

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



SUMMER 2025

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WHY IS SO HARD TO GET GROWTH?

By Andy McSmith

Sir Vince Cable has spent about 50 years watching the UK economy bump along, wondering why it doesn't grow faster, and what ought to be done. His fascination with the subject began when he was lecturing on economics at Glasgow University in the 1970s, and has carried him through his long career, including a period as Leader of the Liberal Democrats, and five years as Business Secretary in the coalition government.

He shared some of his accumulated knowledge to the spring members' meeting of the Association, in an hour-long talk illustrated with charts and graphs.

Perhaps the oddest observation was that changes of government do not appear to have any substantial impact on how fast or slowly the economy grows. It is only major shocks, like the 2008 banking crisis, or Covid, that have a huge, measurable impact.

"Successive governments boast that they will boost economic growth and solve Britain's productivity problem," he said. "All the evidence suggests that the political colour of the government makes absolutely no difference to our long-term economic performance."

"The growth of productivity was on a steady growth path from the 1950's until the financial crisis. 2008 represented a massive economic heart attack followed by repeated shocks from Brexit, Covid and Russian gas. The economy hasn't recovered, and no one has a cure."

One of the charts he displayed showed that in the 1960s, under Harolds, MacMillan and Wilson, the economy grew steadily by between three and three and a half per cent. Then came the abrupt rise in oil prices, knocking a whole point off economic growth, which trundled along at a little over two per cent for around 40 years, rising during Gordon Brown's time as Chancellor to 2.7 per cent, before the banking crisis hit. It took another, bigger hit from Covid. Since 2020, percentage growth has been below one per cent – less than half what it was before the pandemic.

Bad and long-lasting though that crisis seemed, Sir Vince produced a graph to show how it compared with some of the past century's other economic disasters. Compared with the Wall Street crash of the 1920s, it looked more like a mild dip rather than a heavy fall, that was mild compared to how the Russian economy tumbled after the rushed, reckless abolition of communism. At its lowest point, Russia's GDP was below 60 per cent of its 1989 level.

Still, the UK's performance is not an impressive picture overall. One of the reasons for poor growth is that there is – as he put it "absolutely no consistency" in long term planning, because governments work in five-year cycles, which is not 'long term' when planning a business. The answer is that the main political parties should agree a long-term strategy, and embed it in legislation.

Another chronic problem is what is known as the 'Macmillan gap' – after the chairman of a committee set up 96 years ago to look into the causes of the 1929 depression. Its report criticised the apparent unwillingness of British banks to lend to industry, which is still a "fundamental problem", Sir Vince said.

And arguably "the biggest disaster area" is training. Firms are reluctant to invest in training recruits, who might then go and work for a rival once they are. "Training is an area of continuing policy failure going back decades. Lack of trained people will cripple the current push for more housing especially if immigration is blocked," he warned.

When he took questions from the audience, one of the first – unsurprisingly – was about the tariff regime introduced by Donald Trump, the most likely outcome of which, Sir Vince said, was that there would, ironically, be a run-down of production in the USA, and its economy "would be very seriously damaged."

He added: "The way the Chancellor reacts to Trump is absolutely crucial. A battenning down of the hatches would be potentially disastrous. If we want a Chinese style government, we could manage globalisation – but I don't think that will happen very soon."



ASSOCIATION NEWS

NICOLA RIVIS



In April, I was thrilled to accept the Administrator role and have thoroughly enjoyed my first few months. The handover with Laura has been a pleasure and she has made me feel incredibly welcome, and it's clear she'll be a hard act to follow.

I've worked on the Parliamentary Estate since 1999, both in the House of Commons and Lords, but some of you may remember me from my previous role in Black Rod's office,

which I held from 2007 thru 2019. My responsibilities included running Black Rod's and the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft's diaries, plus briefing new Members of the House of Lords, and then organising their ceremonial introductions. My principal responsibility, for over 12 years, was to plan and execute the meticulous ticketing process and extensive seat allocations for each State Opening of Parliament.

In 2019, and 4 x Black Rods and 3 x Yeoman Ushers later, I decided to take some time out to volunteer in Nepal and India, first as an English Teacher at Kopan Monastery in Kathmandu, for 5 months, and then went on to teach other subjects at Shanti Bhavan Children's Project nr Bangalore for 2 months. When the pandemic struck in March 2020, I was fortunate to get one of the last flights out of India back to the UK. These experiences were transformational, and helped build my resilience and resourcefulness, and also let me gain an insight

into communities where being marginalised and dispossessed is the norm. It served, if nothing else, to teach me never to take anything for granted – an experience that will stay with me forever.

Since my return to the UK in 2020, I have worked in various PA roles, and am now a self-employed PA, with clients primarily in the House of Lords. In addition to this, my new position as Administrator for the Association of Former MPs feels like a perfect fit for this stage of my life. I'm thoroughly enjoying being part of both Houses of Parliament and experiencing life from two very different perspectives. I look forward to bringing my wealth of experience to this role and am excited to meet many of you at future events.

Nicola Rivis
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DATES FOR THE DIARY

SUMMER ALL MEMBER MEETING

Thursday 17 July 2025 from 4pm – 5:30pm, Committee Room 1, House of Lords.

We are delighted that our guest speakers: Nigel Evans, Baroness (Eleanor) Laing and Baroness (Rosie) Winterton have agreed to come and tell us about life in Mr Speaker's office.

All of whom have served as **Deputy Speakers of the House of Commons** and will regale their experiences of Mr Speaker's Office

and promise to reveal a few unique behind-the-scenes glimpses.

Nigel Evans MP – Conservative MP for Ribble Valley, Deputy Speaker (2010–2013, 2020–present).

Baroness Eleanor Laing – Former MP for Epping Forest and Deputy Speaker (2013–2024); became a life peer in 2024.

Baroness Rosie Winterton – Former Labour MP for Doncaster Central and Deputy Speaker (2017–2024); became a life peer in 2024. Please do let me know if you wish to attend –

by email to Nicola:
rivisn@parliament.uk

SUMMER RECEPTION

Our Patron, Mr Speaker has again kindly agreed for us to hold our Summer Reception in the State Apartments in Speaker's House on Thursday 17 July from 5:30pm – 7:30pm.

Thank you to those who have registered that they would like to attend and transferred their fee of £40.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK FOR 200 YEARS:

CELEBRATING THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARLIAMENT & OUR NATIONAL PASSENGER RAILWAYS BY LAWRIE QUINN

YOUR EXECUTIVE MEMBERS have agreed to meet to hold Association events beyond the Palace of Westminster as discussed in correspondence earlier this year.

We're grateful to the many colleagues who responded to the Association Secretariat and to lawriewquinn@gmail.com allowing us to develop proposals at our April executive meeting to test the idea of regional based events starting with an Association visit to **York** to mark 200th Anniversary of the Railways between **Thursday 11th & Saturday 13th**.

September 2025

Agenda for September Association **Visit to York: Celebrating 200 years of Passenger Railways**

We have made arrangements with the Friends of the National Railway Museum, NRM in the City of York & Shildon, County Durham to mark this historic milestone around Friday 12th September.

It will include:

- Presentations by Mr Speaker, Railway Minister Lord Peter Hendy, the President of Friends of the NRM and current leaders of the railway infrastructure industry. We hope to be joined by the North's Mayors who will help us celebrate this truly global anniversary and the role Parliamentarians had in the changes railways had across the world.
- Special escorted visits to the NRM in York and Shildon to see 200th Rail Anniversary exhibitions
- A presentation on future rail technologies by Atkins Realis, award winning railway engineers who have kindly agreed to support these events with a buffet lunch/ brunch at the York's Grand

Hotel, which was the original headquarters of the North Eastern Railway (see: <https://www.thegrandyork.co.uk/>).

The Hotel has also agreed to offer a generous discounted rate to Association Member wishing to stay over the weekend to enjoy the wider delights of this historic city. Please contact our Association Administrator, Nicola for details on how reserve discounted accommodation at The Grand for this long weekend in York.

HISTORIC YORK: ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN CAPITAL CITY?

Lawrie Quinn who is a local member of the Association of Voluntary Guides will also organize free York walking tours taking in aspects of over 3000 years of history from the local Brigante tribes, Romans, Vikings, Wars of the Roses, abolishing the Abbeys, religious torments, the Civil War, Chocolate Quaker families, the Railway King, and the impact of Harry Potter on local tourism!

There's even the prospect of a tour of York's ghosts and haunted pubs.

We're also delighted to confirm Association Members will be welcome to bring their Partners to what promises to be a fine September weekend in the heart of this historic Railway City which offers so much more than a recognition of Parliament's part in the birth of railways.

If you're interested please drop an email to the Association Secretariat, rivisn@parliament.uk or to lawriewquinn@gmail.uk so we can send more details of the proposals agreed at our April executive meeting.

Here's a link to a taster for the Rail 200 Anniversary website: <https://railway200.co.uk>



NOTE FROM NICOLA, OUR ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATOR

If you wish to attend the Rail 200 event in York, please provide me with confirmation of all names wishing to attend (by email – rivisn@parliament.uk) and please also indicate whether you intend to stay in York or travel from home to attend the 200th Anniversary Events. There will be events from the evening of Thursday 11th September, thru to the afternoon of Saturday 13th September 2025.

Partners are welcome, but please note no guests due to restriction on numbers.

This event is ticketed at £25 per head, a contribution towards the additional Association costs for the weekend. Payment can be made by bank transfer or cheque in the post to me at the address below.

Upon receipt of payment and names, I will then email out your official invitation to the event.

Payment details are:

Account name: "Association of Former MPs"

Barclays Bank

Account no: 50281506

Sort Code: 20-47-39

WHEN TRANSFERRING YOUR PAYMENT, please insert ref – RAIL 200

We look forward to welcoming you to York. More details (including the Agenda) will be circulated by email including a discount code for the Grand Hotel, York if you wish to stay overnight.

Best wishes, Nicola

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS



DAME JACKIE DOYLE-PRICE
Former Conservative MP
for Thurrock
2010 – 2024

Jackie Doyle-Price served as Member for Thurrock from 2010 to 2024. She served as a Government whip from 2015-2017 then as Minister for Mental Health and Inequalities from 2017-2019 and Minister for Industry in 2022. As a backbencher she served on the Committees for Public Accounts Women & Equalities; and Public Administration & Constitutional affairs. She was elected chair of PACAC in 2024. She has been a leading advocate on women's health and tackling sexual violence against women and girls. She was awarded a DBE in 2024.



ADAM HOLLOWAY
Former Conservative MP
for Gravesham 2005 –
2024

Adam served on select committees: Defence, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Public Admin & Constitutional Affairs, and European Scrutiny; Assistant Government Whip (July–Sept 2022); Lord Commissioner of the Treasury (Sept–Oct 2022) and appointed PPS to the Communities Secretary in 2020.

A former officer in the Grenadier Guards, Holloway served in Cold War Germany and took part in the First Gulf War. After leaving the Army, he turned to investigative journalism, producing hard-hitting reports from conflict zones before becoming an MP in 2005.



ERIC ILLSLEY
Former Labour MP
for Barnsley Central
1987 – 2011

Eric was proud to represent his hometown constituency for 24 years.

He served in the opposition whips office and was spokesperson for the NHS, Local Government and Northern Ireland during the 1990s.

He was a member of several select committees, notably Procedure, Energy and Foreign Affairs.

Eric was also active in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Inter Parliamentary Union, and was a member of the Chairman's Panel for several years.

He is looking forward to renewing old acquaintances and friendships as a member of the Association.



ANNE MARIE MORRIS
Former Conservative MP
for Newton Abbot
2010-2024

Anne Marie Morris is a leading adviser on geopolitical risk and AI-driven strategy for highly regulated industries, specialising in trade policy, sanctions, ESG, and emerging technologies. With experience spanning corporate law, politics, and international strategy, she has advised top firms and governments on regulatory challenges, crisis management, and global security risks. A graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies, Anne Marie integrates AI analytics with deep market expertise to deliver strategic insights for law firms, financial services, life sciences, and energy sectors.

MISUSE OF COMMONS PASSES: A WARNING

BY NIGEL EVANS

As we mark the anniversary of the 2024 General Election and for those who were eligible, the usage of the former members passes I thought it timely to remind former colleagues of conditions of its ownership. Many former members may be unaware of the rule in any event.

A quick scan of LinkedIn will indicate many former members are using their 'rest' from Parliament by taking up consultancies, or setting up their own consulting businesses- me included!

On some of my visits to PCH I have met a few former MPs with some of their clients. All have obeyed the rule as far as I have detected.

Access to Parliament, via the pass, to conduct any business activity in this way is strictly prohibited. The pass does not confer the ability for former members to conduct business in this way by using the pass to receive privileged access to Parliament on behalf of their clients.

Should you wish to conduct business on behalf of yourself, or the business

you are working for you must not abuse the access privileges of the pass. You should contact the Minister or MP you wish to talk to, and arrange a visit in the same way as any other person wishing to do the same. You should come in on a visitor's pass as others are required to.

Should any member be found to ignore this requirement they will lose the pass. It is a privilege and not a right, and so please take extra care to protect yourself and other former members, and your clients.

RECOGNISING FACIAL TECHNOLOGY AS A FORCE FOR GOOD

By Alun Michael

All too often Parliamentarians focus on the wrong issue – for instance seeking to ban any technology that is seen as a threat rather than concentrating on values and governance. In an age when we are faced with ever-changing threats and opportunities from “Artificial Intelligence” it’s more important than ever to focus on the right things – values, clarity of purpose and good governance.

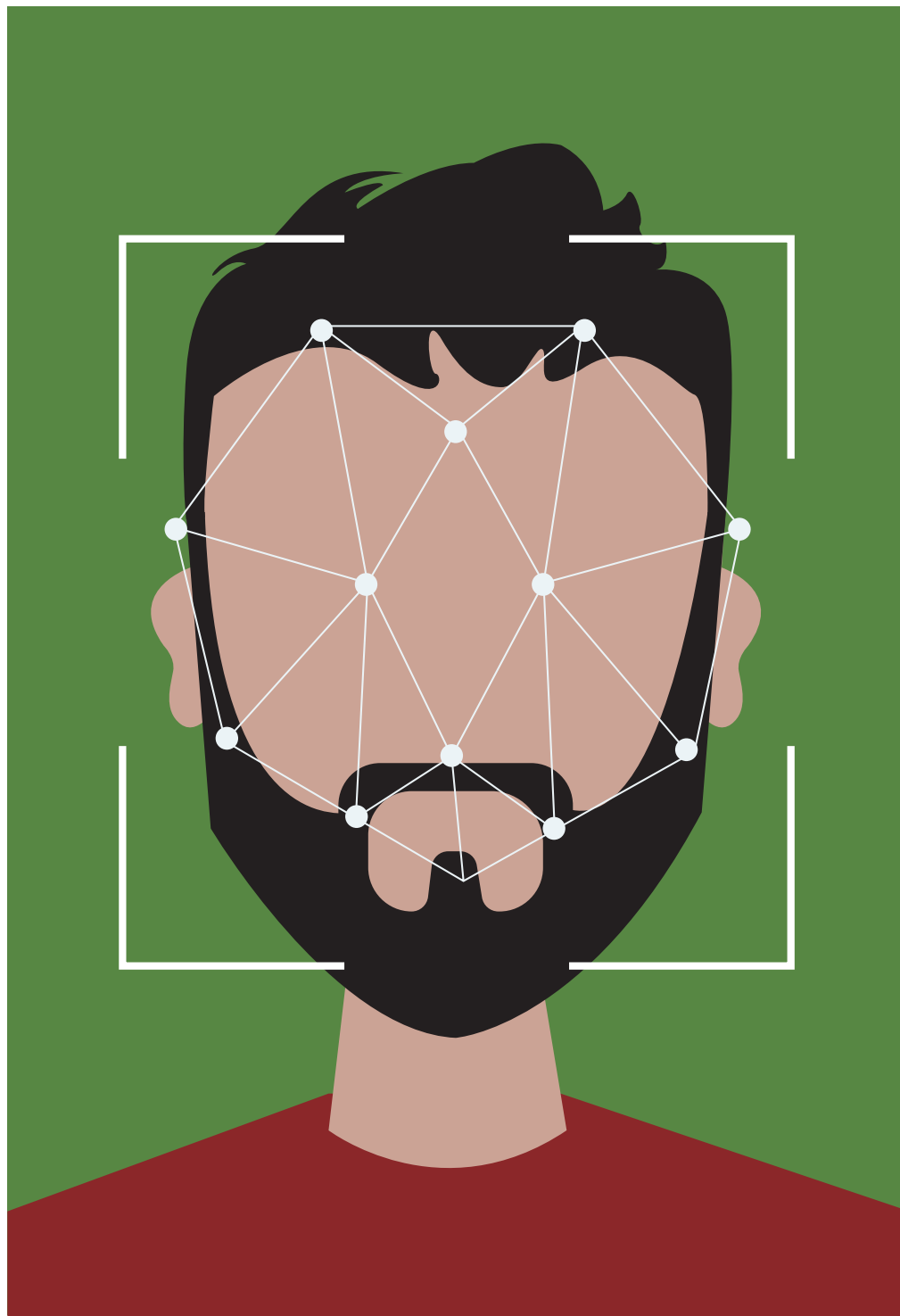
As a Police & Crime Commissioner, this was brought home to me when South Wales Police became front runners in the UK in using Live Facial Recognition (LFR) to keep the public safe.

A Lords report talked about LFR as if the technology is the issue, proposing more legislation to control it. But that misses the point – it isn’t what’s needed.

Legislation

Police in oppressive regimes do use facial recognition as an instrument of oppression but that’s not because of a lack of legislation. Criminals use all sorts of everyday items that we would never think of banning in pursuit of their goals so why should we treat technology differently? In any event, the laws and constitution of the old Soviet Union set out highly-principled democratic ideals that were ignored by those in power. It’s what we are now seeing in the USA.

My favourite quotation about legislation is “Laws rarely prevent what they forbid” so it makes sense for legislation to reinforce clarity of purpose and good governance, instead of being bogged down obsessively about specific technologies.



“Drink more coffee – it helps you do stupid things quicker”

Remember the Panda car? It increased police productivity by getting officers quickly to an incident. It led to demand for more cars – faster and better cars – so fewer and fewer officers were walking the streets and engaging with people. It’s been described as “the moment Dixon of Dock Green became Barlow from Z Cars”.

Unless technology and productivity serve the overall purpose, and receive fair but unrelenting scrutiny through good governance, it’s like following the instruction on my daughter-in-law’s coffee mug: “Drink more coffee – it helps you do stupid things quicker”

Vital

It matters, because applying technology and AI to police work is vital, considering the ruthlessness with which organised and international criminals will exploit the very same technology to drive fresh pathways to profit and harm. They don’t care about the individuals, families and communities they devastate in the process, as we see from the way criminal exploitation of children is growing in the UK.

But we’re not the same. To me clarity of purpose in policing starts and ends with Peel’s two key principles – to prevent crime and harm while remembering that “the Police are the Community and the Community are the Police”. Application of technology will go wrong unless it serves those two principles which need to reach every nook, cranny and silo of policing.

I supported the innovative use of LFR by South Wales Police because of its potential to help enforcement, justice and prevention. Legitimacy of using the technology was tested in the Courts. Fairness was tested by the National Physical Laboratory. Authorised Professional

Accountability

Practice is spelt out in detail by the College of Policing. But accountability was still important. I insisted on knowing who was being targeted and why – an operational decision for the Chief Constable being subjected to proper “live” scrutiny.

The producer of one BBC programme was keen to test the arguments so he invited the lead campaigner against LFI in California to challenge me on our approach and at the end of the programme asked him what he thought. His answer was that if police in California followed our approach – balancing operational independence and governance – he probably would not be campaigning against the technology.

Using technology and AI needs to help the police to focus on the big drivers of harm – domestic abuse and violence, drug misuse, exploitation of children, along with terrorism, online fraud and the dark side of the internet and social media – while being at the heart of every community.

When Ministers gave £10m to the College of Policing to deliver police productivity the Chief Executive, Andy Marsh, called together leaders from all aspects of policing to decide how to use of the money to “harness the full potential of data-driven technologies to transform the speed and accuracy of policing activities across the board”. But he then spelt out the purpose: “Getting this right will free up frontline officers and staff to improve delivery of their core mission of engaging with the public to prevent crime and disorder in our communities”.

That really is the point. Alun Michael was Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales, 2012-2024.



Political Incident No. 9

In June 1975 the UK held a referendum on whether it should remain a member of the EEC (later the EU).

The Conservative Party favoured staying in, and I, a budding activist, did too.

At that time, age 24, I was working in Hereford as a land agent. An important part of my job was to visit the rural estates the firm managed in Hampshire and Berkshire. On the way there I would drive down the Roman Road-straight A417 between Gloucester and Cirencester as fast as a foolish young man in his MGC GT possibly could.

One May morning I was speeding down the A417, the MG’s speedometer reading 95mph, when I spotted posters attached to telegraph poles. Each was headed, in capital letters, “EEC”, and each had three paragraphs starting with a defiant “NO”. Aflame with indignation, I stopped in Cirencester and bought a felt-tip marker with a thick black nib. Driving back late that night I parked on the verge somewhere near each pole. Peering in the dark I could just make out each NO – it was too dark to read what the posters actually said NO to – blocked out every single one, and in their place wrote “YES” in emphatic capitals, before driving on home bathed in satisfaction.

A fortnight later I was on the A417 again, driving slowly this time to enjoy my handiwork. But enjoyment turned to horror as I saw that each amended poster now read “YES to more bureaucracy” “YES to higher taxes” “YES to less democracy”. The foolish young man now felt very foolish indeed, but fortunately a huge thunderstorm over the Cotswolds a couple of days later obliterated the posters, and the referendum result was to remain by two to one, for which I take no credit at all.

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

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

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

PAULINE LATHAM Mid Derbyshire, 2010-2024



LEAVING PARLIAMENT, and I had chosen to retire, still marks a significant transition in the life of any politician and I'm no different from others. The daily demands of public service, the relentless scrutiny, and the deeply embedded sense of purpose tied to serving constituents give way to an entirely new landscape.

Leaving Parliament even when planned is hard and suddenly I had to find a reason to get up every morning because I had nothing to do.

Firstly, I embarked on a fund-raising Ball to raise much needed funds for a charity, The Aortic Dissection Charitable Trust, (TADCT). Three of us set it up soon after the sudden death of my son, Ben at the age of 44, leaving his wife and two teenage children, whilst I was in Parliament. Friends had started to organise the Ball and I was then able to spend my time helping with the raffle and the auction. We raised over £40,000. Obviously, this took lots of our time but then again, it was over.

The following week I had a new hip, which is an incredible improvement. Then what? Well I am reconnecting with family, exploring a new hobby of bee keeping, and am spending time working on TADCT which was sidelined during my time in Parliament.

Even outside Parliament, as a former MP I believe I retain the ability to influence things. So now I plan to do more to help influence policy about aortic dissection using my knowledge of how Parliament works.

CRAIG WHITTAKER Calder Valley, 2010-2024



I decided after the 2019 election that the next term would be my last, so deciding what to do in retirement consumed my thoughts.

We all think we have interests other than politics, but when I sat down with pen and paper to evaluate, I

quickly realised that almost 30 years in politics (local & national) had taken its toll, but a dream of travelling the Ancient Silk Roads on a motorbike I had had since my teens could now become reality.

So, the planning began: two trips a year lasting around a month, bike in storage wherever I end up, then return on the next trip to continue.

Border closures didn't deter my first trip to Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. Arriving in Delhi, collecting a Royal Enfield 350 Classic, I rode north to Amritsar, gently climbing the Pir Panjal mountain range, the western most part of the Himalayas, into Jammu Kashmir, onto Srinagar. Next, east to Ladakh, before heading down the steep decline over three mountains -one of which, is higher than Everest Base Camp! – and finishing back in Delhi.

Later, in Siliguri, I picked up a Royal Enfield Thunderbird and explored Darjeeling, Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Next year, I'm riding my Royal Enfield Meteor across Europe to Sofia. The second trip is from Sofia to Osh in Kyrgyzstan. From Osh, it is through Tibet and Pakistan across to Dubai, then through Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Turkey, and home via Finland and Sweden.

For fun, I've set up a blog for friends and family. If anyone is interested, www.travelssofaformermp.co.uk

ANDY SAWFORD Corby, 2012-2015



IT SHOULD NOT have been a surprise that I lost the seat won in a mid-term by-election when my party lost ground at the General Election, yet it was. I had served as Shadow Local Government Minister and hoped to go into government. Instead, I found

myself winding up the office, thanking my brilliant team, and thinking about what next.

I returned to business, as Chief Executive of the public affairs agency, Connect. A year later, I led a management buyout. I enjoy leading our fifty strong team of consultants and working with clients from many sectors. We have grown the company in London, and acquired two other agencies, Stratagem in Northern Ireland and more recently, Linco in Scotland. It has been interesting to spend more time travelling in the UK and Ireland, getting to know the political culture of different jurisdictions.

On the Saturday after I lost my seat, I took my son to football training. He scored a goal and beamed at me. I hadn't been there for months, and I resolved to be around more. I gained the FA coaching qualifications and had a brilliant time as a youth football coach. Winning the local cup competition, hosted at Corby Town's ground, was a real highlight.

When the call came to stand again at the snap election in 2017, I chose not to. Life had moved on. I play my part behind the scenes, as Chair of the local party, but try keep a better balance now between politics and other interests. I might campaign on a Saturday, but Sunday mornings are for getting out on my bike into the Northamptonshire countryside.

TONY MCWALTER Hemel Hempstead, 1997-2005



I HAVE NOTICED that many of the “Where Are You Now?” contributors have had rather dazzling careers post-Parliament. I’m afraid to report that that has not been the case with me, but it’s perhaps worth writing this piece if only to restore some balance to the misconception that a period in Parliament is a key which can open many doors.

I had been Principal Lecturer in Philosophy prior to Parliament, and my employer, Hertfordshire University, said when I was elected in 1997 that they would take me back to resume my academic career if I served one term, but they made no commitment beyond that. In the end, I served two terms, and the first letter I received when I was defeated was from the university, informing me I was no longer in their employ.

Even though I felt that my skill set had been very considerably extended in Parliament, most notably through my work on Select Committees somehow my knowledge of (for instance) the structure of the science research councils, which had been much valued as an MP, was now of no account.

After passing an initial test to be a bus driver, and realising that that wage would not pay the mortgage, I divined quite quickly that the only person who would employ me would be myself; so I set out on a new career framed by my re-hashing an old skill. I did maths tutoring, and initially for three years only the terrific industry of my wife, Karry, establishing a new business, overcame my loss of five years of salary as a senior academic, and kept us able to pay the interest on, but not any capital off, our mortgage, and we did not lose our home.

Luckily, people seemed to like my approach to maths, and after three fraught years, the last of which was as an unqualified and unpensioned teacher in a school, a scheme pioneered by Gordon Brown came to my rescue. At the age of 63, I qualified as a secondary school teacher, from University College, London, and I then taught maths and sciences including economics as a key stage 5 specialist until my retirement at the age of 74 – because by then I was physically unable to stand. Since then I have done sporadic tutoring in the sciences, but

my main activity has been to work on a tome on political philosophy — “The Mutuality Society”. It is terrific now to have a life as an academic again, though I do miss colleagues and students.

One very pleasant repercussion of having been in Parliament is that despite not being a peer, since January 2023 I have played regularly for the House of Lords bridge team. It is very enjoyable to return to my erstwhile place of employ, and to be kept in touch with developments there.

I hope that some way can be found for industrious ex-MPs with something to contribute to the common weal might be able to make that contribution without having to rely on the “old boy network”.

HOLLY LYNCH Halifax, 2010-2024



WHEN THE GENERAL ELECTION was called in May 2024, I’ll confess that the timing caught me out at seven and a half months pregnant! I was the Deputy Chief Whip of the Labour Party and exciting as the prospect of going into Government was, with a 5 year old at home whom I saw nowhere near enough of, and about to give birth to

his brother, I took the difficult decision that it was time to pass the baton on.

Needless to say, I didn’t have a plan, so I feel truly blessed to have had opportunities alongside the immediate requirements of looking after a newborn!

I am really pleased to say that I have joined the team at Arden Strategies as Senior Counsel.

It’s been a pleasure to join an incredibly capable team, led by Jim Murphy, working part time to give me the work-life balance I need right now with such a young family.

In addition to this, I have tried to find ways to continue to work on some of the local issues and causes which I was passionate about whilst an MP. I have become a Governor at Ravenscliffe special education secondary school to further advocate for more places to meet local demand. I’ve become a Trustee of the local homelessness charity Happy Days and joined the West Yorkshire Police Use of Force scrutiny panel. I’ve been roped into my now 6 year old’s school PTA and the lovely people at the Halifax Civic Trust have made me an honorary member! It’s a busy but rewarding mix which allows me to spend more time at home, whilst still working in politics.

MENTORING THE DEFEATED

ANDREW BINGHAM

Prior to the 2024 General Election the Association of Former MPs put together their own support package for defeated MPs, after colleagues who had been defeated in 2017 and 2019 had great difficulties around finding new employment, while they were dealing with the emotional impact of losing, and coming to terms with life after Parliament. Parliament and the political parties all provided various levels of support but the AFMP scheme was the only one that utilised former MPs directly.

Being a Member of Parliament is an all-consuming role. It dominates your first thought in a morning and your last at night. To have it take away with such finality is a devastating experience for many, particularly when a defeat is unexpected.

Finding new employment is not easy in present conditions. There is a perception that former MPs can walk into new jobs with ease. This may have been the case many years ago. The opposite is true now.

The AFMP scheme identified members of the Association who had been through the experience and were prepared to support defeated MPs. Whilst they could not give them jobs, or indeed take the pain away, their own experiences would give them an insight and allowed them to empathise in a way that only shared experiences can bring.

A wide range of former MPs from across the country and the political divide put themselves forward, and with the support of the House authorities a small brochure was included in defeated Members' packs, from which they could identify a Member they felt close to, be it politically or otherwise.

Whilst no formal assessment has been done as to the success of the scheme, anecdotal evidence suggests that though several defeated MPs did take up the offer and spoke at length to former colleagues who could give them pastoral support and advice, the scheme should be given more prominence at future elections. In the welter of information provided to

defeated MPs there are cases where the AFMP scheme was simply not seen by those losing their seats.

Looking forward, the outcome of the 2024 scheme can be looked at and a decision made on what form it should take, or indeed – as Parliament and Parties alike are becoming more attuned to the difficulties facing defeated Parliamentarians – whether it still has a role to play.

Speaking as someone who went through trauma of losing in 2017 and all that that entailed I was and remain a strong advocate of the scheme, and thanks go to those former MP's who put their names forward to take part, especially as it involved reliving what in many cases was a very painful time in their lives. I feel that it still has its place but the world will change between now and the next General Election. Lessons have been learnt and hopefully it will continue, but maybe with a few slight modifications.

Andrew Bingham was MP for High Peak, 2010-17.



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin

WE SELDOM RECEIVE requests for speakers in the final term in the Academic year, when students and lecturers are concentrating on exams and assessments but we are in discussion with a number of universities regarding possible engagements in the new academic year. We are keen to expand our work and would like to hear from members who have contacts with universities that we may not have worked with.

Since my last report, three of our members have been engaged in programmes organised through our partners, Speakers4Schools.

In March, **Edwina Currie** spoke with 90 students, aged 16-18, at Hazel Grove High School in Stockport. School feedback included: "Students loved the engaging speaker and were very honoured to be given the time

to ask questions so freely and really appreciated Edwina's honesty and candour".

In April **Sir Vince Cable** spoke with 90 students, aged 14-18, at The Burgate School and Sixth Form in Hampshire about his career and his book called "How to be a politician. Advice for students considering a career in politics." And in May, he spoke to 45 students, aged 14-15 at Harrow Way Community School in Hampshire.

In March, **Ian Lucas** spoke to an audience of 240 students, aged 11 and 12, at Darwen Vale High School in Blackburn, about his career in politics and his new book. In June, Ian spoke with students virtually at Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy in Halton on the subject "My career in the law, politics and as a writer. My background and ambitions and how aspiration for

students and having an open mind on the future is important.

We are grateful to Speakers4Schools for their ongoing partnership and co-operation.

Annual General Meeting

The Trust will be holding its AGM at 3.30pm on Thursday 17th July at the Houses of Parliament.

Details of precise venue, Agenda etc will be circulated nearer the date

My apologies to Lawrie Quinn, whose name was omitted from the list of Executive Committee Members of the Trust elected at the last AGM.

To contact the Trust or receive further information contact John Austin at admin@parlyoutreach.org.uk

JOHN AUSTIN
Chair



ACCESS PERMISSIONS FOR FORMER MEMBERS

THERE HAVE BEEN a number of questions from members about access to dining facilities. This is the information that is currently available from the intranet on access to dining facilities.

The Adjournment restaurant

Access information

Who can use the venue? – Full passholders – Press gallery members – Former Members on Wednesday evenings, and Thursday and Friday lunchtimes

Who can bring guests? – All full passholders and members of the press gallery can bring up to 6 guests – Former Members can bring up to 3 guests
Reservations <https://booking.resdiary.com/widget/FixedSize/Adjournment/12079>

T: x6470 / x3090 Groups of 7+
E: adjournmentbookings@parliament.uk
Supervisor: Marica Marchetto T: x6470
E: marchettom@parliament.uk Manager: Marco Turri T: x8145 E: turrim@parliament.uk

Pugin Room

Access information

Who can use the venue? – All full passholders until midday – All Members, their partners, lay members of Select Committees, and Peers at all times – House and PDS staff with a business need, at any time – Passholders with a dinner reservation in Strangers' Dining Room, for pre-dinner drinks

Who can bring guests? – All, except for lay members of Select Committees,

can bring up to 3 guests

Contact details

Pugin Room T: x3358 T: x3358

Manager: Catherine Joyce T: x4244

E: joycec@parliament.uk

Members' restaurant

Access information

Who can use the venue? – All Members at all times – Peers who are former Members on Monday evenings – All Peers on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings – Former Members on Monday lunchtimes, and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings

Who can bring guests? – No guests

Reservations

Reservations are not taken for the Members' Dining Room

Contact details

Dining Room T: x5343 (Small Room) / x5340 (Large Room) Manager: Catherine Joyce T: x4244 E: joycec@parliament.uk

Dress code

Smart casual as a minimum.

Collared shirts are preferred for gentlemen, with long trousers and shoes. Sportswear and trainers are not allowed in the dining room.

Strangers' restaurant

Access information

Who can use the venue? – All full passholders – Former Members on Wednesday evenings, and Thursday and Friday lunchtimes Who can bring guests? – All full passholders can bring up to 6 guests – Former Members can bring up to 3 guests

Reservations <https://booking.resdiary.com/widget/FixedSize/Strangers/12080>

<https://booking.resdiary.com/widget/FixedSize/Strangers/12080>

T: x5343 (Small Dining Room) / x5340

(Large Dining Room)

Reservations T: x4244 / x3090

E: hoceventsteam@parliament.uk

Manager: Catherine Joyce T: x4244

E: joycec@parliament.uk

Dress code

Our dress code policy for the restaurant is smart casual as a minimum. Collared shirts are preferred for gentlemen, with long trousers and shoes. Sportswear and trainers are not allowed.

Strangers' Bar

Access information

Who can use the venue? Monday-Thursday – Members of Parliament (with up to 3 guests) – Members of the press gallery (no guests) Thursday – Full Commons and PDS passholders (no guests) – Former Members who have served a minimum of 10 years as an MP (no guests) – Peers who are former Members (no guests) – Members of the press gallery (no guests) – Lay members of Select Committees (no guests) Who can bring guests? – MPs can bring up to 3 guests at any time. Guests may not buy drinks or stay unaccompanied for more than 15 minutes

Contact details

Strangers' Bar T: x6170 Supervisor:

Anthony Cree T: x6170 E: creea@parliament.uk

Manager: Catherine Joyce T: x4244 E: joycec@parliament.uk

Dress code

No garments bearing slogans or inappropriate clothing (i.e. fancy dress)

A GOOD READ

THE BAD, THE SAD, AND THE UGLY

Jerry Hayes

Ungovernable

by Simon Hart

Published by MacMillan

I HAVE NEVER met Simon Hart, but he seems the sort of fellow I could happily swap gossip with over a four-hour lunch. And this book reads like a boozy dreamy read where he despairs at the venality of the Conservative parliamentary party with modesty, clarity and a lightness of touch. He was an active player in trying to stop the self-destruction of the party where, in the land of the blind, the swivel eyed want to become king. *Ungovernable* plots the course of self-righteous MPs who have become slaves to political purity, where compromise is a dirty word, which inevitably leads to electoral disaster. Nigel Farage should keep it on his bedside table. As a warning.

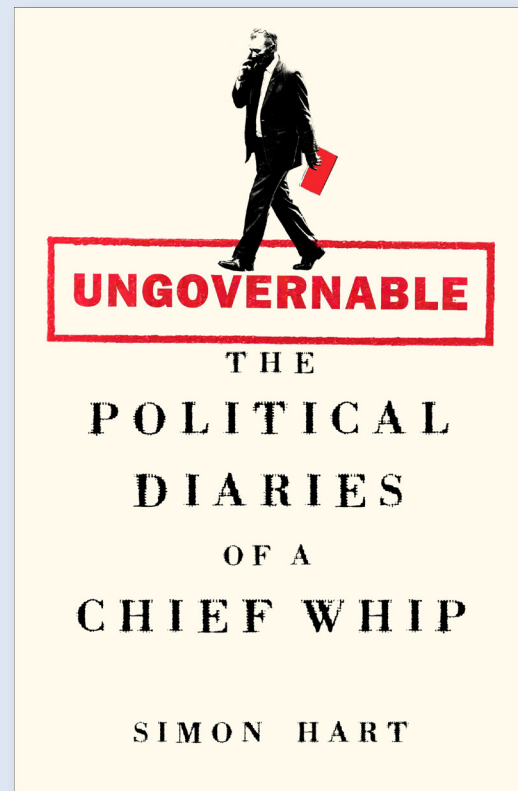
I'm going to skip over MPs dressed as women having sex with rent boys and others held hostage in brothels by KGB spies, which appears to be all fairly routine for Hart as chief whip. This is one of the reasons that he despairs at the selection of the candidates process. Mercifully, he assures us that those with a penchant for 'dick picks' don't get safe seats. What I really like are his gentle vignettes of colleagues – on Dominic Cummings before his Rose Garden car crash, "looks like a dog in a vet's waiting room. Bewildered, reluctant and lips curling".

And when Boris came to visit a sheep farm in Wales, "a bit too vocal about black sheeps matter". But during lockdown Boris, "was especially delighted that we could reopen massage parlours".

When he was Secretary of State for Wales he was alerted to Liz Truss's special needs. "We all know about the mayonnaise situation?" Hart, "no". "And she can only drink coffee from Pret's". No wonder that he concludes that, "some people are delusional about their personal status...(she lives in a) strange world in which she feels genuinely hard done by and misunderstood. She has zero self-awareness."

Of Rob Jenrick, the glamour boy of the Lederhosen wing of the Tories, "once middle of the road and boringly sensible ... for some reason he has been persuaded he could be a future leader, so his persona, values, hair and waistline have all been adjusted with this in mind". He also portrays Gove rather well. "Mastered the art of appearing thoroughly engaged whilst completely ignoring the argument. But he does it with charm and humour so we forgive him. Mistake".

What I found instructive was the delusional entitlement of some who were desperate for their gongs. Nadine Dorris is a Hart favourite as she had been threatening to oust Simon Case and expose conspiracy theories about Sunak unless she was put back on the peers list, which by convention couldn't happen. "Her resignation letter was the very worst example about why candidate selection is so flawed. Bitter, chippy, delusional, vicious and vindictive ...how not to show a bit of



class or depart with honour".

Then he roasts Suella Braverman. Reader beware, If you don't blink you can see her devil horns and cloven hooves. On her sacking by Sunak, "a ghastly ten-minute diatribe of vindictive personal bile ... if ever there was an example of her unsuitability for the office of Home Secretary, or any office".

Oh, and lest we forget: Andrew Bridgen, "an utter knob... malevolent creep whom nobody likes".

But there are some delightful insights into the life a Chief Whip. "Dr Caroline Johnson came to berate me. She is a strange combination of very disappointed yet highly intelligent. Her purpose was to raise two questions, felching and solar panels. I promised to raise these at the highest possible level".

When Matt Hancock flew off for vast sums of money to appear on I'm a Celebrity, his association chairman commented to Hart, "I am looking forward to him eating a kangaroo's penis". And I rather liked the comment of a new female whip about Boris Johnson, "he is like a foreskin, he always disappeared when things got hard".

Hart did have a fixation about the government car service. "The car went so slowly that I thought that we had broken down ... to which a colleague commented, "that this must have been the same guy who couldn't find the duty free on the Woolwich ferry".

But one of my favourite stories was about the agonies of reshuffles. "I suggested we should consider someone who was competent, triggering much laughter."

For all of us who have lived through the parallel universe of Westminster this book is a great read.

Jerry Hayes was MP for Harlow, 1983-1997

A GOOD READ

WHICH IS THE REAL KIER STARMER?

Sally Keeble

Red Flag: the Uneasy Advance of Sir Keir Starmer.

By Michael Ashcroft

Published by Biteback

Keir Starmer: The Biography

By Tom Baldwin

Published by HarperCollins

A BIOGRAPHY HAS to do more than tell the story of a life.

It has to provide an insight or perspective that explains events, rather than just recites them. It has to get under the skin of the person.

In the case of Keir Starmer, the biographer needs to explain what it was about the man that made him only the fourth person in history ever to lead Labour to a General Election victory. And what it was that made him even try – audacity, madness or luck.

Michael Ashcroft starts his biography, *“Red Flag: the Uneasy Advance of Sir Keir Starmer,”* with a trawl through Starmer’s unremarkable ancestry. He then strips down Starmer’s early life, showing how every detail of it supports his thesis that the man was never what he claimed. That his toolmaking father was more of a small business owner than a factory worker. That his attendance at a fee-paying school meant his was not the working class boyhood he has made out.

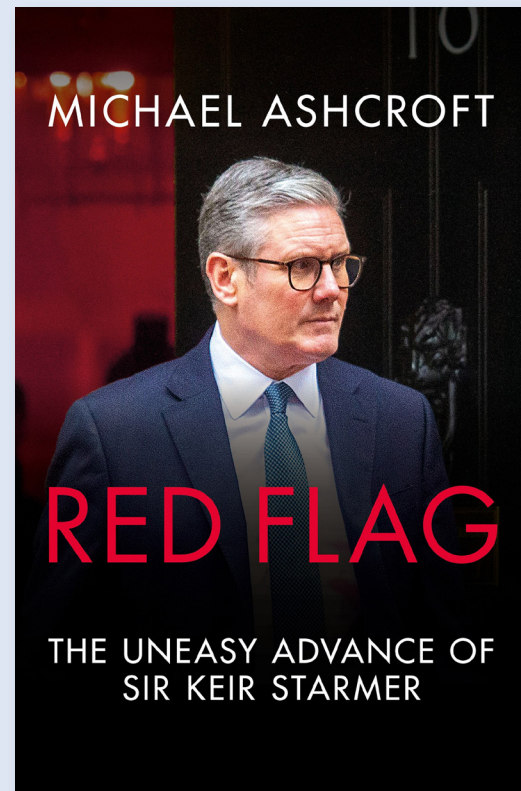
He deconstructs Starmer’s law career in similar fashion. His involvement in the McLibel case was more behind the scenes than upfront. In the global campaign against capital punishment Starmer “tended to be more junior counsel than the advocate on his feet.” Ashcroft provides anonymous quotes from Starmer’s former legal colleagues saying that his legal work was “derivative and regurgitated,” and “very run of the mill.”

So by the time Starmer reaches Parliament, Ashcroft has framed him as someone over-promoted on a false prospectus. Which is an impossible basis for explaining the politician who shimmied his way up the greasy pole to become Labour leader, trounced his enemies inside the party, eviscerated his enemies outside and entered Downing Street with one of the biggest majorities in UK history. All within 10 years.

It’s a carefully-researched and well-written biography, with lots of the gossip that makes political biographies so entertaining. And the analysis will sit well with those who share Ashcroft’s politics.

Just as those who share Tom Baldwin’s will find his book, *“Keir Starmer: the Biography,”* the more rewarding and insightful.

Baldwin brings to it an insider’s understanding of the causes and near-terminal consequences of the Corbynite era, combined with exceptional access to Starmer at key points in his political journey. He also had on-the-record interviews with Starmer’s inner circle and a wide array of leading Labour figures: Tony Blair, Charlie Falconer and Alistair Campbell, among others. Angela Rayner is quoted as taking a puff on her vape and saying Starmer was “now



having to do ‘the emotional and life stuff.’”

However, that’s where the problem is with Baldwin’s analysis. He sets out, with great journalistic flair, to show that the perception of Starmer as an emotional illiterate is misplaced: that he has an inner life and understands, shares even, the feelings that motivate most people.

A big part of this is tied up with football, so we read a lot about football matches watched. There’s a surprising amount about the Prime Minister’s wife and family, close-ups of warm and committed personal relationships. On election night he describes how Starmer “Wrapped both arms around his wife to share a kiss. He then reached out for his thirteen-year-old daughter and they hugged for a moment, before his body suddenly jolted into a tighter, more protective grip as he realised it was all becoming too much for her.” And there are descriptions from friends of a “totally normal and genuinely good bloke.”

But ultimately, however much Starmer might enjoy football or love his family, his achievements are not those of an ordinary person. Baldwin needs to explain the exceptionality of the man.

Perhaps the truth about Keir Starmer lies somewhere between the two biographies. An enigmatic politician who triumphed in extraordinary times largely through an ability to pivot.

Or perhaps it’s just that his biggest test is yet to come: whether he can become only the second person in history to lead the Labour Party to a second consecutive full-term government.

Sally Keeble was MP for Northampton North, 1997-2010

A GOOD READ

A SOLUTION OF A SORT'

Peter Heaton-Jones

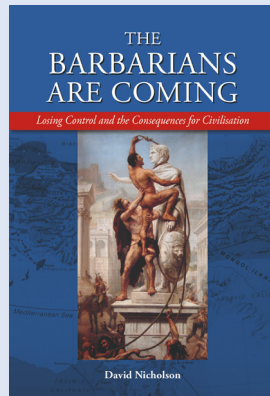
The Barbarians are Coming
by David Nicholson

Published by Halsgrove

The Greek poet Constantine Cavafy's 'Waiting for the Barbarians' tells the story of a city state in decline, contemplating the arrival of the titular invaders. It's never clear who the barbarians are – Cavafy himself later said they were symbolic – but, spoiler alert, they never materialise. The poem's central theme is that the society is in such a state of slow decomposition that their arrival might actually have been beneficial. The ambiguity is neatly summed up by the poem's closing line: 'What is to become of us without Barbarians? Those people were a solution of a sort'.

Former Tory MP David Nicholson uses another line from the poem as the title and starting point of his fascinating book, *'The Barbarians are Coming'*. This is a meticulously researched sweep through centuries of history, and the impact – good and bad – of various 'invading' forces, both physical and intangible. As with the poem, it's the generally risible quality of so many governments, with their lack of leadership, vision or strategy, which is the common theme.

The book takes us through the rise and fall of many great civilisations, from the Roman Empire onwards. The history is



fascinating, but I found the chapters on postwar Britain, the European experiment and, of course, Brexit, even more arresting. 'My original plan', Nicholson writes, 'was for this book to culminate in an indictment of the Brexit processes and consequences'. He does indeed discuss the machinations of that turbulent period, and concludes that our political masters have much to answer for.

He goes on to discuss immigration. 'Much of the inter-ethnic harmony which has been achieved in the UK will be jeopardised if large-scale migration continues,' he writes.

'That is why long-standing immigrant communities should support limitation.' As with the many historical events he covers, Nicholson argues that 'long-term failings' of 'government, business and society' have left us in this position.

Nicholson is an historian, and much of the book is a meticulously researched view of the most significant global events across the centuries. However, his thoughts on today's 'culture wars' also deserve a wider audience.

David Nicholson used to be MP for Taunton, just across the county border from my own former seat, and still lives close by. I am now tempted to stage an invasion of Somerset to hear his insights in person. The Barbarians might well be coming.

Peter Heaton-Jones was MP for North Devon 2015-19.

HOW BUSINESS HAS CHANGED'

Denis MacShane

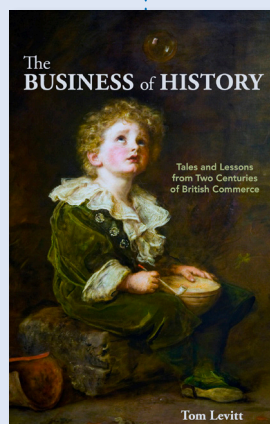
*The Business of History,
Tales and Lessons from Two Centuries
of British Commerce*
By Tom Levitt

Published by the London Publishing Partnership

Tom Levitt, is a polymath who in addition to winning the Tory seat of High Peak in 1997 and being an effective ministerial aide also learnt to ski when aged over 50, and became a valued member of the Parliamentary team in our annual races against Swiss parliamentarians. He has written plays and a fine biography of Frances Perkins, the American Secretary of Labor during Roosevelt's four terms, in 1933-45.

Unusually for a Labour MP Levitt also has a passion for the inner workings of business. His latest book is a vade mecum of the evolution of business over the last two centuries.

Most businesses were in manufacturing 150 years ago. Today just 8 per cent of UK GDP is based on manufacturing. By contrast, 18% of Switzerland's GDP is manufacturing. In Britain every economic decision is taken by the Treasury. In Switzerland, cantonal governments, social partnership, and a proportional electoral system keep economic activity closer to community stakeholders.



Levitt records the massive changes in British business which have quietly happened since most readers of "Order! Order!" were at school. In the 1960s there were sixteen UK clearing banks, but incorporation reduced this to just four by 1970: Barclays, Lloyds, NatWest and Midland.

In 1962 UK banks' sterling assets were ten times the value of their foreign currency assets; by 1979 their foreign currency assets were 20% higher than their sterling assets.

Between 1960 and 1990 half of all money held by UK defined-benefit pension funds was invested in equities, falling to under 2% by 2020. Britain was leading the EU campaign for a capital markets union to allow more shares to be traded across Europe. But thanks to Brexit, British capitalism has shrunk to horror stories like Thames Water. Almost entirely British-owned in the early 1990s, today half of the shares on the UK stock market are foreign-owned.

Levitt has useful mini-histories of household name businesses in Britain. His book is in fact an innovation that puts the history of business on the political map. It is about time.

Denis MacShane was MP for Rotherham 1994-2013 and Minister for Europe.

TRIBUTES

ROGER FREEMAN, BARON FREEMAN OF DINGLEY

27 May 1942 – 2 June 2025

Conservative MP for Kettering, 1983-97

Remembered by Nicholas Bennett



Hollywood had nothing on the Department of Transport in 1990, Cecil Parkinson, Nicholas Baker and Roger Freeman all had matinee idol appearances, tall, elegantly suited with brilliantine hair. Sadly neither Patrick McLoughlin or I, as Roger's first PPS, quite fitted that description.

Roger was born in Neston, Cheshire in May 1942 but after the War was educated at the Whitcliff School in Croydon and gained a place at Balliol College where he was chairman of the Oxford University Conservative Association. Articled with Binder Hamlyn, he qualified in 1969 as a chartered accountant and married Jennifer Watson, (Dr Jennifer Freeman OBE the noted architectural historian). The same year he moved to Lehman Brothers, working in New York and returning in 1972 to the

UK to set up Lehmann Brothers' London operations. In the 1979 General Election he fought then ultra safe Labour seat of Don Valley but it fought back and although achieving a swing of nearly 9% lost by over 17,000. Success came in 1983 when he won Kettering.

He joined the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee and was the only newly elected Tory to vote against rate capping and rebelled to support letting councils keep the proceeds from selling houses to tenants. This proved to be no bar to promotion, and he joined the government after only three years on the backbenches as Armed Forces PUS at the MoD

He replaced Edwina Currie at Health in December 1988 after she had been forced to resign over remarks about the impact of salmonella on egg production.

On promotion in May 1990 to Minister of State for Transport he was entitled to a PPS and after a short interview I was appointed. Roger was given responsibility for the rail industry. He had an inquiring mind and wasn't content to just sit in the Department. We visited Sheffield to see plans for the tram system and he steered the legislation to set up the system in 1991. We went to France (Mrs Thatcher required me to pay my own way) and travelled in the cab of the TGV to Le Mans. After dinner with the British Ambassador, I took the overnight train to Frankfurt from Paris. Roger regretted that he hadn't joined me as he was delayed on their flight the next morning.

As befitted a chartered accountant, he had an eye for detail. I remember a meeting with Deputy Secretary Edward Osmotherley, beforehand Roger selected a Woolworths' sixpenny exercise book from a pile on top of a wardrobe in his office which contained meticulous notes of the previous meeting and the actions required.

Although I only served Roger for six months before my own appointment as a junior minister, I learnt an enormous amount from him and have never forgotten his kindness and consideration.

After Mrs Thatcher's fall, Roger remained at Transport under a succession of Secretaries of State. He played a major role in developing the legislation to denationalise British Rail. In 1994 he moved sideways back to the MoD as Minister for Procurement. The following year he joined the cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Civil Service. Like the Lord Privy Seal one of those posts with little inherent responsibility but ones which enable the Prime Minister to use a 'safe pair of hands' for any jobs requiring 'mopping up'. In this role he used all his emollient skills in winding up the debate on the Scott Report the shipment of arms to Saddam Hussein.

He lost his seat in the 1997 by just 187 votes. He was ennobled in the resignation honours list as Lord Freeman of Dingley. As such he continued to play an important role firstly as a Conservative Party Vice Chairman and then as Chairman of the Select Committee on the European internal market. He became a partner of PwC and chaired Thales UK. He retired from the Lords in 2020 Jennifer survives him together with a son and daughter.

SIR BILL O'BRIEN

25 January 1929 – 18 May 2025

Labour MP for Normanton, 1983-2005

Remembered by Ed Balls



Sir Bill O'Brien lived a long and rich life dedicated to public service. He was a coal face miner, who backed the 1984-85 miners' strike, but fell out very publicly with the miners' leader, Arthur Scargill. In local government and then in Parliament, he was highly respected for both his deep

knowledge and wise judgement. I know that both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown relied upon him for advice and guidance.

He was a highly important mentor to me, first in the Normanton Co-operative Party, as a parliamentary candidate and then as Member of Parliament when I succeeded him in 2005. His were big shoes to step into. I spent many hours in my surgeries in my first year as Normanton MP being told that things were much better in Bill's day.

But Sir Bill was generously and consistently supportive of me. I will always be grateful to him – and also to Lady Jean O'Brien, his wife, who taught me the proper way to make Yorkshire Pudding one Sunday in 2004. Our family is eternally grateful to Jean too, and I know Bill would appreciate that.

Sir Bill, above all, was a deeply loyal man: loyal to our country and party, to the Wakefield district and his union and, above all, to his family, whom I know he treasured. His was a life well lived, a life of great generosity, and public service – a rare man we were all privileged to know.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS MEMBERS' FUND



Greetings from the Chair

Greetings to all former Members. My name is Clive Betts, and I am the Chair of the Trustees of the House of Commons Members' Fund (HCMF).

I wanted to let you know that if you are a former member, and consider yourself to be in financial hardship you are able to make a hardship application to the HCMF. Please note making an application does not guarantee a payment will be made as payment is subject to Trustee approval.

This article provides further information about the Fund, and the application process.

What is the HCMF?

The HCMF is a benevolent fund that assists former Members of Parliament and their dependants who are in financial need.

How is the HCMF funded?

All current Members automatically contribute 0.03% of their salaries to the Fund. Currently that equals approximately £2.35 per month. Member contributions and investment income then fund any payments made.

How is the HCMF managed?

The HCMF is managed by a board of Trustees, of which I am the Chair. Legislation requires the board is made up of one former Member and six serving Members appointed by the House.

Who may benefit from one-off payments?

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

How do I apply for assistance?

To apply for financial assistance from the HCMF, please contact the HCMF Secretariat. You will be sent an application form requesting further information about your financial situation and reasons for applying. You will also be required to provide documentary evidence of your finances.

The Trustees will consider your case, and you will be notified of their decision in due course. The Trustees only grant awards after they have looked at and considered all of the circumstances of the applicant, particularly their financial circumstances. A completed application does not ensure a grant will be made.

Please note, applications can take a number of months, dependant on urgency and the time taken to resolve any queries. All matters related to the Fund are handled on the basis of utmost confidentiality.

Enquiries and further information

House of Commons Members' Fund
Members' Pensions Team
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Phone: 020 7219 6481