to study this model closely. As Denis Healey used to say, a good political career needs a proper hinterland. Without it you are left in shallow soil when the wind blows hard (as in politics it frequently does). Tom was a good sports all-rounder, a good soldier facing real danger in Africa, dealing with the Mau-Mau insurrection, and a highly efficient CEO and personnel manager.

Chance and Lady Luck played a part in his election to Parliament and arrival on the political scene, which is just the way it should be.

When the Ministerial period started challenges came, almost literally, in battalions.

For while he was tied to the Heseltine rocket, always an exhilarating experience. Then, after a brief stopover as Transport Secretary (following numerous others in that post, including this reviewer), he was pitched into the very heart of Government, first dealing with trade union militancy, at one of the unions' nastiest and most badly-led phases, and then straight on from there into the Northern Ireland maelstrom.

There he was treading the same hazardous path which of some of us, under Willy Whitelaw, had tried painfully to construct more than a decade earlier, and he was lucky enough to have advice from the same brilliant source, Ken Bloomfield, on which Whitelaw had relied in the earlier phase.

His touch was deft and he undoubtedly laid key foundations for the eventual Good Friday Agreement, but from Ulster he was moved into an even deeper labyrinth as Defence Secretary – namely the boiling Middle East with Saddam's vicious Kuwait invasion and the oncoming First Gulf War.

His handling of the British role in this global drama was almost universally praised – all the more of an achievement since his time covered the fraught and awkward moment of a change of Prime Minister in London.

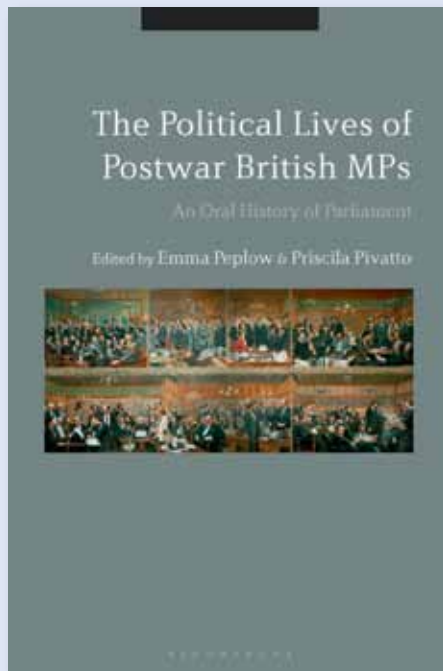
Decency and good judgement sprout from every page of this memoir. Will it be serialised in a serious newspaper? It certainly ought to be, although when one sees the recent Sasha Swire diaries being spread (to my mind shamefully) over pages of *The Times*, it seems rather a remote hope.

Indeed, this must be the ultimate contrast in political publications on offer – between the truly instructive King memoir and the Swire trivia. On one side an authentic story of deep experience, valour, personal sacrifice (both for Tom and his dazzling wife) and years of sustained service to the nation; on the other a stream of malign trivia, cavalierly distorting and pulping friendships and confidences all round.

Here we have windows into two utterly different worlds, different value systems, different attitudes to the way life and work should be conducted.

I know which I infinitely prefer!

Lord Howell was MP for Guildford, 1966–1997, and served in Cabinet in 1979–1983



## LIFE STORIES TOLD BY THE MPs WHO LIVED THEM

Gordon Marsden

### *The Political Lives of Postwar British MPs An Oral History of Parliament*

*Edited by Emma Peplow and Priscilla Pivatto*

Published by Bloomsbury Academic

THERE IS AN APTNESS AND PIQUANCY, but also poignancy, about the timing and appearance of this book. Its authors – my colleagues at the History of Parliament Trust, Emma Peplow and Priscilla Pivatto – have laboured long and hard in the vineyards of oral history. The Trust's project that has produced this substantial offshoot – a point of entry into the politics, lives and culture of British MPs since the Second World War – was begun in 2011, just after the expenses controversy opened up big questions as to how a 21st century Parliament should operate, and the book was put to bed while the dramas of Brexit and minority Government thrust the mechanics of Westminster and the significance of individual MPs into unprecedented public scrutiny.

This book draws on extensive interviews with nearly 200 former MPs. As its authors explain in their lucid introduction, these are the first fruits of an ongoing major Oral History project which the Trust continues to carry forward. The material garnered from these interviews is richly varied, covering Parliamentary careers from Elizabeth Shields's 13 months to Teddy Taylor's 41 years. The authors are at pains to point these are 'Life story narratives' and the five sections that provide the book's successful structural spine – headed 'Background/Politics before Westminster/House of Commons/Politics/Reflections' – bear this out.

It is of a piece with the use the Trust has made increasingly in recent years of oral history recollections

from peers and MPs at events it has held in Parliament as part of its vigorous initiatives to broaden its reach to wider audiences both in and outside Parliament.

But Peplow and Pivatto rightly remind us that their spur for this book stems from the questionnaire that Josiah Wedgwood MP (founder of the History of Parliament Trust in 1940) circulated to his colleagues in the 1930s, seeking their likes, opinions and thoughts on what moved them.

The methodology in this book is thoughtful but not stuffy. The interviewees are not before judge and jury but given a platform that, as the authors say, 'allows us to hear how these politicians view their own careers through, in some cases, deep personal reflection'.

That interactive process depends for success on painstaking work and trust built up by the interviewers – all volunteers, trained by the Trust and the British Library. The Library's partnership in this venture has been crucial and the sound archive being created is a unique contribution to post-war British history.

The interviews took time and care to reveal the prequels to MPs' political careers; their early lives, family and other influences before they hit the political stage. They are the richer and more valuable for it – and struck a chord with me, having delivered three lectures in Speaker's House since 2011 on a trio of twentieth century Labour giants – Clem Attlee, Nye Bevan and Denis Healey – where I found early influences on them were often key to what made them tick in their later political life.

Most of the recollections here come from a world now besieged before the relentless blast of the digital world, which privileges online over the printed word, and where info overload, the demands of social media and a 24/7 news cycle, let alone the pitfalls of fake news, can hamper severely the ability to consider and decide of the 21st century politician. A world, where narcissism and voyeurism can bloom and real time detail is quickly forgotten, may be less conducive to weighing up evidence in honest attempts to recollect and reflect.

Of course there has never been a golden age of political objectivity and this book's authors are acutely aware of how 'legacy building' can permeate even the most conscientious interviewee's answers. As Shakespeare's Henry V tells us in his Agincourt speech 'yet all shall be forgot, but he'll remember, with advantages, what feats he did that day?' But Pivatto and Peplow conclude that what emerges from this cornucopia of interviews is 'a richer, messier and more complicated view of Westminster... real people with complex and different backgrounds, living in the real world and struggling with real dilemmas'. May there be more to come, from future interviewees and publications, for as Dryden says of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims 'here is God's plenty'.

Gordon Marsden was MP for Blackpool South, 1997–2019



## VENOMOUS BETRAYAL, BACKSTABBERY AND SMUG ENTITLEMENT

Jerry Hayes

*Diary of an MP's Wife, Inside and Outside Power*

By Sasha Swire

Published by Little Brown

IF THE PUBLISHED EXTRACTS were anything to go by I expected this book to be a delightfully indiscreet political romp. Unfortunately, it is nothing more than a venomous betrayal of people who had shown the Swires friendship and kindness. It is a terminally depressing cry for help from a couple who come over as smugly entitled toffs desperate for money, recognition and power.

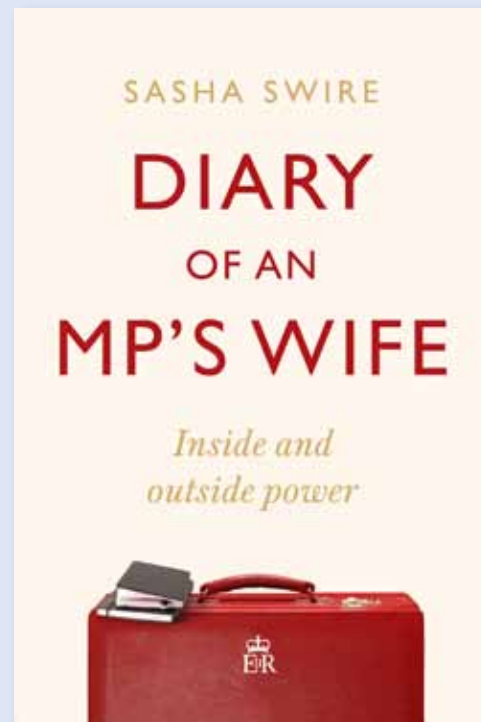
I still can't work out whether the ghastly Swires really have any friends at all or just a succession of contacts to be eviscerated of any usefulness before their dry husks are discarded. What I find so unforgivable from this primal scream of sordid backstabbery is that they see themselves as superior to everyone who has the misfortune to be in their circle of victims. Even the food ('slop') at Buckingham Palace is not good enough for their sophisticated palates. And the sheer cheek of the 'beady eyed' Queen having the nerve to ignore Sasha at a garden party. Well, that was a narrow escape.

For the Queen.

Nobody is safe from the Swire vitriol. The Camerons, who come over as a thoroughly decent family loving couple, who show the Swires nothing but kindness get a pasting. 'He has a picture of Macmillan on his wall that's all you need to know....slimy....bland'. Sarah Vine, 'that woman clearly needs to be under permanent medical supervision'. Of her husband Michael Gove, '...has to be at the scene of the car crash because only then can he receive the medal for cutting the victim out of the wreckage'.

But don't just blame Sasha for her almost comic delusions of self-importance. This is a joint enterprise with her Not So Nice But Dim husband Hugo, who "has waited all his political career to be in Cabinet". This book is a vehicle for his public school toilet (it's lavatory, you oik Hayes!) humour and her political genius. When I read her angry text to him after a row, "you would be nothing without me, I am your political brain", I wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry.

It must be absolutely horrid to have the indignity of having titled parentage and no money, I suppose. And it must have been absolutely ghastly to put up with all these dull middle class folk in the constituency, who have worked tirelessly to get your husband re-elected for the past twenty years. It was the named character assassination of these party stalwarts which I found particularly unsavoury. For someone ('at our sort of dinner parties the butler would serve the brandy and cigars'), who plays the part of a central casting toff he doesn't behave much like one. Sir



Hugo has a very thin skin. He insists on being called Sir Hugo and woe betide anyone who doesn't.

I really can't see the point of being vicious to those hedge fund managers who filled them with their finest food and drink who could one day provide a living for Sir Hugo. Or the Camerons, the Johnsons and the many others who could help with a life outside of Westminster. Not any more.

There are some fascinating snippets though. That George Osborne asked Yevgeni Lebedev for the editorship of the *Standard* whilst he was meant to be lobbying for Matt D'Ancona. Of 'Boy George' they are particularly vicious painting him as a dark, almost satanic manipulator. At one stage they rather grandly announce that they no longer regard him as a friend. Another lucky escape.

The measure of this thoroughly gruesome twosome was the way they treated their teenage friend and godmother to a daughter Amber Rudd (I can't remember whether it was Chardonnay or Sauvignon). They dumped her by text.

But the fellow I felt most sorry for was Dominic Raab, who seems a decent enough sort. The political genius that is Sasha spotted him as a political meal ticket and claims that Sir Hugo ran his campaign for the leadership, which is a bit like asking Mark Thatcher to organise a coup in the Congo. It goes without saying that Raab C Brexit, as they (oh, so cleverly), called him behind his back, lost. But I can't work out which was worse, allowing Raab to be humiliated at Whites or telling everyone about it. Neither is the hallmark of a gentleman.

The real mystery to me is what Cameron saw in Hugo, let alone what made him befriend him. No more Aga suppers for you matey.

If Sir Hugo deigns to read this I wouldn't be surprised if he challenged me to a duel. Fine by me, as with his track record he would undoubtedly miss.

Jerry Hayes was MP for Harlow, 1983–1997



## SUMMER IN PLIMSOLES, WINTER IN CLOGS

Bruce Grocott

*A Lakeland Boyhood*  
by David Clark

Published by Haycroft

THE BOOK'S TITLE, *A Lakeland Boyhood*, gives you its structure which is that of a young boy growing to early manhood in one of the most beautiful parts of the country. But David Clark's story contains much, much more than that.

This is rural Britain in the immediate post-war years and the lives of families dependent on the land, and dependent as well on the fairness or otherwise of the people who employed them. As David describes it, "it was very much a rural working class district without any middle class presence. We were all poor. In summer the children ran around in plimsolls....whilst in winter our footwear was clogs".

There was a pervading sense of insecurity, his father a gardener and his mother who worked in the big house. And all this while living in a tied cottage. Whenever the job was lost, as it was, it resulted in a desperate search for somewhere else to live. The dream never realised for Mr and Mrs Clark was for a council house and the security that would have given. David's experience of those times sees the beginning of the inexorable growth of his political beliefs about poverty, inequality, injustice and the Labour Party.

But alongside the precariousness of insecure income and housing is set the richness of life living in the country by the lake and living off the land. David's descriptions in

*The detail is astonishing – either David kept the most comprehensive diaries or he is the possessor of a photographic memory*

Chapter 4, Birds and Animals, and Chapter 5, Life Through the Seasons, are rich in detail and lyrical in style. But as well as the beauty of the landscape, there is a huge practicality of the benefits it offered. His father "a first class shot" meant that there were regularly wood pigeons or rabbits on the dinner table, not to mention fish from the lake.

From an early age David supplemented the family income, first with a paper round and then with work on the farms. He passed the 11 plus but there was never any question of him staying on at school into the sixth form, the family finances simply would never have afforded it. One of his earliest jobs was in forestry where he says "our productivity was surprisingly high and on a good day each of us could plant over a thousand trees". There emerged a neat symmetry with this experience when fifty years later David became Chairman of the Forestry Commission.

There is so much to enjoy in these memoirs. They offer a social history of life after the war, with low incomes, cold houses, few cars, no television, no dishwashers, fridges or freezers. And all this laced with encyclopaedic detail of the radio programmes of the time, the food we ate, the clothes we wore, the board games played at home, the entertainments in the village hall, the scouts, the cycle rides. The detail is astonishing – either David kept the most comprehensive diaries or he is the possessor of a photographic memory. It is a natural history book as well, David would make a wonderful companion for a walk on the fells.

And it is a growing up story with all the highs and lows, but also with the clearest description of the developing, it seems inevitable movement, towards a life in the Labour Party. It is authentic, sincere, convincing and hugely enjoyable.

For copies of the book, priced at £12, contact David at [clarkd@parliament.uk](mailto:clarkd@parliament.uk).

Lord Grocott was MP for Lichfield and Tamworth, 1974–1979, The Wrekin 1987–1997, and Telford 1997–2001

## A MAN WHO WOULDN'T BEND WITH THE WIND

Austin Mitchell

### *Peter Shore: Labour's Forgotten Patriot*

By Kevin Hickson, Jasper Miles and Harry Taylor

Published by Biteback

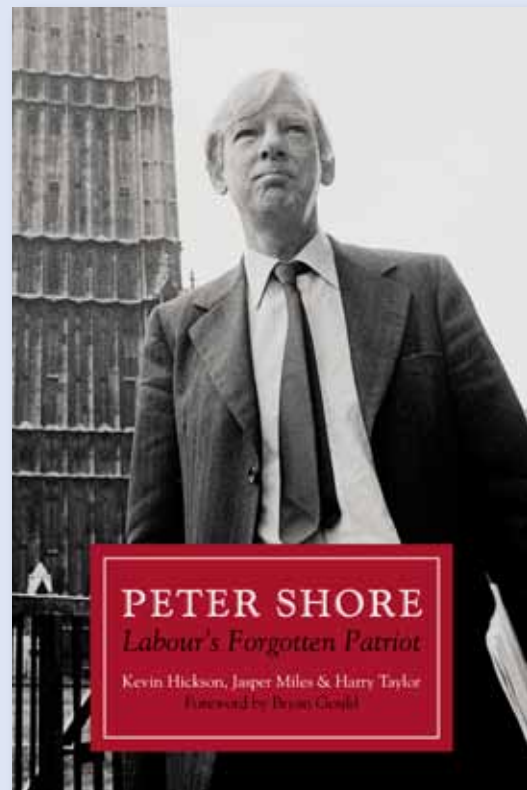
WHEN I FIRST JOINED THE LABOUR PARTY in 1956 I naively believed that I was joining a movement for the betterment of the working class aimed at building a fairer, more equal society. How naive can you get? In fact I was joining a chameleon organisation which changed from cool on Europe to passionately in favour, from big spending to "prudence", and neo-liberalism, from pro trade union to anti, and from socialism to Euro-mush.

The key to political success is to bend with the wind. Some can. Many can't and history offers a whole crop of talented people left behind by their party, from Jim Callaghan to Bryan Gould, and those whose careers were ruined by the Corbyn interregnum. Peter Shore is the best example of one whose views were so strong that when Labour abandoned its principles to get power he was left behind. A Pariah in his party.

That's the theme of this first biography of Peter Shore, a man I admired enormously perhaps because I agreed with him. It's thorough and workmanlike rather than exciting, no great revelations because there are few papers but a very readable analysis of the political career of a seriously neglected Labour figure whose career from 1945 to 2003 outlasted seven leaders.

Peter was a rare figure in the Labour Party, a serious thinker who devoted most of his efforts to a problem few in the party even thought about; how to build the strength of Britain's flagging economy to give everyone the better life and equality socialists aspire to. Peter saw this as a problem to be so few in the party even thought about; how to build the strength of Britain's flagging economy to give everyone the better life and equality socialists aspire to. Peter saw this as a problem to be solved by planning, and competitiveness achieved by devaluation of a pound consistently too high so it imposed a ball and chain round manufacturing's leg. Rebuilding could only be done by the nation state, the only instrument which can advance the interests of the people safeguard their welfare and build economic strength.

Such the basic beliefs which made him the only Labour Shadow Chancellor to advocate devaluation, effective regulation of capitalism and European scepticism all the opposite of John Smith and Blair, who made Euro-enthusiasm a religion for Labour. By the nineties Shore's views were seriously unfashionable. On the Labour Euro



*Being true to your principles is never career enhancing in the Labour Party*

Safeguards executive I watched the list of members dwindle as one after the other wrote in to resign, disassociate or pull out. But thank God for the cause, Peter, our chair still gave brilliant and powerful speeches against the EU. Listening was like being at Agincourt.

I voted for Peter in the 1981 leadership election though he wasn't one of Labour's leadership types. Not as tricky as Harold, as solid as Jim, as damaging as Foot and Corbyn or all fur coat and no knickers like Blair. Just a decent, honest and thoughtful man who thought seriously about the basic issue everyone of them ignored: how do we build a strong economy to sustain the betterment Labour needs.

In these later years he did wonders for the morale of the dwindling band of Euro-sceptics but nothing for his own career being dumped by Kinnock, and ignored by Blair, who was positioning to be President of the EU as a retirement job. Peter had become a leper in his own party. Being true to your principles is never career enhancing in the Labour Party. He went to the Lords and, though increasingly frail continued the fight, but died while speaking there. Ten years later the Great Recession and the referendum vote showed just how right he'd been and this sympathetic analysis of his struggle to bring the Labour Party to its senses is well deserved.

Austin Mitchell was MP for Great Grimsby, 1977–2015

## A LORD'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH SRI LANKA

Ian Paisley

*Sri Lanka*

*Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained*

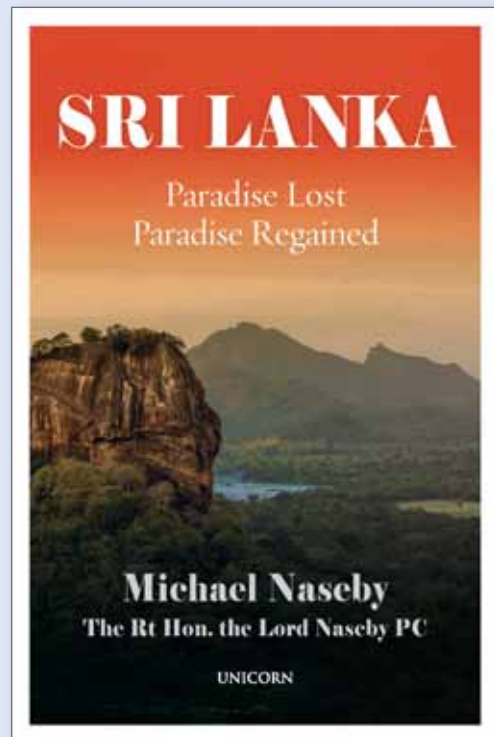
By Michael Naseby

Published by Unicorn

LORD MICHAEL NASEBY is the foremost UK authority on Sri Lanka. His knowledge developed over decades of in-depth research and his emersion in the country's economy, politics and culture is unsurpassed by any other politician in these Islands. It gives his book, *Paradise lost Paradise Regained* a very sure foundation for the reader. Michael gives the reader the benefit of his fifty years involvement in the island. He sets it out in a balanced manner. His support for all the people of the island and his enduring admiration for a place that has seen both beauty and the beast of war is obvious for all to read.

For anyone who wants an historical, economic and political summary of the island they need look no further. Here it is in a single volume. It cuts through a lot of the undergrowth for the reader and gets to the nitty gritty very quickly. He deals brilliantly with the impact of the civil war and the Tamil Tigers. He takes the reader through the complex political developments and rebuilding of the country after the peace. His chapter on the tsunami and the rebuilding of the country thereafter is masterful.

The book has been brilliantly researched. It provides a series of minuets of the various political characters and doesn't shy away from addressing the allegations of war crimes and the outcome of the rebuilding of the political and legal process. He provides various documents to show the reader with proof, if that was required, of his own tireless work of promoting the country and importantly building a friendship with its people.



*His chapter on the tsunami and the rebuilding of the country thereafter is masterful*

Make no mistake about it – Naseby is like a chap in love with the country. He makes no apology for that, and why should he? The island and its people have intrigued him and captured his heart. He is not uncritical, but the book is not to be seen as anything other than his own personal reflections and anecdotes from the perspective of the author. It doesn't pretend to be anything more than that. The fact that he has so much to say simply comes from the man's depth of knowledge and experience and for that alone it is worth reading.

It was once said that a person who reads has lived one thousand lives. Reading *Paradise Lost Paradise Regained* provides the reader with an opportunity to catch up on at least two more life experiences from the comfort of an armchair – those of the author and those of the people and places he writes about.

The Hon. Ian Paisley is a Freeman City of London and MP for North Antrim



### *A History of Britain's Parliamentary Constituencies (2020 edition)*

Jacques Arnold originally compiled this publication as an enthusiast in the years immediately following the 1974 election. As it developed, he began to market it to public and academic libraries, candidates and journalists, he has kept it up to date over the years.

The latest edition includes the results of the last general election, has been further expanded and now provides a thumbnail summary on each constituency.

Jacques is offering Association members copies of volumes of their own constituency/county/city/borough at a 50% discount.

The books are published by Patricia Arnold, 243 London Road, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5AD. Telephone: 01732 848388

Enquiries by e-mail: [constituencyhistory@uwclub.net](mailto:constituencyhistory@uwclub.net) Website: [www.theroyalhousesofeuropa.co.uk](http://www.theroyalhousesofeuropa.co.uk)

## BUTCHERED ANIMALS AND A BAD PRESIDENT WHOSE CORRUPTION BETRAYED THE MANDELA GENERATION

Denis MacShane

*The Rhino Conspiracy*

By Peter Hain

Published by Muswell Press



SOMETIMES THE BEST WAY for a politician to get over the facts is to write fiction. Benjamin Disraeli did so in 1844 in *Sybil* or the *Two Nations* and Douglas Hurd did it 130 years later in *Scotch on the Rocks* about a nationalist surge in Scotland.

Now Peter Hain who has had a distinguished career in two parties, two houses of Parliament, and two administrations has written a gripping page-turner that is also a history of the Nelson Mandela generation in prison, exile and finally winning freedom for South Africa and the dreadful wasted years this century of Jacob Zuma and his corrupt cronies who did so much damage to post-Mandela South Africa in their decade of power after 2009.

I first met and worked with Cyril Ramphosa, the current president of this beautiful country, in the 1980s when I was working with democratic black trade unions who were the real driving force for the end of apartheid.

They eschewed violence and rejected the Sovietism of many ANC leaders and supporting groups in exile. They made clear to the white ruling elites of apartheid that South African capitalism would never prosper without a majority African middle and working class earning enough to buy what they made or dug up from the bowels of the earth as gold, diamonds or coal.

Peter Hain has a record any political activist can be proud of as he led the 1968 generation in Britain in the great protests against apartheid especially by denying the white racists the right to play in international sport if teams were selected on the basis of colour.

In the Lords, he also raised the scandal of British public relations firms working for the new rotten rulers of South Africa and their Indian money men. He was rebuked for using parliamentary privilege but the whole point of parliamentary privilege is to place on record what powerful lawyers and judges paid by rich powerful men will stop being printed even if utterly true.

His thriller weaves different elements of South Africa's recent past and present and brings to life the dreadful, sickening global crime of butchering the elephant and rhinoceros for their horns and tusks which fetch a golden price in China, Vietnam and Korea for their claimed powers of bringing life back to elderly men.

There is plenty of action in the manner of a Lee Child Jack Reacher novel. The reader learns more about the techniques of the sniper than can be learnt from military histories.

There is a wise old Mandela generation ANC politician, his friend from Robben Island who has turned rotten as the post-Mandela ANC ministers just continued using many of the techniques of the apartheid state to line their pockets.

Perhaps the passage of the years has gentled Lord Hain but he weaves in one and a half love stories that avoid being corny as we live with the characters as they develop in the novel and want to them to succeed as a couple as well as campaigners against the crooked corruptions of power.

Naturally, there is a fine Labour MP who calls himself a 'male feminist' whatever that may be with a record in his youth campaigning against apartheid. He is now willing to use adjournment debates to put on the record the wrong-doings of the Zuma gang – the bad president is never named just called "The President" but every follower of South African affairs will not need much of a key to unlock this *roman à clé*. And no prizes for who Hain has in mind as the Labour MP who uses parliamentary privilege to dish the dirt.

South Africa is such a beautiful country of colour, wildlife, scenery, drama, political theatre and warm people of all races that a thriller set there has no problem conveying a larger-than-life landscape as well as heroes and villains.

It is not clear that Neath, Peter Hain's former constituency, would provide such a setting but we have not had a good novel about politics in today's Britain for many years, other than Michael Dobbs' enjoyable but absurd House of Cards sequence. Perhaps if the multi-talented Hain has more time to spare he can try and write a novel or thriller about the politics and the Parliaments he has lived in and worked in in the last 25 years.

In the meantime for anyone interested in politics *The Rhino Conspiracy* is an excellent stocking filler.

Denis MacShane for MP for Rotherham, 1994–2012

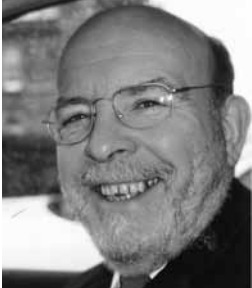
## TRIBUTES

### HAROLD BEST

18 December 1937 – 24 August 2020

Labour MP for Leeds North West, 1997–2005

*Remembered by Alex Sobel*



MY FIRST EVER TOUR of Parliament was with Harold when I came to lobby him about opposing the introduction of tuition fees as a student leader at the University of Leeds. I wasn't his constituent, Derek Fatchett was my MP, but Harold very readily supported us and assured us of his vote, and spent the best part of an hour taking us

round the House and into the Chapel where I was shown Emily Wilding Davison's cupboard. His example is something I now follow as the MP and take people on a tour and always show them Emily's Cupboard if I can.

The way Harold spoke about our radical traditions was straight out of E.P.Thompson and one Labour MP's now would struggle to emulate. Not long after that visit I had my first ever canvassing session, with Harold, on the Meanwood Valley Estate. It was a knife edge local election in Weetwood Ward but Harold stopped to speak to me about the houses on that estate the last (until recently) to be built by the Council and the difference a Labour council could make, and his own upbringing in Meanwood on the very streets we were canvassing.

That same year, I organised a Rally against the introduction of tuition fees. The NUS supplied us with Lembit Opik and Austin

Mitchell, as speakers. After our earlier meeting and support I asked Harold. All three spoke, with Austin leading a chant against the introduction on loans and Lempit doing ... well, a speech about Lempit ... but Harold spoke in passionate and articulate terms about the importance of education as a right and the need for everyone to have access irrespective of means. We couldn't have asked for a better speech!

In 2002 I stood myself in that same Weetwood Ward and again Harold gave me so much support, taking me to buy a Christmas Tree at St Chads Centre, canvassing in Meanwood and Ireland Wood, telling me about his plans for a station at Horsforth Woodside Quarry – which I'm still pursuing. He made every conversation alive with interest and brought in historical or political context to everything.

At his wake I spoke to his widow Glyn and she told me about Harold's proposal to her on Monkbridge Road. As it transpires, it is on the corner of the street which my house is on and I can see the spot from my bedroom window. It's unusually serendipitous for two MPs for the same constituency to have such overlapping paths but I feel blessed for the time I spent with Harold and thankful to his wonderful family who continue to be a credit to him and Glyn.

**Alex Sobel is MP for Leeds North West**

### TERRY DICKS

17 March 1937 – 17 June 2020

Conservative MP for Hayes and Harlington, 1983–1997

*Remembered by Andy McSmith*



PA Images/Alamy Stock Photo

TERRY DICKS was the sort of MP who is it a delight to have around, if you are covering Parliament as a journalist and you want someone that will provoke outrage. I doubt that the Conservative whips' office were as keen to hear what he had to say.

I could not name another Tory MP who would get up in Parliament and attack Margaret Thatcher – for being too pro-EU. According to Terry, “her approach was yes, yes, yes—yes to the Single European Act, yes to giving money when the Community overspent and yes to the exchange rate mechanism.”

And what must the largely pro-Tory fox hunting community have made of this suggestion, from Terry: “Have all the huntsmen with their glasses of sherry sprayed and given a 10-yard start on the foxes, on foot. Let's then see who enjoys the sport.”

Born with cerebral palsy, he was a persistent and passionate campaigner for the disabled, a cause in which he found allies

on Labour's backbenches, though they did not always like the language he used. During one debate, he accused a fellow Tory, Lady Olga Maitland, of taking orders from the whips, getting it wrong, and suggested that the whips should not “send a girl to do a woman's job.” Terry claimed that this was not a sexist remark.

During his 14 years in Parliament, he also called for the restoration of capital punishment, and of beating in schools, opposed the money spent on combatting AIDs, and suggested that parents of “unruly kids” should be given six months in jail unless they improved their parenting.

He objected to the talks with Sinn Fein leaders, such as Gerry Adams that set off the peace process, saying all members of Sinn Fein were terrorists. He also never backed down from his view that Nelson Mandela was a terrorist.

Other causes he took up ranged from opposition to the expansion of Heathrow – a major issue in his constituency – and the plight of Sikhs in Punjab. He returned to a favourite theme in his final intervention in the Commons before losing his seat, by suggesting that no public money should ever go into opera, ballet or drama because “most of the kids I know would go bonkers if they had to sit through anything like that.”

Brought up by his single mother, a cleaner, he left school at 15, and saw himself as the voice of the man in the street. As well as being an MP, he was a councillor for many years. He represented Runnymede until he stood down in 2018.

**JOHN HUME**

18 January 1937 – 3 August 2020

SDLP MP for Foyle, 1983–2005

*Remembered by Peter Hain*

Allstar Library Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

ONE OF THE HARDEST things for a politician is to reach out to a bitter opponent in the middle of a conflict.

Yet that's exactly what John Hume did as leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) when he talked, in secret to Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein's President, whilst 'The Troubles' were still

raging on the island of Ireland.

The SDLP was and is committed to reunification of the Island, but by constitutional democratic means, not the IRA's paramilitarism endorsed by Adams and Sinn Fein.

What became known as the 'Hume-Adams' talks began in strict privacy between January and August 1988, but were leaked the following year to huge criticism from Unionists who questioned Hume's willingness to talk to 'men of violence'. Some in the SDLP, including Hume's deputy Seamus Mallon, also had serious reservations.

Yet Hume's courage resulted in the basis of an agreed approach – known as the 'Hume-Adams proposals' but which were never set out on a document. The talks began officially in April 1993 and focused on the idea of 'self-determination for the people' of the island, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic. The key

was Britain accepting that citizens on both sides of the border should democratically decide their own political future – which meant London had to be willing to accept the possibility of a united Ireland. And Sinn Fein had to accept that the outcome would be decided in the ballot box not by the bullet.

That Hume's parliamentarianism and Adams' paramilitarism could find a common way forward free of violence was historic. It ultimately paved the way for first the 1995 Downing Street Declaration and then the 1998 Good Friday Agreement between the British and Irish governments.

During his long journey from civil rights leader in the late 1960s Hume became the most important peacemaker in the conflict, receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Ghandi Peace Prize and Martin Luther King Award. He was prominent in the corridors of power in Washington, Brussels, London and Dublin. Throughout he showed steadfast courage and commitment to principle.

Marching in front of civil rights protesters he and others were attacked by militant Loyalists, even though the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was pledged to peaceful protest against the way Catholics had long been victims of systemic discrimination.

But in the end it was the breakthrough Hume initiated with his much criticised talks with Adams as leader of the political wing of the IRA – even while it continued to bomb and kill – that helped end that horror.

**Lord Hain was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 2005–2007**

**LORD (MARTIN) O'NEILL OF CLACKMANNAN**

6 January 1945 – 26 August 2020

Labour MP for Clackmannan and Eastern Stirlingshire, 1979–1983, Clackmannan 1983–1997, and Ochil, 1997–2005

*Remembered by Gordon Banks*

Allstar Library Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

When charged with winning and defending a parliamentary seat against the SNP, a shrinking violet is not what is required. Martin O'Neill had to fight all his political life against an opponent with whose views he deeply disagreed, and face down opponents in the Labour Party.

As Shadow Defence Secretary, he handled the ditching of the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. Later, as Energy Spokesperson, he argued that a balanced energy policy including nuclear would best serve the UK.

I first met Martin in about 1995, worked closely with him in his 1997 election campaign and thereafter we campaigned and organised together in referenda, local, Scottish and Westminster elections.

Whilst Martin lived in Edinburgh, after his victory in Clackmannan and Eastern Stirlingshire in 1979 he had strong feelings for the area which would be his political home for over 40 years. When he was elevated to the House of Lords in 2005, he took the title Lord O'Neill of Clackmannan, a great honour for Scotland's smallest mainland county.

Martin may however be best remembered for his time as Chair

of the Trade and Industry Select Committee from 1995 to 2005. Many industries saw Martin as an ally who was not frightened to say the right thing to the right people, even if they found this difficult.

After deciding he would retire from the Commons at the 2005 election, he helped me in my campaign for the nomination as Labour candidate in Ochil. For this I will always be grateful.

Martin was loyal, and received significant loyalty in return – not just from his constituents but also from staff in his constituency (Ann and Haldis) and his Westminster (Emily) offices who worked with him through most of his parliamentary career.

Martin was one of the first MPs to open a Scottish constituency office, arguably understanding well before many other UK politicians the phrase made famous by his near namesake Tip O'Neill in the USA that "all politics is local". He also grasped before many that voting intentions and data retention were key to electoral success in difficult seats. He was always a source of sound guidance when I was involved in Westminster and Holyrood by-elections and the 2014 independence referendum in 2014. Simply put, there was never an alternative agenda, just good, solid advice.

Outside of politics he was a great supporter of Hibernian FC and served as a Director for a period – surely the highest accolade a fan can get!

He will be missed by many people in Clackmannanshire who considered him one of their own. Our thoughts are with his wife Elaine and sons Michael and Peter.



## NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin

**WE ARE ALL HAVING** to adapt to a different way of working as a result of the Covid19 epidemic and as most of our work in the past has been through face to face contact with students in schools and colleges we have seen a major disruption as no visits have been possible since March.

We also faced the challenge of holding our Annual General Meeting which we are obliged to do as a registered charity.

I am pleased to say that most of the tasks involved in an AGM were carried out by email followed by a Virtual AGM on Zoom on 1st September. All of the existing Trustees and Committee Members seeking re-election were re-elected with the welcome addition of Helen Jones. The Officers (Trustees) and

Executive Committee for 2020–2021 are as follows:

### Officers and Trustees:

**Chair:** John Austin

**Secretary:** Keith Best

**Treasurer:** Sarah McCarthy-Fry

**Vice-Chairs:** Dr Edmund Marshall,  
Michael Meadowcroft

### Additional Committee Members:

John Corrie, Huw Edwards, Nigel Griffiths, Sylvia Heal, Helen Jones, Tom Levitt, Adrian Sanders, Bowen Wells

13 of our members are currently confirmed as speakers through our partnership with Speakers for Schools and a further 8 are in the pipeline. Before lockdown Victoria Borwick

spoke to two schools in Lewisham and Brent; Edwina Currie spoke to sixth form students in Halton; and Bridget Prentice spoke to students at a school in Greenwich. Since March, Bridget Prentice and David Hanson have been involved in pre-recorded webinar events and several more are envisaged.

The Trust has been in discussions with several Universities about on-line and recorded events and we have one event planned for the University of Westminster and one in the pipeline for Exeter University. Hopefully several other invitations will be forthcoming. This looks likely to be our method of working for the foreseeable future.

[www.parlyoutreach.org.uk](http://www.parlyoutreach.org.uk)



## A NOTE FROM THE SCOTTISH BRANCH

An update from Gordon Banks, Chair of the Scottish branch

**LIKE MOST OTHER** organisations which rely on face to face activities, the Scottish branch has been unable to function since the Coronavirus outbreak.

Anne, our Treasurer, contacted me some time ago as a result of her attempts to move ahead with the opening of our account with the Bank of Scotland but as a result of lockdown and the impact on my business and getting things up and running again, I have to advise I haven't been able to make any progress.

As a result of surgery for a replacement knee I will however have recuperation

time in which I will try and attend to matters.

I do hope you are all keeping safe and well and that it won't be too long before we can get things up and running again and rebuild some momentum to get us moving forward in a creative, entertaining and productive manner.

A new Executive committee has been elected / co-opted to the UK Association and I look forward to the officers of the Scottish branch working with the new committee – many thanks to members who voted in the election.

I would gratefully receive any suggestion on locations, topics and potential speakers for future meetings and also comments as to when members would feel comfortable attending although I appreciate that may well be some time in the future.

Finally, if a meeting via Zoom was of interest to members in the meantime just let me know your thoughts. Keep safe

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

### ASSOCIATION CONTACT DETAILS

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