

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



SPRING 2026

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SIGNAL BOX TO DESPATCH BOX

by Andy McSmith

Peter Snape has had a long life's journey, starting as a 15-year-old booking clerk on the railways, then the signalman's gofer on Edgeley Junction No. 2 signal box, south of Stockport, then a signalman, army corporal, a councillor, MP, a government whip, and now a life peer – and guest speaker at the pre-Christmas annual meeting of the Association. This meeting had a railway theme to it, because 2025 was the year for celebrating the world's first passenger rail journey powered by steam, on the Stockton to Darlington line, on 27 September 1825.

Snape made a few enemies on the way, such as Lord Dannatt, former Chief of the General Staff. Shortly before the invasion of Ukraine, his lordship assured peers that Putin was only bluffing. Days later, the former corporal could not resist reminding the general that he had got it wrong, for which he was told: "Why don't you eff off?"

Soon after he had been elected MP for West Bromwich East, in 1974, he offended Tony Crosland, the Environment Secretary, who was dallying over plans to construct a Channel tunnel. Snape accused him of tackling the project "with all the enthusiasm of a Trappist monk who's told to advocate birth control." Crosland accosted him later and pointed out that "a Trappist monk wouldn't open his bloody mouth in the first place."

Jimmy

Crosland blamed Tony Benn, then Industry Secretary, who had successfully lobbied Harold Wilson in favour of building Concord. The government, apparently, could not afford both a supersonic plane and a tunnel. "He actually referred to Tony Benn as 'Jimmy Benn' for some reason," Lord Snape said. "We got to know each other, and he told me a story about 'Jimmy'. He said that when he was Foreign Secretary, he had not long been married to Susan, who was a very beautiful woman. One Sunday afternoon he said 'Why don't we



Peter Snape (right) and Association Chairman Lawrie Quinn

retire for the afternoon?' But there was a ring on the doorbell, a very persistent ring. He said: 'So I put my dressing gown on, and I went downstairs, and it was Jimmy Benn! I said: 'What do you want Jimmy?' and he said: 'The chain has come off my bike.' Susan came down in her dressing gown as well. And he looked at me in my dressing gown, and he looked at her in her dressing gown, and he said: 'Oh, I've obviously disturbed you. Are you not very well?'"

Flusher

As a government whip, Snape sat in during a Cabinet sub-committee meeting at which, while Tony Benn was speaking – 'waxing lyrically', as Snape put it – Denis Healey was noisily using a razor blade to cut items from a newspaper. "So Benn said: 'Denis, that's distracting.' And he said: 'Well, so is listening to that bollocks from you'. And I looked at the secretary, and I wondered 'how is he going to minute that?' It said the Secretary of State for Energy proposed something or other 'and the Chancellor demurred'."

After the October 1974 election, the Labour government had a majority of only three, so the onus was on the whips to get every vote out. Each had a list of duties. In Snape's first week, he saw on the

notice board his role was "Flusher, Lower Deck". He had to ask the Chief Whip, Walter Harrison, what it meant. "'Your job', he said, 'is to go along the lower floor and check there is nobody there pissed who should be voting Labour. And don't forget to check the loos as well, and push all the cubicle doors and check there's nobody in there.'"

I had got all the way to Westminster, I was no great shakes as an orator, but I thought I was better than pushing loo doors. But accidents happen.' Eddie Wainwright, a coal miner MP – there's not many of them left, of course - missed a vote one particular night and when they said 'What happened?' he said 'I fell asleep on the loo'. Luckily it wasn't on the ground floor."

The meeting also heard from the veteran journalist, Paul Routledge, who was born in 15 Railway Terrace, Normanton, where it seemed that the only choices were to work on the railway, or the mines, but he got to university, by the age of 27 he was Labour Editor of *The Times*, and, in his words, "I never had a proper job: I have always been a journalist." But the love of railways stayed with him, as demonstrated in his book, *For the Love of Trains*, published to mark the bicentenary, which is already on its third print run.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Nicola Rivis



NICOLA RIVIS PETITIONS AND BACKBENCH BUSINESS – VIEWS SOUGHT

The House of Commons Modernisation Committee was set up at the start of the 2024 Parliament, and has so far published a report on the accessibility of the House of Commons and its procedures as well as looking at matters such as outside employment of MPs and Select Committees.

On 16 March it announced an inquiry considering Backbench Business Committee and Petitions Committee debates, in the context of its wider work on the effective use of time in the Commons. As part of this inquiry Modernisation Committee is keen to hear from former MPs about their views. The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

1. Is the current allocation of time for Petitions and Backbench Business debates appropriate and effective?
 - What impact, if any, does the timing and scheduling of debates have on attendance?
2. Are the 35 days allocated to the Backbench Business Committee appropriate in the context of other demands on the House's time?
3. Is the current allocation of Backbench Business debates between the Chamber (27 days) and Westminster Hall (8 days) correct?

4. Are there any improvements that could be made to the Backbench Business Committee's process to agree applications for backbench business debates (including ensuring debates are popular amongst members and on topical subjects)?
5. Are the existing mechanisms available for the Petitions Committee to hold debates in the Chamber (to apply via Backbench Business Committee, or to be allocated time by the Government) sufficient or should the Petitions Committee have guaranteed time in the Chamber?

If you would like to provide a written submission setting out your views on the inquiry, you can get in contact with the committee via modcom@parliament.uk

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER

DAVID T.C.DAVIES

Former Conservative MP for Monmouth, 2005-2024

David TC Davies became one of the longest-serving Chairs of the Welsh Affairs Select Committee, holding the role for nine years. He served as a Government Whip for much of Boris Johnson's premiership and was appointed Secretary of State for Wales by Rishi Sunak, serving until the 2024 general election. Alongside his parliamentary career, he served for eight years as a Special Constable. Known as "TC", to differentiate himself from David Davis, he now works as Chief of Staff to the Conservative Senedd Group and has more time for surfing.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

NEXT MEETING

The Association's next All-Member Meeting will be from 16:30hrs – 17:30hrs on **Wednesday 29 April** in Committee Room 1, House of Lords. We will hear from Lord (Ken) Clarke on: 'Westminster, Whitehall & All That Jazz'

Lord Clarke, as you will know, is one of our most experienced living parliamentarians, arguably the most experienced, having been MP for Rushcliffe for 49 years, a minister at every level of government, Father of the House for two years, and now a Conservative peer. We are expecting a fascinating talk.

We will be having the AGM prior to the All-Member Meeting at 15:30hrs on **Wednesday 29 April** also in Committee Room 1, House of Lords.

SUMMER RECEPTION

Our Summer Reception will be taking place in the Speaker's State Apartments, House of Commons, (with kind permission from Mr Speaker) on **Thursday 9 July** from 17:30hrs – 19:30hrs, immediately following the All-Member meeting.

If you would like to attend the Summer Reception in the Speaker's State Apartments, please email Nicola (rivisn@parliament.uk) to reserve your place. Also include or not if you are bringing your partner, and their name when emailing. Then please also transfer £42 per head to the Association's bank account.

Look forward to seeing you there!



INQUIRING INTO INQUIRIES

As government inquiries proliferate, Ross Cranston, a recent inquiry chairman, reports that inquiries into inquiries have begun

Public inquiries are now a familiar feature of the UK political landscape. Covid, contaminated blood, the Post Office scandal – these are only a few of the public inquiries of recent times. In broad terms the independent public inquiry furthers accountability. I have a personal interest in their reputation since I recently completed an inquiry into a major maritime tragedy when more than 30 people died in UK waters attempting to cross the English Channel from France in a small boat.

The number of public inquiries has been growing. The Institute for Government (IfG) records that since 2005, 63 have been launched, compared with 41 in the 20 previous years.

This increase has been accompanied by more critical commentary, which has led to inquiries into inquiries. The House of Lords Statutory Inquiries Committee, the National Audit Office (NAO), and the IfG have all suggested reforms.

A contrast is usually drawn between statutory and non-statutory inquiries. The former are conducted under the Inquiries Act 2005 which governs their procedures and evidence gathering. Non-statutory inquiries have more flexibility but cannot compel evidence and depend on cooperation.

Another classification is between “investigative” and “policy” inquiries. Investigative inquiries are charged with finding the facts behind specific events - a major disaster, deaths, a public scandal and so on. Policy inquiries can be similar to what parliamentary select committees do. The type of inquiry has implications for the terms of reference, most appropriate chair, procedures, and anticipated length.

In establishing an inquiry ministers need to be clear about what they want to achieve in the terms of reference and

within what timeframe. The political pressure to act can threaten a disciplined approach. It helps no one if ministers or the advocates for a public inquiry have unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved and when. A chair can be crucial in driving the process, determining strategy, and retaining the parties’ support.

Familiar criticisms of public inquiries are length and cost. The IfG calculates that on average the completed inquiries launched since 1990 have taken just over three years.

Of the longer inquiries the Iraq (Chilcot) Inquiry took seven years, the Bloody Sunday (Saville) Inquiry, 12 years. By contrast the review into self-inflicted deaths in custody of 18–24-year-olds, chaired by Lord Toby Harris, took 15 months. My inquiry was on the short side taking just over two years.

Time and cost will vary with the subject matter, since that can determine the number of documents obtained and witnesses examined. Delays can occur for various reasons such as disagreements over the terms of reference, finding a chair, judicial review, and parallel police investigations.

Some say that we need a fundamental rethink of our model of public inquiries. There is certainly scope for reform. Procedure is one area. The IfG argues that reliance on precedent, risk aversion, and political sensitivity discourage innovation. An example is “Maxwellisation”, where those to be criticised in a report are sent warning letters so they can raise objections before publication. It slows matters considerably. If a criticism has already been aired, say at a public hearing, and there is ample opportunity to respond, that should be sufficient.

Administration is another area for reform. For example, in 2014 the House of Lords Committee concluded that each

inquiry began afresh and this was a major cause of “unnecessary length and cost”. It recommended a central inquiries unit to arrange premises, IT, staffing, and so on. The Cabinet Office established one, but it concentrates on best practice.

Finally, there is lesson learning and the recommendations a public inquiry may make. The government needs to be transparent about which it accepts. Then there is their implementation. The House of Lords Committee has identified cases where serious mistakes were repeated when this did not happen and suggested a formal system for monitoring inquiry recommendations.

Public inquiries in the UK have provided a way of getting to the bottom of matters of major public concern, identifying the causes of failures, and making recommendations for the future. In the process they have contributed to rebuilding public trust. But this does not mean that they are not capable of improvement.



Ross Cranston is professor of law at the LSE. He was Labour MP for Dudley North 1997-2005 and a High Court judge. He chaired the inquiry into the events of 23-24 November 2021, when more than 30 people died attempting to cross the English Channel in a small boat. The inquiry report was published on 5 February.



JOINING REFORM IS A DUTY, NOT BETRAYAL

By Adam Holloway

A former Tory MP explains why he has switched to Reform UK. Overleaf, another Tory lays out why he believes colleagues should stick with the party.

There comes a point in public life when you have to ask yourself a hard question: am I still serving the cause I believed in, or am I defending an institution that has drifted away from it?

Many of us who have worn the uniform will recognise that moment. You join to serve the country. You do not sign up to protect a bureaucracy when it loses its sense of mission. That is the position I eventually found myself in within the Conservative Party.

When Kemi Badenoch said publicly that there are real differences between the Conservatives and Reform UK, she was right. For months, colleagues insisted Reform was merely a protest movement saying the same things in a louder voice. It isn't. The differences are substantive – in policy, in urgency, and above all in mindset.

I did not leave conservatism. I remain instinctively conservative in my beliefs: sovereignty, secure borders, low and predictable taxation, personal responsibility, cultural confidence, and the primacy of national interest. But I came to the conclusion – reluctantly – that the party bearing the Conservative name no longer reliably advances those principles.

On immigration, for example, we presided over net migration that reached 728,000 in a single year and over four million arrivals across the last parliament, largely unskilled and including dependants. Whatever one's personal sympathy for individuals seeking a better life, that scale of inflow has profound consequences for housing, public services, social cohesion and wage levels. The

electorate was promised control. They did not receive it.

On energy, we embraced a well-intentioned but economically damaging Net Zero pathway without sufficient regard for competitiveness or resilience. UK industrial energy costs have been driven to levels far above those of our competitors, with predictable consequences for growth and investment. A Conservative government should never put ideology above national economic security.

On taxation, spending and state expansion, the direction of travel was equally troubling. We allowed the tax burden to rise to historic highs while expanding regulatory frameworks and public-sector structures. The language remained conservative; the practice did not.

Reform's position, by contrast, is not cosmetic adjustment but structural reset. Hard borders rather than managed decline. Immediate and meaningful tax reform rather than marginal tinkering. A clear willingness to challenge institutional capture in parts of the civil service, academia and public bodies. You may disagree with aspects of tone, but the underlying proposition is clear: the system itself requires overhaul, not calibration.

When I speak to former constituents in Gravesham, they do not talk about abstract theory. They talk about small boats, crime, waiting lists, housing pressures, energy bills, and a sense that effort is no longer fairly rewarded. They see economic migrants housed in hotels while veterans struggle. They see public services stretched beyond capacity. Their concern is not ideological. It is practical and rooted in lived experience.

Many colleagues argue that Reform

merely splits the vote and risks permanent Conservative exile. I understand the fear. But we must be honest with ourselves. The vote was already fractured because trust had already been eroded. Millions of natural conservative voters concluded long before the last election that the party had drifted into managerial centrism – neither defending borders effectively nor reducing the state meaningfully, nor confronting cultural overreach with clarity.

Labour's alternative is, in my judgment, worse. It represents a deeper instinct toward centralisation, higher spending and greater regulatory control. The country cannot afford another decade of that trajectory.

I am under no illusion that Reform is perfect or fully formed. It must professionalise further, broaden its talent base, moderate unnecessary abrasiveness and demonstrate administrative seriousness. Moving from insurgency to government is a profound shift. It requires discipline, credible leadership teams, detailed policy costings and institutional maturity.

But politics does not offer perfect vessels. It offers moments of decision. Current polling and political momentum suggest that Reform is no longer peripheral. It may well be the principal challenger at the next general election. If that is the direction of travel, then those with governing experience should help ensure that, if Reform wins, it governs competently and responsibly.

Parties exist to serve national interest. When they cease to do so effectively, realignment becomes a duty, not a betrayal.

Adam Holloway was Conservative MP for Gravesham, 2005-2024

NO, THE PARTY DIDN'T LEAVE YOU... YOU LEFT US

By Tim Loughton

Before standing for public office Ronald Reagan was an active supporter of the Democrats. When he formally registered as a Republican in 1962, he claimed: "I didn't leave the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party left me."

Since then, a version of that attempted justification has become a frequent template for MPs jumping ship from a political party that many emotionally claim has been central to their lives almost since the womb. In my 49 years as an active Conservative Party member, I have seen defections from all sides, and some of them could legitimately plead Reagan's exculpation in aid. In the case of recent defections of Conservative MPs, current and defeated, this doesn't come close to cutting the mustard.

Four MPs elected as Conservatives in 2024 have now chosen to take the Farage shilling—substantially fewer than the double figure stampede of sitting Labour MPs who deserted Michael Foot's Labour Party for the new SDP in 1981, but damaging all the same. Rather more former Conservative MPs who failed to survive the July 2024 rout have also subsequently switched.

Many have flounced out attacking Kemi Badenoch's Conservative Party as being unrecognisable from the one they joined, quasi-Lib Dems hijacked by woke, some have inexplicably claimed. Most graceless of all was Robert Jenrick's highly personal attacks on senior colleagues whom he had been happy to sit with, round the Shadow Cabinet table just days before, professing his undying loyalty. None of it is with a heavy heart and great personal sadness that I have taken this difficult move niceties that used to accompany defectors genuinely wrestling with their consciences.



Instead, Jenrick apparently battled with colleagues to get his way over immigration whilst at the Home Office and when he failed to impress resigned on principle. The problem with this claim is that it was under his tenure as Immigration Minister that immigration levels set new records. As I clearly saw in frequent dealings with him as deputy chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, I am afraid he was just not on top of his brief. Furthermore, the "I was only obeying orders" routine falls flat when you realise that his time at the Home Office almost entirely overlapped with Suella Braverman as Home Secretary, who then followed him out of the

door, citing similar excuses and with a similar dose of gracelessness.

The thing that the Gang of Four sitting MPs have in common with their also now turquoised former Conservative colleagues is that all stood at the last general election on a Conservative manifesto, bidding to remain as Conservative MPs, defending in varying degrees the record of the departing Conservative government. Within 20 months all are claiming they didn't mean it, even those who had been ministers to the end, and are attacking the record of the last Government they were in a position to influence. This is just not credible.

When Labour MPs defected to the SDP, they justifiably claimed their party had lurched to the left. There was also a scintilla of rationale in the four main defections from Conservative to Labour that I witnessed in opposition: Peter Temple-Morris, Robert Jackson, Quentin Davies and Shaun Woodward, who had serious differences with William Hague's stance on Europe, and, in the case of Woodward, over Section 28, and who all claimed that the party had moved to the Right.

By contrast, the defectors to Reform claim the Conservative Party has moved to the Left. Yet, can anyone seriously argue that Kemi Badenoch is more left wing than David Cameron was when Jenrick and Braverman were first elected under his premiership?

Under Kemi Badenoch the Conservative Party is, rightly or wrongly, seriously contemplating withdrawing from the ECHR; wants to go further than the 2024 Asylum and Immigration Act which had to replace the flawed 2023 Illegal Migration Act Braverman and Jenrick piloted; is far tougher than Farage on welfare reform; and Kemi has been the most high profile "anti-woke warrior" not least on protecting teenagers with gender dysphoria.

Another vomit inducing 'cri de coeur' of the defectors is that the Conservative Party is no longer the party of Margaret Thatcher. I joined the Conservative Party soon after the great lady became leader, indeed she was the major factor that kickstarted my political career. I have no doubt that she would be right behind Kemi Badenoch now and warning against the siren voices of Reform. She liked a good fight, she relished debate, as does Kemi, and didn't flounce off if she didn't get her way. She wanted to beat the Labour Party on ideas and results. She didn't want to expunge the Labour Party in the way that Reform proselytizes about destroying the Conservative Party. She acknowledged that a healthy democracy needs a healthy Opposition. The zeal with which defectors have signed up to Farage's call to dispatch the political party they grew up in goes far beyond even the most acrimonious marital splits.

Kemi is now doing the serious work of the serious Official Opposition, holding the Labour Government

to account week in week out, methodically road testing detailed alternative policies and coming up with a credible and practical agenda for government.

Reform, meanwhile, has been very successful in broadcasting its menu of the problems it thinks "broken Britain" faces. But responsible politics is about coming up with credible practical solutions to address them and that we have yet to see from Reform, or at least something that lasts the week before half the parliamentary party votes against it. Even on its flagship issue of small boats I have no idea of what their solution actually is, other than shouting at the people in them. In practical terms Reform MPs have voted against the toughest measures put in place by the last government before they have even been properly enacted.

I am sorry but I am not having it. Theirs are convictionless and implausible grounds for defecting. They smack of personal seat preservation, despite all the emotional histrionics about only wanting what's right for their constituents and the country, not that any of them want to put that to the test with an honourable by-election.

Conservative colleagues who have worked hard through tough times and fair should not be seduced by these strident voices. When I was first elected after what we thought had been a record drubbing in 1997 we knuckled down for the long haul and learned how to be a constructive Opposition, rebuilding for government again. We didn't flounce off in search of an easier ride.

Perhaps my former colleagues should pay more attention to another of Ronald Reagan's famous quotes: "The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave." The brave thing to do is to stand and fight, alongside those who have stood and fought with you over decades, not least the volunteers in the constituency who worked tirelessly to put you there. There is nothing brave in jumping to a ship of convenience, particularly to one for which, as Groucho Marx put it so well: "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies."

Tim Loughton was Conservative MP for East Worthing & Shoreham 1997-2024.

THE CANDID CANDIDATE

Hugo Summerson

Political Incident No. 11

Having lost Walthamstow in 1992 I was on the hunt for another seat. Would-be candidates usually try—desperately, sometimes—to dig up some sort of connection with whatever constituency they are applying for. You are very fortunate if, quite by chance, you or one of your parents was born there; or you work (or have worked) there; or you went to school there, even at the age of five for one month; or (starting to scrape the barrel a bit) your aunt lived there (of course you visited her frequently); or your best client lived there, or your best friend; or you bought a mousetrap there; etc etc. Selection committees must hear some remarkable stories. But while they may be helpful it is absolutely essential that you do not mispronounce a local place name. If you do, you've had it.

Garboldisham. Cogenhoe. Wymondham. Soulby. Gullane. St Weonards. Happisburgh. Woolfardisworthy. Leominster. (Test yourself and see how many you get right, although it's a lot easier today with the internet.) The UK is riddled with hundreds of villages many of which bear names that are not pronounced phonetically. And in 1996 I was undone by Twynning in the new Tewkesbury constituency.

Sure enough, the selection committee asked me what connections I had with the constituency. And I answered, with perfect truthfulness, that I had cousins who lived at Twynning. (I saw no need to mention that they had moved there only six months earlier.) As they pronounced it "Twine-ing" I did too. Whereupon a member of the committee who had taken little interest in the proceedings up to that point raised his head, glared at me, puffed himself right up, and snapped "TWINNING!!!"

That was it. I knew it and they knew it. Goodbye to Tewkesbury, tail between legs.

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

PARLIAMENT'S REMEMBRANCE CLOCK

A proposed Association site visit, September 2026

BY LAWRIE QUINN

Following the success of last year's visit to York, to mark the 200th anniversary of the nation's passenger railway, the Association's officers and committee have received numerous suggestions for a visit in the autumn of 2026

After consulting Mr Speaker, we would like to ask if our members would be interested in a visit, with overnight accommodation, to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, to see the proposed location for a Remembrance Clock.

In November 2025, Parliament commissioned a Remembrance Clock to serve as a permanent memorial to MPs, peers, journalists and staff who died in war, conflict or from acts of terrorism.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, and Lord

McFall of Alcluith, former Lord Speaker, have written to the parliamentary community asking if they would consider contributing funds to the sculpture, intended for installation at the National Memorial Arboretum.

"While the parliamentary estate has a number of memorials to colleagues killed in both wars, and in tribute to the lives of MPs cut short by terrorism – such as Airey Neave, Jo Cox, and Sir David Amess – there is no central place of reflection," said Sir Lindsay.

"We hope the 'Remembrance Clock' memorial, with its resemblance to the four dials of the Great Clock of Big Ben, all set permanently at 11 o'clock, will offer the nation a place to take a moment to remember those people whose time was taken away."

Chosen through an open call for designs, 'Remembrance Clock' by the Midlands-based artist, Andy DeComyn, was picked by a cross-party committee of MPs, peers, and staff, for its respectful, striking design, and clear relevance to the familiar symbols of Parliament.

At the centre of the steel structure

are two benches carved in Cumbrian sandstone in the style of the seating from both Houses - offering visitors a place to pause and reflect.

Just like the arboretum's numerous other memorials, Remembrance Clock will not include the names of all who perished. Instead, a dedicated website for the more than 550 people it represents will be featured on The Speaker's Art Fund website.

A letter to the parliamentary community from both Speakers stressed that "no public money should be used to fund the memorial". Instead, MPs, peers, staff and journalists have been invited to consider contributing to the £550,000 cost.

Sir Lindsay said he hoped the memorial, and accompanying website, might prompt members of the public to come forward with their own stories of family members whom it represents.

"Hearing the untold back-stories of much-loved relatives who died in the service of Parliament will make the memorial even more poignant and important," he said.

“It will also help us accumulate an incredible piece of social history relating to those who worked in or served the centre of UK democracy”.



“It will also help us accumulate an incredible piece of social history relating to those who worked in or served the centre of UK democracy.”

About the artist and sculptor Andy DeComyn

Based in the Midlands, Andy DeComyn is best known for his Shot at Dawn Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, which commemorates 309 British and Commonwealth soldiers who were shot for desertion, cowardice, striking a senior officer, disobeying a lawful order, casting away arms, mutiny and sleeping at post during the First World War.

Other notable works include, the National Miners’ Memorial, Women’s Royal Air Force Memorial, and the statue to Frank Foley, who saved thousands of Jews from Nazi persecution.

About the National Memorial Arboretum

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire is the nation’s year-round

place to remember; it helps people to reflect and to be inspired, providing a space to celebrate lives lived and commemorate lives lost in service. Since it opened to the public in 2001, it has grown into an inspirational living landscape, freely open to all. The 150-acre arboretum is part of the Royal British Legion and has approximately 25,000 maturing trees and over 420 memorials. The multi-award-winning garden and woodland site sits at the southwestern corner of the 200 square mile National Forest. Situated on land owned by Tarmac and leased on a peppercorn rent, the Arboretum is home to the striking Armed Forces Memorial, which commemorates those killed on duty or because of terrorism from the end of the Second World War to the present time. www.thenma.org.uk

About the Speaker’s Art Fund Charity

If there is a gap in funds raised, the Speaker’s Art Fund (SAF) will contribute to the difference to ensure the project can proceed. If

funding remains after the memorial is complete, or if the project is unable to proceed, any excess will be devoted to other projects within the SAF. Mr Speaker hopes that the Remembrance Clock will be completed by Remembrance Day 2027. SAF’s mission is to encourage people to learn about Parliament through art, by making donations towards the acquisition of works of art and offering grants to projects that improve the understanding of democracy. Please send an email to our Administrator, Nicola by mid-May 2026, indicating if you are interested in joining an Association visit this September, and if you would like to be joined by a guest. For early planning, please assume we will arrange accommodation in Lichfield. Details to follow directly after we have assessed numbers for our Association party. Please email: rivism@parliament.uk to indicate your interest.

Lawrie Quinn is Chairman of the Association of Former Members of Parliament.

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

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

JUDY MALLABER AMBER VALLEY, 1997-2010



When I lost my seat in 2010, I was coming up to retirement so it was no great shock. I'd had a good run – and was more worried my staff had lost their jobs than me. After a break it was back to being a humble branch secretary – still canvassing and leafleting! More time for reading and walking – but also to support local

groups – like being trustee of our local youth club set up in a donated railway carriage when youth services were cut.

I'm happy just to help and support our newly elected MP Linsey Farnsworth – and glad it's not me having to do the hard graft. But I didn't know whether to be embarrassed or honoured when she named her office "Mallaber House" – not that they thought to tell me till they realised I'd see the address on a leaflet!

Pre-Covid I had time for some foreign travel – to projects of an organisation I've long supported, Practical Action, which tackles poverty through simple but effective technology. Ropeways across rivers to help farmers get their produce to market in Nepal, replacing dangerous internal cook ovens, building a hydroelectric plant way up in the Andes in Peru for the alpaca farmers. And I went back to the Congo where I did election monitoring as part of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes.

But Derbyshire is beautiful too – so I took up cycling – part of British Cycling's plan to get a million women on bikes. Very sociable and mostly politics free!

RICHARD BURDEN BIRMINGHAM NORTHFIELD 1992-2019



Everyone who has lost a seat knows it is always a disorienting experience when being an MP has defined your identity for so long. Maybe it felt even weirder to lose in 2019, as I did, going from hyper-activity to Covid lockdown in just three months. Still even Covid provided some focus for my early parliamentary "after life",

helping with food deliveries and other community responses in my part of Birmingham.

What have I been doing since then? I chair Healthwatch in Birmingham and Solihull and I am now doing my best to highlight the folly of the current government's plan to scrap not only the Healthwatch network itself but also the principle of recognising an independent voice for patients and the public in health and social care. Will Parliament persuade ministers to rethink that part of the forthcoming Health Reform Bill? I hope so.

Last year I also served as Director of Remembering Srebrenica UK, co-ordinating commemorations of the 30th anniversary of the Bosnian genocide. Memories of what happened in Bosnia in the 1990s and the international community's shameful inaction are personal. I was first elected in the same year that the Bosnian war started. I have also continued my long involvement with Israel and Palestine. I chaired Medical Aid for Palestinians in 2023 and I am a trustee of the Britain Palestine Project. With the tragic events which have unfolded in the Middle East, it feels important to remain active on this. I also do bits of public affairs consultancy from time to time.

Maybe that lot doesn't sound much like semi-retirement but, compared to "being on it" 24/7 as an MP, it still feels like it. And I do get a bit more time to go out and play with my old MG sports car!

ELLIOT COLBURN CARSHALTON AND WALLINGTON 2019-2024



Try as one might, I'm not sure anyone who seeks re-election can really fully prepare for the possibility they may no longer have a job at the end of it all, even if that eventuality seems certain!

Being an MP brought me a great deal of job satisfaction, and I knew that whatever I did next had not only to pay the bills (as important as that is), but also give me that same sense of purpose that came with being in Parliament.

As a relatively young MP, starting at 27 years old, I didn't have much of a back catalogue to revisit. What I did have were the interests I developed during my time in Westminster and in November 2024 I was lucky enough to come across an opportunity to join the incredible suicide prevention charity, Samaritans.

I spoke about my own experience of attempted suicide during a nerve-wracking PMQs, so I was incredibly excited to be able to join the UK's largest suicide prevention charity to help with its difficult and sensitive work.

It's a cause that unites across the political divide, but one that requires real effort and will to tackle. It is my privilege to bring my experience to support this cause.

Outside of work, my partner Jed and I continue to look after our menagerie of animals, including our beautiful dogs, Bella the Bernese Mountain dog and Callie the Corgi, and look forward to marrying in July.

RUTH EDWARDS RUSHCLIFFE, 2019-24



When I lost my seat, I was very clear that I wanted a new challenge, not just to return to a familiar corporate role. I also did a lot of reading about the impact of AI on the jobs market and didn't want to outsource my future to company leaders who may or

may not take the action needed to get ahead of the wave rather than drowning in it. Doing so in politics hadn't worked out so well!

So I set up 10 Years Ahead with my husband Owen, the UK's first communications agency built on people and AI working in partnership. We offer public affairs, stakeholder engagement, PR, all the services you'd expect from an agency, but we work with powerful AI to do so. It's been quite a journey and a challenge but I've loved the creative freedom to build something new.

I've also kept up my focus on national security, joining the Great Britain China Centre (GBCC) as a non-executive director. The GBCC is an arms length body of the Foreign Office that provides training to civil servants and politicians about China and facilitates dialogues. I'm greatly enjoying the experience to build on my skills as a director and learn from their network of experts.

We have also moved from the East Midlands to Devon (quite an undertaking with our donkeys, llamas, dogs, chickens and every plant from the garden in tow). We love our new life here and are looking forward to buying a property on Dartmoor soon.

STEPHEN FARRY NORTH DOWN, 2019-2024



The 2024 General Election brought to an end 31 years as an elected representative covering local government, the Northern Ireland Assembly, including time on the power-sharing executive as Minister for Employment and Learning, and finally as an MP.

I look back with pride as having been part of a transformational time in the history of Northern Ireland, from the negotiations on the Good Friday Agreement and the establishment and consolidation of devolution through its many ups and downs.

Having left politics behind, I am now Co-Director of a new Strategic Policy Unit, and a Professor of Strategic Policy in Practice at Ulster University. UU SPU is a think-tank based with the university. The public policy space in Northern Ireland is relatively underdeveloped compared to Scotland and Wales, and especially so compared to London and Dublin, having fewer and smaller scale think-tanks.

With the potential for devolution to bed-down after two periods in which the institutions were non-operational, it is now hoped that much richer, evidence-based and strategic policy discussions will emerge.

UU SPU seeks to provide through-leadership and to stimulate policy debates in key areas, and while Northern Ireland will be a particular focus, our interests will also range much more widely. Being located within a university setting, our unit can also help to leverage other academics into the policy place and also provide a platform in which we can assist students and researchers. To date, our work has focused on public finances, and the policy implications and public attitudes relating to Artificial Intelligence.



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin

FUNDING

We have discussed the possibility of seeking funding for our development and core costs from the Finance Committee of the House of Commons to be provided via the Association.

UNIVERSITIES

Since our last report there have been three sessions – two at Nottingham Trent University with Helen Jones on the role of the Whips Office and Ian Lucas on parliamentary scrutiny; and one at Brunel University with Tom Levitt on parliamentary procedure. Regrettably, as university staff have moved on, we have lost some of our regular contacts. If any former MPs have contacts with universities, we would be grateful if you could let them know of the work of the Trust or pass their details to me at admin@parlyoutreach.org.uk

SCHOOLS

The charity, Speakers for Schools, has remodelled itself and been



renamed as Futures For All. It is now the UK's leading social mobility charity, whose mission is to transform work experience and secure fair futures for all state-educated young people – levelling the playing field for 93 per cent of the student population. The Speakers for Schools programme, with which we are partners, remains central to its work. Since our last report the following of our members have participated: Ian Lucas at Ysgol Maes Garmon, Flintshire on his life story; Jeremy Lefroy at Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group on his experience

in business and politics; Lady Victoria Borwick at Bacon's College Southwark on the role of MPs and mayors; Sir Vince Cable at St James' Academy, Dudley on his business and political career; Sir David Lidington at St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College, Kensington and

Chelsea on his career as a politician and the challenges of ministerial office; Lord Clive Soley at Larbert High School, Falkirk and an online webinar involving 19 schools and 401 young people; and Edwina Currie at Tytherington School, Cheshire East and Aquinas College, Stockport on her professional and political career.

Annual General Meeting

The Trust's AGM will be held in Committee Room 1, House of Lords, on Thursday 9 July at 3.30pm.

SCOTTISH BRANCH UPDATE

Gordon Banks, Chair of the Scottish branch

I am happy to say that our formal election processes for the Scottish branch, which naturally follow on from the election processes for the UK Association, are now complete and my thanks to Linda Gilroy for acting as Scrutineer throughout this period.

Our new executive is up and running with the following office bearers

Chair – Gordon Banks

Vice Chair – Micky Hirst

Secretary – Linda Gilroy

Treasurer – John McNally

Executive member – Nigel Griffiths

I would like to welcome everyone to their roles and thank the outgoing and past executive committee

members for their support over the years.

We are still able to co-opt a further two members to sit on the executive and any suggestions or self-nominations would be appreciated.

We have arranged Executive and All Member meetings to take place on **16th April 2026** in The Cabinet Room, Queen Elizabeth House, 1 Sibbald Walk, Edinburgh EH8 8BH.

The executive meeting is 2.00-3.00pm

The All-members meeting is 3.15- 4.15pm

And from 4.30-5.30pm our guest speaker Chris Deerin, who is one of Scotland's leading journalists and commentators and Director of

Enlighten, Scotland's independent, non-partisan think tank will speak to us on his chosen topic: Has the Scottish Parliament grown up?

It would be great to see as many Scottish branch members as possible on the day, but please remember to respond to the notifications that Linda has sent out so we can give numbers to the venue. Also please note that photographic ID is required and allow a bit of time to be processed through reception and escorted up to the Cabinet Room.

It is our aim to hold further meetings throughout the year and more details of these and our plans for developing the activities of the branch will be available on the day.

A GOOD READ

THE ENIGMA THAT IS DANNY KRUGER

Jerry Hayes

Covenant

By Danny Kruger

Published by Swift Press

DANNY KRUGER IS AN ENIGMA WRAPPED WITHIN A RIDDLE. He is an evangelical Christian and supports the Christianisation of public life. He was David Cameron's chief speech writer when Leader of the Opposition and credited with coining the phrase "compassionate Conservatism". He was briefly Boris Johnson's political secretary and was supportive of Dominic Cummings' Covid sight test road trip. He became a shadow junior minister under Kemi Badenoch. And finally in September 2025 he defected to Reform UK as he was of the view that the Conservative Party was discredited and "over". It has been trumpeted, probably by Kruger, that he will be writing the blueprint for a Reform government. Therefore, I thought that it might be helpful to try to get inside the Kruger mind by delving into the ideological bestseller he wrote in 2023: *Covenant*.

Covenant is not an easy read. It has the feel of a set of Oxford PPE tutorials under the supervision of Barbara Cartland. It is an epic biblical battle between the Order which is good and the Idea which isn't. The Order represents community, family, Christianity and virtue. The Idea represents self-worship.

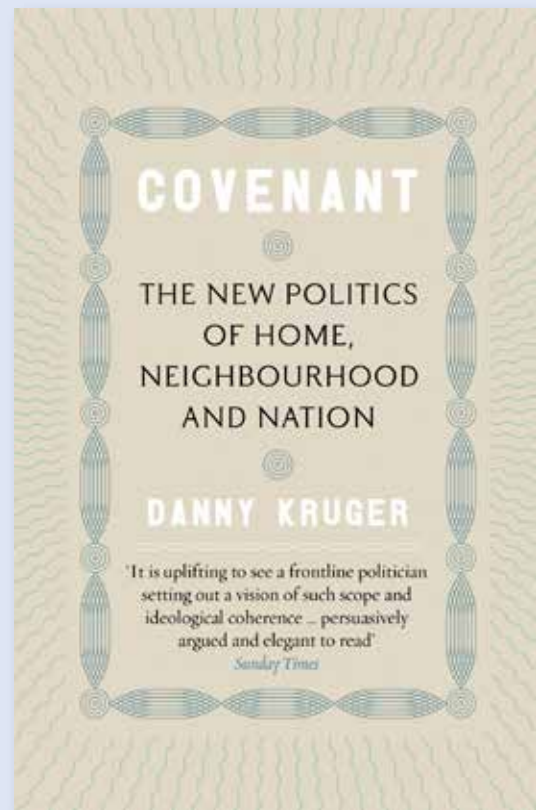
He writes: "The principle of personal dignity and individual value becomes, 'I don't care what people think'. The idea of freedom becomes 'I can do whatever I want' and indeed, 'others must help me do it'. The great gift of individual uniqueness becomes 'I am whatever I want to be'. The fact of emotions of all their power to move becomes 'my feelings matter above all else', and the fact of our emotional vulnerability becomes 'I must be protected from the words and thoughts of others'."

Kruger argues that the legal structures that support the Idea are embodied in the Human Rights and Equality Acts. That the EHCR is guilty of evolutive interpretation. In other words, the EHCR is acting way outside its remit and should be reined back to basic principles.

He quotes Kemi Badenoch's common sense approach to the Equality Act. "(It) is too often used not as a shield against prejudice, but as a sword to prosecute suspects of thought crime". Where Kruger goes wrong is that he quotes various ridiculous court rulings and fails to mention that they were eventually overturned by the Supreme Court.

Then he throws objectivity to the wind and embarks on a rant: "The leadership of our public and private sectors has collectively adopted the view that the foundations of society are rotten and illegitimate. Thus, our leaders are transgressive, politically opposed to the mores of the people they lead. And their sons and daughters will be more so."

He continues: "Instead of the Idea we need the Order, an old/new arrangement of institutions and understandings, which between them create the conditions for virtue....we recover a politics of home and the household, what we might



call oikism, to restore us to ourselves and each other."

A word of warning to Reform supporters. Oikism derives from the Greek *par-oikos* from the word parish evolved, not behaviour outside asylum hotels. I'm sorry to disappoint.

So in essence Kruger wants to restore community, jobs with dignity and worth, the family unit, stay at home mothers relying on one family wage, letting locals take charge of land development, education and healthcare. He even suggests that everyone should be a councillor for a while.

Yet he is profound about the unpreparedness of government: "A tribe of humanities graduates run the country and the culture with only a dim memory of GCSE science to guide us.we are in thrall of a priestly class of professional scientists...[who] reveal to the rulers the mysteries.... Government may be utterly bewildered, but at least it can 'follow the science' as in the old days it heeded the flight of birds or the entrails of a chicken. We are currently following the science into captivity... perhaps we have already awoken to find ourselves citizens of some bleak new empire of tech headquartered in California, in Shenzhen or in cyberspace."

Why on earth Kruger joined Reform is one of the universe's great mysteries, like Liz Truss, Angela Rayner's tax arrangements and the hiding place of Keir Starmer's personality. He hasn't been seen for a while so I imagine Farage has locked him in an attic with Suella Braverman, where, at least, Kruger will finally understand the true meaning of hell.

Perhaps the lesson is that, as nature abhors a vacuum, politics abhors human rights lawyers and evangelical Christians.

A GOOD READ

THE LIFE OF 'SAJ'

Peter Heaton-Jones

The Colour of Home

By Sajid Javid

Published by Abacus

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR SAJID JAVID is known to his close mates simply as 'Saj'. He and I were never quite on single-syllable terms, despite being MPs at the same time, so I've no need to declare an interest. Javid entered the House in 2010; by the time I arrived in 2015 he was already a cabinet minister. He went on to run numerous ministries and occupied two of the great offices of state, as well as vying for the top job, twice.

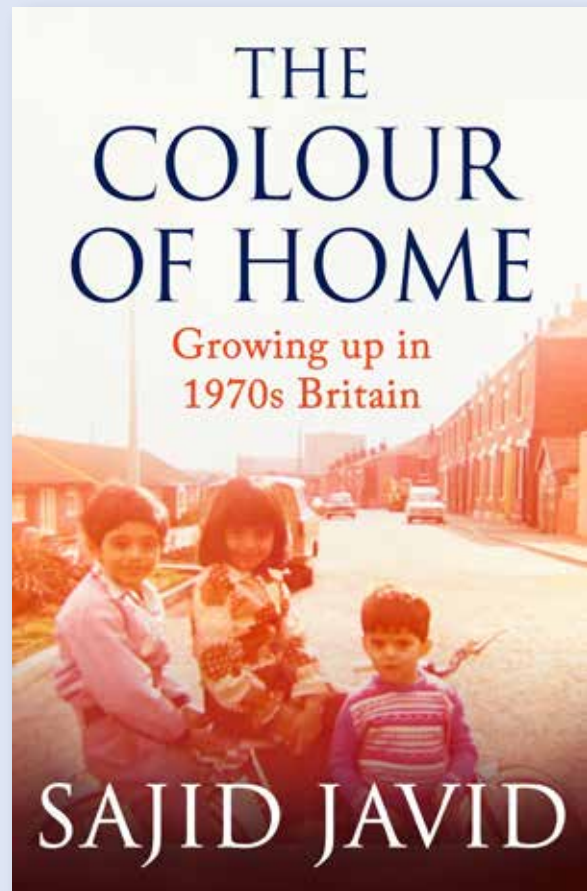
With such a CV, it must have been tempting to make this memoir merely a chronological catalogue of posts held, but he doesn't fall into that trap. Instead, Javid writes about his upbringing, his background and his family. About his parents' arrival from Pakistan, growing up above a shop in Bristol, and his father driving buses so that his children could aim higher. "Home," he writes, "was not a postcode but a promise." It's a line that sums up the argument that runs through the book: Britain offers opportunity, but it must be defended and renewed. It's to Javid's credit that he grabbed it with both hands.

There is room for politics here, of course. For those of us who inhabited the green benches during those fourteen years of Tory government, some chapters are a reminder of just what turbulent times they were. Early sections cover the coalition years and the financial clean-up. "We were rebuilding the aircraft while flying through a storm," he writes of the post-crisis period.

Coverage of his time at the Department for Business and later the Treasury has just enough economic detail, but it never overwhelms the story. Javid clearly enjoyed the intellectual challenge of those roles, yet keeps returning to the real-world impact. "Politics is the art of proceeding amid imperfection," he says. Welcome to Westminster.

The chapters on the Home Office are among the strongest. Windrush is confronted directly. "Leadership sometimes begins with accepting that the system you inherited has failed," Javid writes. It would have been easy to hide behind process or his predecessors, but instead he acknowledges the gravity of what happened and the responsibility that came with his office. There's no passing the buck.

Brexit occupies its expected share of space. Javid explains his own journey from backing Remain to supporting the delivery of the referendum result (been there, got all the t-shirts). The tone is always measured and there's no attempt to fight old battles or caricature opponents. Those of us who endured the procedural contortions of that period know only too well that being in Parliament after 2016 was, well, challenging. I remember those years as being hugely fractious: friendships stretched, tempers frayed and a constant sense that the wheels might become detached at any moment. It's a minor gripe, but I would have liked more of that maelstrom reflected, warts and all.



The most dramatic moment of Javid's career came in February 2020, when he resigned as Chancellor after reportedly refusing an ultimatum from Boris Johnson to sack his Treasury advisers. It was seen as a power grab by Number 10, and "no self-respecting minister" could accept it. But not much is said here about the Johnson era; maybe he's saving it for a sequel.

For former MPs, this book will strike a chord. It captures the mixture of exhaustion and privilege that comes with the job, and recognises the strain on family life. Above all, it explains how and why someone from modest beginnings navigates their way to the political top-flight, and is pretty successful when they get there. Sharper portraits of colleagues or more detail on particular policy battles would have been interesting, but that's a matter of preference. What Javid offers is his personal account of a political journey shaped by conviction and experience. He writes as someone who understands that government is complicated, compromises unavoidable, and hindsight all-too-easy to make your best friend.

In the crowded field of Conservative memoirs from the past decade and a half, this is one of the best. It's readable, thoughtful and occasionally dryly amusing, such as the observation that "Whitehall has a genius for producing briefing papers that answer questions nobody has asked." In much the same way, some politicians produce books that nobody needs to read. This isn't one of them. Javid writes so personally that, by the end, I felt like we could be on 'Saj' and 'Pete' terms after all.

A GOOD READ

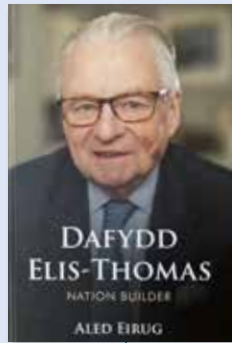
DEVOLUTION'S FOUNDING FATHER

Wayne David

Dafydd Elis-Thomas, Nation Builder

by Aled Eirug

Published by University of Wales Press



DAFYDD ELIS-THOMAS was a truly remarkable politician who played a significant role in the political life of Wales and Westminster for fifty years. In this well written and thoroughly researched biography, Aled Eirug paints a picture of a man who was always colourful and, on occasions, brimming with contradictions. While sympathetic to his subject throughout, Eirug never slips into sycophancy. There is a heavy reliance on interviews with Dafydd Elis-Thomas shortly before his death in 2025, balanced with comments from others who did or didn't share Thomas' perspectives, and material from other sources.

Across 311 pages, Eirug takes us through Dafydd Elis-Thomas's breathtaking journey, from south and north Wales childhood, through his time as the Plaid Cymru MP for Merioneth (later Merionydd Nant Conwy) and Leader of Plaid, to his joining the House of Lords and being elected to the Welsh Assembly, and then becoming the first Presiding Officer of the Assembly before controversially joining Carwyn Jones' Labour Government in Cardiff Bay.

On the way, Dafydd Elis-Thomas lost friends from Plaid Cymru, but gained others from parties traditionally wary of or hostile to Welsh nationalism, particularly the Labour

Party. He was condemned as the "Merioneth Marxist" because of his left-wing views; he was labelled a "terrorist" for his opinions on Northern Ireland; he was castigated for accepting a peerage; he was called a "bon viveur" for his penchant for smart clothes and fine wine; and lambasted for his closeness to members of the royal family. And yet, Dafydd Elis-Thomas can be justifiably portrayed as one of the founding fathers of Welsh devolution. If he had a single motivation throughout his political life, it was, as the book's title suggests, to build the Welsh nation.

The "yes" vote in the referendum for devolution for Wales, in 1997, was won by a mere 6,721 votes. But over the last few years, the Welsh Assembly has developed into a legislative Welsh Parliament and, even in today's choppy political waters, there is hardly a voice calling for the clock to be turned back and the parliament to be dissolved. Dafydd Elis-Thomas is one of those responsible for this political transformation.

No doubt, there will be many who will question aspects of this book and the interpretation of key events; it is after all an "approved biography", as is made clear in an unusual note from the publisher on the very last page. Nevertheless, this should not detract from what is a first-rate biography, and a must for anyone who wants to understand the life of Dafydd Elis-Thomas, undoubtedly one of the most important Welsh political figures of modern times.

Sir Wayne David was Labour MP for Caerphilly, 2001-2024

DOES THIS ASSOCIATION NEED A WELSH BRANCH?

Members of the Association who once represented a Welsh constituency, or now live in Wales or have close connections with Wales, are being invited to come together to form a new Wales Branch of the Association.

Following a discussion with the Association's executive, Alun Michael has been asked to test the water and is contacting former MPs across the parties to see if there is enough interest.

It follows the success of the Scottish Branch and both Linda Gilroy and Scottish Branch Chair Gordon Banks have offered advice based on the positive Scottish experience.

Scottish branch meetings have included academics, commentators and pollsters, says Linda. "They provide food for thought about the changing Scottish scene and our questions come from a shared unique perspective. Scots love a good blether and I'm sure the Welsh do too!"

Alun agrees: "Most of us came to

Parliament via local activism, whether in local government or campaigning or through representative bodies and in Wales as elsewhere our former MPs take a lively interest in local, national and international issues," he said.

"Once the latest Senedd election votes have been counted, May seems the right time to start bringing a Welsh branch together in the same spirit of mutual respect, shared experience and passionate engagement that has made the Association of Former Members of Parliament such a good place to be for all of us.

"In the background is a time of sea change in Welsh politics. Each paired constituency (two Westminster constituencies joined together) will have six members in the new Senedd. Will that lead to coalition politics, or to the more collaborative 'Team Wales' approach that was envisaged before the first Welsh Assembly elections in 1999 (but failed to materialise) – or something quite different?

"It will certainly be a time of changes and whatever they are, the differences will be felt at every level from local government in Wales to the UK level. The relationship between Senedd members and MPs will be different for representatives of every party in ways that are quite unpredictable. Surely that makes it a good time for the non-combative but interested former MPs across parties to come together socially, to break bread and to share insights just as members of the Association do at Westminster.

"It is envisaged that any former MP who represented a Welsh constituency plus former MPs who now live in Wales will form the core membership, with an invitation to attend meetings extended to the wider membership of the Association, particularly those who were born or brought up in Wales."

Please let Alun know if you're interested via alun@alunmichael.net or via our Administrator, Nicola Rivis, at rivisn@parliament.uk

TRIBUTES

LORD (TERENCE) HIGGINS

18 January 1928 – 25 November 2025

Conservative MP for Worthing, 1964-1997

By Sir Peter Bottomley



Terence was a good person, a fine MP, a diligent peer, great in many fields and proud of the achievements of his wife Dame Rosalyn, the brilliant academic lawyer, the first woman judge and later president of the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

He told me what to say at the prospective Thanksgiving service after his death: use some of his valedictory words. Instead, I quoted tributes by his colleagues across the House.

As a Treasury minister in 1971, he prepared the way for VAT after implementing the Labour government's choices for decimalisation. He was amused by a pensioner's letter saying the change would be difficult for the elderly who would not live forever, so please delay until they were all dead.

People remember the result of the ninth race in Oxford on 6 May, 1954 when the university competed against the British Amateur Athletics Association. Chris Brasher and future MP Christopher Chataway helped Roger Bannister achieve the first sub-four minute mile. Terence was in the next race. He can be seen warming up as others celebrated. He had been selected for two British Olympic teams and won a silver medal at the 1950 Auckland Empire Games.

After two years in the RAF, and years in New Zealand shipping, he read economics at Caius College, Cambridge, serving as president of the Union Society. He was helped in law by Rosalyn Cohen, then at Girton; they met again when he lectured at Yale before becoming the economist at Unilever. When we visited their home in The Hague, she was presiding at a case about precise borders in the Straits of Hormuz.

He was Worthing's only MP until, after 32 years, when they divided the town, letting Tim Loughton and me take over his constituency responsibilities. In the Commons, at different times, he chaired the Liaison, the Procedure and the Public Accounts Committees. He might have been elected Speaker if Ted Heath, as Father of the House, had not chosen an adverse election system.

Locally, he faced down activists who thought they could instruct him to support capital punishment and to back Ian Smith's illegal Declaration of Independence in Southern Rhodesia.

He gave days of campaigning help to me in Woolwich West in 1974 and in the next year's by-election, saying an extra 500 votes for him was vanity; those votes for me might be decisive in the choice of government.

He was active in the Lords for over 20 years, especially on pension policy. Fine people like him come to serve in the Houses of Parliament. As their work is known, others will be encouraged to follow.

JOHN MARSHALL

19 August 1940 – 3 November 2025

Conservative MP for Hendon South, 1987-97

By Nicholas Bennett



Few parliamentarians can rival John Marshall's record of public service on five separate, directly elected parliaments and councils. He fought his first parliamentary election in October 1964, at the age of 24, as a National Liberal in Dundee East, where

he was educated at the Harris Academy. He lost to the incumbent and future cabinet minister George Thomson then, and in a return match in 1966.

With an Economics degree from Glasgow University, John became a lecturer at Aberdeen University and was elected to Aberdeen City council in 1968. He relinquished his seat in 1970 on moving to London, but within a year he was a member of Ealing Council and served for the next 15 years. I first met John when he was selected as candidate for Lewisham East. He lost to Labour in February 1974, and sat out that year's second General Election, but success came in 1979, when he won London North in the first directly elected elections to the European Parliament. He married Susan Mount the same year and they had two sons. He and Susan divorced in 2000.

He and I were both interviewed for the Enfield Southgate by-election after the murder of Sir Anthony Berry, but were beaten to the nomination by Michael Portillo. John, though, was at last elected MP for Hendon South in 1987.

At Westminster he was a hardworking constituency member, and an affable and pleasant colleague. Hendon has one of the largest Jewish populations in the UK and he chaired the British-Israeli APG. He was appointed PPS to Nick Scott, Minister for the Disabled, and then to Tony Newton, Secretary of State for Social Security. In 1995 he opposed a plan to close the A & E department at Edgware General Hospital in the neighbouring Hendon North constituency and was sacked from his PPS role.

The Boundary Commission merged two Hendon seats for the 1997 General Election. He and Hartley Booth fought a bitter battle for the nomination, with both MPs hiring minibuses to the final selection meeting in Brent Town Hall, which John won by 782 votes to 311—but to no avail. At the General Election, he was defeated by nearly 3200 votes. The following year, he was elected to Barnet Council. In the 2001 General Election, he once again fought Finchley and Golders Green, supported by Margaret Thatcher, but fared no better than in 1997.

Now in his sixties he settled down to serving as a Barnet cabinet member. Having failed to become Conservative Group leader in 2005 he served as mayor for the year 2008-9. He remained a councillor for 24 years until 2022 standing down at the age of 81.

TRIBUTES

PHIL WOOLAS

11 December 1959–14 March 2026.

Labour MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth, 1997–2010

By Sally Keeble



Phil Woolas was a smiling bruiser of a politician. Clever, outspoken, thoughtful, funny, his sunny nature ensured a wide circle of friends, while below it was one of the most single-minded and tribal of Labour MPs.

Widely admired as an effective minister, he

helped make Labour electable in the run-up to 1997, and was one of the few brave enough to take on the often taboo questions of race and immigration.

I first met him when, as president of the National Union of Students, he came to meet Frances Morrell, indomitable leader of the Inner London Education Authority. It was young turk versus grand dame. Phil impressed with his sharp grasp of the strategic political challenges and the practicalities of getting over Labour's message.

He entered Parliament with an impressive CV. He had been NUS president, a fundraiser for War on Want, a BBC Newsnight and then Channel 4 News producer, and head of communications at the GMB. He was the by-election candidate in Littleborough and Saddleworth, the seat which, under new boundaries, he held through four general elections. He was quickly promoted to government, as a PPS, a Whip, deputy leader of the Commons and minister for Local Government.

He was an environment Minister Under Gordon Brown, and minister of state for borders and immigration. It was this role in which he grabbed his biggest headlines, in a confrontation with Joanna Lumley over the rights of Gurkha veterans to settle in the UK.

Phil had a solid record in taking on the far-right, from his student involvement in the Anti-Nazi League, through to tackling the BNP electorally on his home ground in Oldham. "You don't beat the BNP by pretending the issue of immigration doesn't exist," he said, "... you beat them by taking them on. Phil's gift for plain speaking made sure his views were heard.

But when plain turned to trenchant, it cost him his seat. After he won against the odds in the 2010 General Election, his Liberal Democrat opponent went to court over leaflets published in Phil's name. After an extended legal battle, Phil was forced out of Parliament, barred from standing in the subsequent by-election, and suspended from the Labour Party – which sparked a huge backlash from parliamentary colleagues, past and present.

If it was a measure of his strength of character and integrity that he remained loyal to Labour, and bounced back to become an environmentalist and consultant.

Phil had solid working-class credentials. His father was a steelworker, his mother a dinner lady. He was born in Scunthorpe and grew up in Burnley. He and his much-loved wife Tracey Allen had two sons, and a grandson.

MARK FISHER

29 October 1944–16 November 2025.

Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent Central, 1983–2010

By Joan Walley



With a father who was an MP and a family with all kinds of aristocratic links, there wasn't anything extraordinary about Mark Fisher being an MP. It was just a little surprising that he should be the MP for Stoke-on-Trent Central.

At least that's how it

seemed to me when I first set off to meet him on the steps of St Stephen's entrance in late 1986 just after I'd got the nomination to stand in neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent North.

Dressed in his customary suit, overcoat, and with his posh accent, he outwardly came across as the typical Tory—but that impression was quickly dispelled. He was generous with the time he gave me at that first meeting, and over the 23 years that we were colleagues that same generosity of spirit and commitment to the Labour movement and his constituents shone in all he did. He will be remembered with great fondness for the outstanding and much-loved Labour MP that he was in Stoke-on-Trent, and for the campaigns waged there, not least the investment in new schools and NHS buildings.

Mark's work as a film director had brought him to live in Stoke-on-Trent, where he was elected in 1983 and at all successive elections until he stepped down because of ill health in 2010. He had previously stood against David Knox for the old Leek, Staffordshire seat in 1979.

Mark was passionate about the arts, and passionate about his principles. He was passionate about Stoke's New Vic Theatre, and he spent long years in opposition working on the arts policy he so badly wanted a future Labour government to deliver. After his long apprenticeship, I don't think he ever quite came to terms with being appointed Arts Minister only up until Tony Blair's first reshuffle, but he took satisfaction from seeing many of the policies he championed, such as free entry to museums, being delivered. He also etched out a role for himself editing and writing about the arts, including his book *Britains Best Museums and Galleries* and work he did on ancient monuments in Iraq.

His views on policy issues like the Iraq War didn't always endear him to the Whips, but that never troubled Mark. He led the debate in the Commons which brought in substantial reforms to the whips powers over the select committee system, which was very much in keeping with Mark's view that parliament needed to assert itself over executive.

He will be remembered for his time in government and just as importantly as a man who loved Stoke on Trent and its people. My condolences go to Gillie and his family.

TRIBUTES

HARRY BARNES

22 July 1936–16 February 2026.

Labour MP for North East Derbyshire, .

by Gary Kent



Harry Barnes, the son of a miner from Easington, was a rebellious figure on Labour's left who often defied its sloppy thinking, and became an influential voice on Northern Ireland.

As a leader of Independent Labour

Publications, a socialist pressure group before his election to Parliament, he advanced fresh thinking on Northern Ireland, and then worked with Irish left-wingers who advocated an internal settlement that stressed class interests and overcoming sectarianism through trade unions and increased integrated education.

He worked with Conservative MP Peter Bottomley through the cross-party New Consensus group and with other Anglo-Irish groups such as the Peace Train Organisation and those opposed to paramilitary kneecapping and intimidation. He often joined relatives of victims at the sites of IRA bombings in London. He once picketed Sinn Fein leaders meeting Tony Blair at Downing Street, and successfully urged Gerry Adams to help lift an IRA death sentence on a Derry man forced to flee to England.

He invited Ulster Unionist Leader David Trimble to the Labour Conference in 1996 for the first time. Defeating anti-partitionism on the left and bringing unionists in from the cold laid the basis for the Belfast Agreement in 1998, for which he campaigned in Belfast and Dublin. Harry was one of "Blair's bastards", but quipped he'd been a Blairite on Ireland before Blair.

It didn't stop him strongly opposing the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He had done his national service in the 1950s as a railway clerk among the mud huts and poverty of Basra. But after the invasion, he supported non-sectarian Iraqi trade unions through Labour Friends of Iraq, of which he and Ann Clwyd were joint presidents. He denounced left-wingers who gave succour to terrorists, and helped defeat a motion at the 2004 Labour Conference urging the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Iraq.

He and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw devised an alternative policy urging those who honourably differed on the invasion to support Iraqi democrats. He returned to Iraq in 2006 to meet Iraqi union leaders and was granted honorary membership of the Iraqi TUC.

He devised detailed legislation through two Private Member's Bills to modernise the electoral registration system, badly damaged by the poll tax, and for comprehensive civil rights for disabled people. The Blair government implemented both. Harry was a modest but sharp-witted and intellectually robust man with deep roots in the Labour movement who spurned left dogma for principled and pragmatic policies. The partnership with his wife and secretary, Ann was crucial.

Gary Kent was Harry Barnes's researcher from 1987 to 2005.

COLIN PICKTHALL

13 September 1944 – 27 December 2025

Labour MP for West Lancashire, 1992-2005

By Mike Hall



The service to celebrate the life of my great friend Colin Pickthall was held in Ulverston where Colin and Judy, his wife and soulmate of 56 years, settled in 2005, on his retirement from Parliament. It was perfect. Had Colin witnessed it, he

would have said it was wonderful. The music was classical. Daughters Ali and Jenny made heartfelt tributes. The celebrant knew Col and spoke eloquently about him. His grandkids Noah and Beth read a moving poem written by him. The event was true to Col's Humanist principles and a very poignant send off. Colin entered Parliament in 1992 as the MP for West Lancashire. This intake was described as one of the "brightest in generations". Colin was one of those who made this claim fact.

He rose to prominence in Parliament as an animal welfare supporter, pioneering a ban on hare coursing. He was pivotal in getting the Hunting Act 2004, banning hunting wild animals with trained dogs, onto the statute book.

The Countryside Alliance produced a set of playing cards called "The Pack of Prejudice" attacking animal welfare supporting MPs. They cited Colin as the "King of Diamonds" placing him in the top six MPs supporting animal rights. Colin wore this as a badge of honour.

In Parliament Colin served with distinction on the Agriculture Select Committee, advocated passionately for environmental protection and was an expert on rural affairs. When Labour won the 1997 general election, I felt that Tony Blair missed a real opportunity by not making him an agriculture minister.

He also served in government as Parliamentary Private Secretary to his friend Jack Straw, first at the Home Office and then the Foreign Office.

Colin dedicated himself to public life. As a Labour stalwart he was forthright in his support for the many not the few, using government finances to improve public services not tax cuts for the rich.

This is why he served on Ormskirk Town Council, Lancashire County Council, 13 years in Parliament, and as Labour leader of Ulverston Town Council. This is probably a unique achievement.

Colin was a multi-faceted person. He saw the best in everyone. His commitment to public service was more than matched by his love for his family, which he claimed as his best achievement.

His passion for life encompassed politics, Shakespeare, literature, music, outdoor pursuits, conquering the Wainwright's, good food and drink, cricket, gardening, comradeship, reading *The Guardian* and more.

Colin was the proud son of a Barrow shipyard worker, born in Furness in what was then Lancashire. He was a powerful and authentic voice for the communities he represented.

TRIBUTES

KEN WEETCH

17 September 1933 – 4 February 2026
Labour MP for Ipswich, October 1974-1987
By John Mowles



Ken was born in South Wales. His father was a coal miner and trade union activist; his mother came from a gypsy family. The family was poor; they lived in very basic accommodation, a wooden shack with no running water.

Ken went to grammar school, and to the London School of Economics. He did his National Service in the Army.

He started a Labour branch in Henham, Essex, where he taught, and later, in Waltham Forest he was secretary of the local Labour Party. He also taught in Tower Hamlets, continuing his party involvement when he moved to Bishops Stortford, where he taught at a teacher training College.

In the 1970 General Election he stood for Labour in Saffron Walden, a very safe Tory seat, and unsurprisingly lost by almost 10,000.

After Dingle Foot's defeat here in Ipswich in 1970—by just 13 votes—Ken was adopted in 1972, as our candidate for the upcoming General Election. In February 1974, Ken came second to the Tory, Ernie Money, who held on with a majority of 259.

Ken stood again in the October General Election of the same year—this time beating Mr Money comfortably, by a majority of 1733. In the 1979 and 1983 General Elections—difficult times for the Party nationally—Ken won with handsome majorities of 3,741 and 1,077—thus proving the old adage of 'watch Ipswich for the likely national outcome' was mistaken; and demonstrating that Ipswich often 'do different'.

In his time in the House of Commons Ken became known for his diligent constituency work—to the point that he was dubbed 'Ips-weetch'. He also chaired a Labour back-bench committee on education, and covered various neglected issues. He served as PPS to the Transport Secretary, Bill Rodgers MP.

In the 1987 General Election, Ken lost his seat, by a Tory majority of 874—a truly dreadful day for us all, and particularly for Ken whose 13 years of representing Ipswich were at an end.

He was adamant that he would not stand for election again and that it would be best for a younger person to do so. It was fitting that in 1988 he was honoured by the granting of the Freedom of the borough of Ipswich. He later joined another former MP as a parliamentary consultant. In 2023, Ken moved into a care home in Gosforth, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne.

In 1961 Ken had married Audrey (Wilson). She, sadly, died in 2009 of Alzheimers. They had two daughters and eight grandchildren.

John Mowles was Secretary/Agent to Ipswich Labour Party 1977-2002.

JOHN MAXTON (LORD MAXTON)

5 May 1936 – 20 November 2025
Labour MP for Glasgow Cathcart, 1979-2001
By George Foulkes (Lord Foulkes of Cumnock)



In his political life John was keen to follow in the radical footsteps of his uncle, the great Jimmie Maxton, the prominent Red Clydesider, pacifist and home-ruler.

Some people assumed John was Jimmie's son, but his father, also John, was a senior Oxford academic,

which was why John was educated first at Lord William's Grammar School and then at Oxford University, where he was a contemporary of the latter Cabinet Secretary, Robin Butler.

Uninhibited by an English accent, John entered Scottish Labour politics while he taught first at Secondary school and then at Hamilton College, where he became secretary of ALCES, the Association of Lecturers of Colleges of Education in Scotland, the lecturers' trades union. But his real break came when, in 1976, he won the Labour selection conference to fight Glasgow Cathcart, seat of Teddy Taylor, then the Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland.

It was expected that Teddy, who was a doughty campaigner, would hang on, but John was elected with a Labour majority of 1,600, the only Labour gain from the Tories at that election, depriving Teddy from becoming the Secretary of State, and banishing him from Scotland, to pick up a seat in Southend.

John was a fitness fanatic, running marathons regularly and in the Commons gym every day. He joined the left-wing Tribune Group and with his long unkempt hair was graphically described as "the wild man of the left".

He worked hard, first as the Scottish Labour Whip, and also as Whip on the Finance Bill where he shadowed John Major, with whom, notwithstanding their political differences, he became good friends, and then in his main role as deputy to Donald Dewar, then Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, a post he held for some time, and carried out with loyalty and diligence. But he was one of the many Labour shadow ministers whom Jim Callaghan described as "the lost generation", who endured 18 years in Opposition without ever becoming a minister.

When he retired from the Commons in 2001 it was, unexpectedly, a few years before he received the merited elevation to the Lords, in June 2004. There he served on the BBC Charter Renewal Committee, the Communications and Digital and the Science and Technology Committees continuing to use his specialist knowledge and skills. He retired from the Lords on his 89th birthday.

He will be greatly missed and by none more so than his devoted wife Christine, his sons Jamie, a business executive, Michael, a horticulturalist and Richard, a secondary school deputy head, and his three grandchildren, Ruby Gabriella and Anna.

REGULATIONS FOR FORMER MEMBER PASS HOLDERS

1. You are reminded that you have agreed to observe the regulations applying to holders of a Former Member pass.
2. Former Members are explicitly forbidden from using the privilege in connection with lobbying activity. Former Members who undertake, or may be perceived to undertake, lobbying activity are invited to notify the Security & Access Hub and voluntarily surrender their Former Member pass for the duration of that activity. Where a pass is surrendered on this basis, the usual six-month deadline for renewal or initial application will be paused.
3. Parliamentary business must take precedence.

Entrance and internal access

4. You must always wear your pass when you are on the estate. It enables you to use the main passholder entrances into the Palace of Westminster and Portcullis House to attend meetings and access facilities (see below).

Dining access

5. Former Members are required to adhere to the following conditions:
6. You are entitled to use the following catering venues at any time (except the external dining area of the Terrace Cafeteria):

Internal dining area of the Terrace Cafeteria

- Open to all passholders
- When: At any time the cafeteria is open
- No guests are permitted
- No booking required
- External dining area of the Terrace Cafeteria
- When: On days when the House is not sitting
- No guests are permitted
- No booking required

Debate Cafeteria

- Open to all passholders
- When: At any time the cafeteria is open
- No guests are permitted
- No booking required

Bellamy's Cafeteria

- Open to all passholders
- When: At any time the cafeteria is open
- No guests are permitted
- No booking required

7. You are entitled to use the following catering venues at certain times:

Strangers' Dining Room

- When: Wednesday evenings and Thursday lunchtimes
- Up to three guests are permitted
- Booking required

The Adjournment Restaurant

- When: Wednesday evenings and Thursday lunchtimes
- Up to three guests are permitted
- Booking required

Members' Dining Room

- When: Monday lunchtimes, and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings
- No guests are permitted
- No booking required

House of Commons Strangers' Bar

- When: Thursdays
- No guests are permitted

8. Further information on dining facilities for former Members can be obtained by contacting Catering Services on 020 7219 3686.

General regulations

9. You are not permitted to:
 - Make use of any other facilities in the Palace of Westminster or the parliamentary outbuildings. These include telephones, printers, House of Commons stationery and Official Paid envelopes, and Library and research facilities.
 - Entertain guests, apart from in the two venues and at the times outlined above.
 - Enter any of the Catering & Retail service rooms (except those described above) or areas in the House, Terrace or the outbuildings unless accompanied by a full pass holder.
 - Show guests the Visitor Route.
 - Use the Underground Car Park or any of the car parking facilities.
10. The Administration Committee has oversight of pass rules including for former Members, administered by the Security & Access Hub. Passes can be suspended or withdrawn if the above rules are contravened.
11. The Behaviour Code applies to all passholders and visitors to the Parliamentary Estate.

Former Member pass application and renewal

12. If your former Member pass lapses, you must apply for its renewal within six months of it lapsing, otherwise you will be ineligible for a future pass.
13. New and renewal applications are administered via an online portal. Requests should be submitted in the first instance to the SecurityandAccessHub@parliament.uk. This email address may also be used for any further queries or information on pass and access arrangements, including rules on eligibility.

Parliamentary Security Department

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Email: SecurityandAccessHub@parliament.uk

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