

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



WINTER 2023

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REPAIRING PARLIAMENT



It is an old, beautiful, historic building, in serious need of expensive care pp4-5



ASSOCIATION NEWS

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CHANGES TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Elizabeth Peacock has decided to stand down from the Committee, although she will continue to be an active member of the Association.

The Association is very grateful to her for the contribution she has made to the Committee and we thank her for her input.

We are delighted to be able to welcome two new faces to our Executive Committee, **Linda Gilroy** former Labour MP for Plymouth, Sutton from 1997 to 2010 and **Dr Tania Mathias**, former Conservative MP for Twickenham from 2015 to June 2017.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome our new members. Word of mouth is always the best endorsement as a recommendation, so please feel free to encourage colleagues who are former MPs to come and join us. Applicants need to complete an application form as well as a standing order form for the annual fee of £40. Both forms can be found on our website on Politics Home, or I am happy to send any interested parties a copy.



Susan Elan Jones is the former Labour MP for Clwyd South from 2010 to 2019. Prior to that, she was a Councillor in the London Borough

of Southwark, serving as Labour Group Deputy Leader from 2007 to 2009.

During her time as MP, as a fluent Welsh speaker, she campaigned successfully for Welsh to be used in Parliament at meetings of the Welsh Grand Committee.

From October 2010 to October 2011, Susan served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Harriet Harman MP, the then Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, in her role as Shadow Secretary of State for International Development. In October 2011, Susan was appointed to the Labour front bench as a Whip. In 2015, she became a Shadow Wales Office Minister but resigned from the Labour frontbench in June 2016. She served as a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe between 2017–19.

Susan returned to the voluntary sector after leaving Parliament. She is currently Development Manager with the Cranfield Trust and a Trustee of the London Welsh Centre.



Ian Cawsey is the former Labour MP for Brigg and Goole from 1997 to 2010.

Ian was Assistant Whip (HM Treasury) between 2005 and 2007, and was Deputy Chair of the Labour Party between 2007 and 2010.

He is Director of Advocacy & Campaigns at The Donkey Sanctuary and an Ambassador undertaking UN Engagement work to promote the welfare of working donkeys and mules. In particular advocating for higher welfare standards as a route to assist the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

He is a member of the OECD Committee for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD). The PCSD Partnership brings together governments, international organisations, civil society, think-tanks, the private sector, and other stakeholders from all regions of the world committed and working to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.



David Tredinnick is the former Conservative MP for Bosworth from 1987 to 2019.

He is an advocate of alternative medicine,

and was chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Integrated Healthcare from 2002 to 2019. David was the chair of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments from 1997 to 2005, and a member of the Liaison Committee. He became a member of the Health Select Committee in 2010 and in January 2013 he became a member of the Science and Technology Select Committee.



Bill Grant is the former Conservative MP for Ayr Carrick and Cumnock from 2017 to 2019.

Having retired from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Service as a

Deputy Commander in 2005, Bill entered the political area as a Conservative councillor on South Ayrshire Council in 2007 having secured more First Preference votes than any other candidate in the ward at 2,176 votes (30.3%). He was re-elected in the 2012 Council elections with 1,992 First Preference votes (33.8%), again with more First Preference votes than any other candidate.

Having achieved a 20% swing, Bill was first elected to Parliament in June 2017.

In his first year in office as an MP, Bill Grant spoke in 89 debates and voted in 266 out of 284 votes in Parliament, which was well above average amongst MPs. He was also a member of the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee.

VOLUNTEER REQUEST

As the next election draws closer members of our Executive Committee are working closely with the House with a view to supporting MPs who have lost their seat or stood down. For further information please read mentoring article in this issue on page 13 written by Andrew Bingham.

DATA PROTECTION

The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles'. They must make sure the information is:

- used fairly, lawfully and transparently
- used for specified, explicit purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- kept for no longer than is necessary
- handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage

I can confirm that the Association handles data in compliance with GDPR. You can find a copy of the Association's Data Protection Privacy statement on our website or, if you prefer I am happy to send you a copy.



FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 12th December 2023
OUTREACH TRUST MEETING
1.30pm – River Room, House of Lords
 PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

ALL MEMBERS' MEETING
2pm – River Room, House of Lords
Guest Speaker, Michael Dobbs
 PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

CHRISTMAS RECEPTION
4–6pm – River Room, House of Lords
 Many thanks again to the Lord Speaker for allowing us to hold our Christmas Reception in the River Room. All members and partners (no other guests please) are welcome to attend.

If you have not already done so and wish to attend, please confirm your attendance to me urgently on blakelb@parliament.uk.

This year, as agreed by the Association Members at the AGM in October, there will be a cover charge to attend of £10 per head which can be paid by cheque or banker's order to:
 Association of Former MPs,
 Account no 50281506
 Sort Code 20-47-39



Outside of Lord Dobb's very active political career, this year's guest speaker is probably best known for his writing of the political trilogy *House of Cards*, with Francis Urquhart as the central character. *House of Cards* was turned into a television series by the BBC and Netflix went on to produce a US version based upon the first novel and the BBC adaptation. Lord Dobb was an executive producer of the American series.



Ian Lucas addressing students at Darwen Vale High School, Lancashire earlier this year



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin

THE TRUST HAS CONTINUED its partnership with the charity Speakers for Schools, set up by journalist Robert Peston, and currently 13 of our members are involved with their programmes.

Ian Lucas delivered a talk in October at St Michael's Church of England High School in Sefton. There were 120 students aged 14-15 in the audience and the school said the highlight was hearing about Ian's work on social media and the students having the opportunity to ask him questions about it.

In October Jeremy Lefroy spoke to pupils at Paulet High School in Staffordshire. This session was to a smaller audience of 25 students aged 11 – 17 and covered his work experience both inside and outside of Parliament with one student commenting "It's made me feel better about my career not being decided now – I can enjoy the journey!"

Tom Levitt spoke in mid-September to the Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in Ealing, to 150 students aged 17 – 18. The school said, "The speaker did deliver a clear message that the future rests in their hands, their own personal futures as well as the future of the planet."

Sir Vince Cable is a regular speaker within the network, his most recent talk being in mid-September to Ringwood School Academy in Hampshire. Vince spoke to a large audience of 300 students aged 16 – 18. Again the feedback from the school and students was very positive.

At a time when politicians in general are portrayed negatively in the media, it is comforting and reassuring that our efforts are having some effect

in restoring faith in the democratic system. One student commented "Really nice to meet a politician from a normal background" – and hopefully the positive message goes beyond the classroom, as another student said: "Went home and talked with parents over dinner about the talk"

We also have a few talks lined up with Universities for November – January. Tom Levitt is due to speak to students at Brunel University on the theory of how Parliament works and whether that is reflected in practice in his experience. Part of the students' assignment is to draft a submission to a Committee enquiry.

Helen Jones is booked for two sessions, one at Nottingham Trent University on the role of Whips and the other at Westminster University on life in Parliament during the Blair/Brown years, and Debra Shipley will be speaking at Exeter University on how back-benchers can influence policy. A further series of talks with Exeter is in the pipeline.

Another of our volunteers, former MEP Julie Ward, will be speaking at the Women in Politics London School of Economics society on the evolution of female political power.

We are keen to hear from any members who wish to join our group of volunteers and we would also appreciate any introductions to, or contacts for, relevant tutors in other universities. If you can assist with either, please contact John Austin admin@parlyoutreach.org.uk.



PLANNING PARLIAMENT'S MULTI-MILLION POUND MAKEOVER

By Andy McSmith

At some time in the next few months, MPs will be need to stop thinking about politics temporarily, to focus their minds on their own place of work.

The Palace of Westminster is a very large, very historic and very old building in serious need of repair. Making it fit for purpose is going to cost billions. Currently Parliament operates a policy of routine maintenance and repair, otherwise known as ‘make-do-and-mend’, patching up the worst problems as they are identified while both Houses operate as normal. In the first four years to 2019, this cost £369 million, or approximately two million pounds a week. What still needs doing will cost much more.

Next year, the Client Board, comprised of the Commissions of both Houses which oversees the vast Restoration and Renewal Programme, will present Parliament with two other options alongside an ‘enhanced maintenance’ option. MPs and peers will not, yet, have to choose between the options. What they will be asked to do is give the Board permission to do a thorough job of estimating the practical implications of each option, including what they would cost. The crunch decision will have to be made in 2025.

The Choices

Under one option, almost everyone who works in the Palace of Westminster will have to move out – but there will still be a chamber in the historic building where MPs can debate, and journalists can watch and report on proceedings. The more modern additions to the Parliamentary Estate, such as Portcullis House, will be open for business as usual, but there will be no offices, or library, or other facilities in the old building, and the red benches of the House of Lords will not be in use.

Under either option, the House of Lords will spend years meeting in some other location. Peers will meet and debate in some other building, most likely the QEII centre nearby. This would force a drastic change to the ceremony surrounding the King’s Speech, or the daily ritual of the Speaker doing the slow walk to take his seat at the start of the day’s session. And the ritual as ‘ping pong’, when the two houses are in disagreement

Parliament has been meeting within the Palace of Westminster for 576 years, since King Edward VI handed over what had formerly been a royal chapel in St Stephens

as Parliament is about to go into recess, will become more complicated than ever.

The other option is that the MPs also move out. This would allow the work to be completed more quickly, and therefore at less cost. But it would be a visible break with a very old tradition. Parliament has been meeting within the Palace of Westminster for 576 years, since King Edward VI handed over what had formerly been a royal chapel in St Stephens. The current debating chamber of the House of Commons has been in continual use, since 1860, through two world wars. In most British people’s minds, the phrase ‘Houses of Parliament’ conjures up an image of old building by the Thames every bit as much as it refers to the institutions based there.

A third possibility will be to go for ‘enhanced maintenance’ until the work is done, which could mean MPs and peers remain in the Palace but face disruptive works around them, and this could be the slowest and most expensive option.

The Fear

When John Bercow was Speaker, he told me privately that he was adamantly opposed to moving MPs out of the Palace, because he feared that they would never be allowed back. Parliament’s reputation had been so badly hit by the expenses scandal of 2008 that it seemed that public opinion would not accept paying, potentially, billions of pounds to return it to its historic location.

However, that fear should since have been put to rest by a clause in the 2019 Parliamentary Buildings Act, which lays out that “the works must be exercised with a view to facilitating the return of that House to the Palace of Westminster as soon as is reasonably practicable”.



[Top] Fish token found in 2022 [Bottom] Basement cabling

And much has been done in the past few years, while business in the two Houses carried on with minimal disturbance. The most visible was the work on the Elizabeth Tower, begun in 2017 and completed in 2022. The Victoria Tower is going to require a similarly long and expensive overhaul. The scaffolding will probably go up during 2024.

Believe it or not, there are more than 200 flat roofs around the Palace of Westminster, all of which needed attention. That work has been done. It was also important, for health reasons, that a mist sprinkler system should be installed in the basement, to suppress any fire. That was done three years ago.

But there is a vast amount still to do. The four priorities are health and safety – which includes removing asbestos that can still be found in parts of the building – fire precautions, conservation of the stonework, and updating systems such as the electrics. Visiting the palace is a nightmarish obstacle course for anyone in a wheelchair. Currently, it is estimated that 12 per cent of the building is accessible. The aim is to raise it significantly across the Palace and in the areas visited by members of the public.

Cloister Court

Eventually, the hope is that every part of the Palace will be safe to visit. This might mean that in another decade, people will be able to visit one of the most fascinating and little-known places in the entire estate – Cloister Court.

Once, it was the centrepiece of the palace. Now it is deserted, and there are people who have worked in Parliament for years, in one capacity or another, without ever knowing that it is there. To take a look at it from the outside, the best vantage is via the Members' Lobby, but instead of going straight ahead to the debating chamber, turn left, and then look through the windows along that short corridor. You will see a beautiful old stone structure, but no people.

I had the rare privilege of being allowed to visit Cloister Court



Original Victorian equipment

The Palace of Westminster needs extensive restoration work to continue to serve as the home of our democracy for generations to come

as one of a small group of journalists who were being briefed on the work that needed doing. The idea that there should be a cloister on this site has been traced back to 1348 the reign of Edward III, though the building that stands in the centre of the court, which was once the home of the Speaker, is not quite that old. In the ceiling, you can see the crest of arms of Henry VIII, next to the those of Catherine of Aragon, his first wife, out of six, which dates the building to the 1520s. When I was shown around, the gargoyles that overlook the court were in a very sorry state, and cloister wall was so eroded that if you touched it, crumbling masonry was likely to come away in your hand.

To compound the problem, the court is completely enclosed. In ancient times, it had an entrance through which a horse and carriage could pass. Now it is accessible only on foot. Before the first round of repair work could begin, machinery had to be lifted by crane over Parliament's high roof, and lowered gently onto the court's delicate stone floor.

A spokesman for the UK Parliament said: "The Palace of Westminster needs extensive restoration work to continue to serve as the home of our democracy for generations to come. This highly complex project to invest in one of the world's most recognised buildings will support jobs across the UK and improve public access to Parliament.

"We are updating proposals to present to MPs and Peers, including further detail on potential temporary locations for Members during the significant and complex work, and after necessary approval by the R&R Client Board expect to publish these proposals in the New Year ahead of debates expected in both Houses."



'ANGELS FOR UKRAINE' PART 2

Brooks Newmark

Eighteen months have gone by since I first went into Ukraine for what I thought was going to be four days on the Polish border evacuating people from makeshift refugee centres into western Europe.

In fact, I ended up spending a year and half evacuating women and children from front line villages primarily in the east of Ukraine in Kharkiv and Donbas. To date I have evacuated over 35,000 people, mainly women and children, but some wounded soldiers and civilians too.

While my initial intention – as I discussed in my last article for *Order Order* a year ago – was just to spend a few days on the border helping out, but I soon realised that many people were being charged large sums of money to get away from the Russian



I didn't know Ukraine. I didn't speak the language and had no contacts there, but I was determined to do 'something'.

onslaught, especially around Kyiv. So, I decided to go into Ukraine to do what I could do to help. I didn't know Ukraine. I didn't speak the language and had no contacts there, but I was determined to do 'something'. I teamed up with a Russian speaking Latvian friend of mine, Raitis, and we formed Angels for Ukraine.

Four phases, three buses

The past 18 months have essentially gone in four phases: evacuation of women and children; medical evacuation of soldiers and civilians from front line hospitals; humanitarian aid drops to de-occupied villages; and initiating a training program to help children with PTSD.

In early March Raitis got me three old buses from Lithuania and with another friend of his, Maris, we went into Ukraine to Kyiv and started moving people from the shelling around the capital and took them to the safety of the Polish border. As the Russians were pushed out, we moved our operation south



to Vinnytsia and Zaporizhzhia, where people were rushing to get away from Mariupol. The roads in the south were more challenging so we went to one of the national bus companies and found buses and bus drivers to help us move people to Lviv. From there people would find family or friends to stay with, in the relative safety of western Ukraine. At this stage we had four hubs: Lviv, Kyiv, Vinnytsia and Zaporizhzhia.

By May we moved our operation to the east and set up three more hubs in Dnipro, Kharkiv and Sumy. The Russians were increasingly targeting civilian towns and cities on a daily basis. By the time I got to Kharkiv, the second largest city in Ukraine, it was a ghost town with people hiding in the underground and 25% of the city's buildings and infrastructure having been shelled. The villages outside Kharkiv were even in worse shape with some almost 100% shelled – like Izyum, Sloviansk and Kramatorsk.

Finding drivers

I wanted to head east of Kharkiv to some of these villages to help people get away (the city council didn't have the resources to help so they tasked us to do this). But the first problem I had was no bus drivers wanting to go there. So, I literally said "I am going! Who is coming with me?" I found four bus drivers who felt that 'if this crazy Brit is willing to go, we will go too.' Once we did a couple of trips safely, we subsequently found more bus drivers willing to help.

The next challenge I had was that many people thought that, as we were charging them nothing, that this was some Russian trick to kidnap them and take them to Russia, which the Russians had been doing. I then did two things: a promotional video with a local council, the military and several families getting on one of our buses.

The second thing I did, rather counter-intuitively, was to charge people 10 Hryvnia (10p) to come on our buses. This was a huge tipping point in persuading people to come with us as they felt there was no way the Russians would charge them 10p in order to kidnap them. I ended up evacuating over 11,000 women and children from Kharkiv Region alone.

By September, as the Russians were driven out from around Kharkiv, many people began to return to their villages in the de-occupied areas. I then switched my efforts to doing medical evacuations from front line hospitals to civilian hospitals. We would take soldiers and civilians with deep trauma wounds, like amputations and shrapnel wounds, all the way to Rzeszow, on the Polish border, and get them airlifted to hospitals in Germany who had the facilities to deal with deep physical trauma. The Ministry

I found four bus drivers who felt that 'if this crazy Brit is willing to go, we will go too.'

of Health was so impressed with our work that they eventually partnered with us to help them with their medical evacuations (though the military asked us to keep our precise numbers confidential).

Aid drops

The third phase of our work began in February this year as the Russians bombed infrastructure while people were trying to return to their homes in Kharkiv, parts of Donbas, Kerson and Zaporizhzhia. We started doing humanitarian aid drops to the small towns and villages on the front line, who were getting almost no support from the big NGOs (I only saw the Red Cross once in 18 months!). We delivered blankets, duvets, warm clothes, and dry bulk food in addition to generators and basic medical supplies. The aid we delivered came mainly from donors in France.

The final and fourth phase of our work began in June, when we started to come up with a solution to support many of the children who were suffering from PTSD from all the shelling. Working with the Department of Education, we began a training program for teachers and volunteers to support children who were suffering from PTSD. Our objective is to train enough individuals so every school in Ukraine has someone with the basic training to support children. We had our first graduating class in July and our training program will continue until the war ends and each school has the necessary trained support they need for every school child.

In the past 18 months with my partners, we have evacuated over 35,000 people from the front line, including over 11,000 from the occupied territories, over 2,050 children, including 178 orphans, and thousands of wounded civilians and soldiers. In addition, we have delivered several tons of aid and begun a training program to support children with PTSD.

I am committed to supporting Ukraine and the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Slava Ukraini!



Brooks Newmark is a former MP and Minister for Civil Society currently doing humanitarian work in Ukraine.

Gino's Premium Images / Alamy Stock Photo



WHAT HAPPENS IF TRUMP WINS?

Denis MacShane

The smart money seems to be on a November general election. In America, the presidential election is scheduled for Tuesday 5th November so maybe we will see the world's two major English speaking democracies almost simultaneously changing leaders or confirming existing power-holders.

And then – as the nomination of Donald Trump as the Republican Party candidate seems all but unavoidable – the British prime minister will have to work out how to relate to this extraordinary political phenomenon.

Theresa May tried her best. She held Trump's hand as they came down the short ramp from the White House balcony where the US President gives press conferences with important visitors, but it is difficult to see whether she and the UK gained much benefit from this kindly helping hand for an unsteady president.

She inherited as UK ambassador to Washington, Kim Darroch, who worked with me as an FCO minister, as FCO press chief and then UK Permanent Representative in Washington. Kim was the very opposite of the haughty, Oxbridge, superior diplomat. He was lively, opinionated, and believed firmly that Britain should be partner and leading

player in Europe. A few months after he was named Ambassador to the US, the Brexit vote happened and then four months later Donald Trump was elected President.

At first there seems to be a Trump-UK bond. His mother was born in the Western Isles and later bought a croft to spend time in the beauty of west Scotland and see old friends. Trump hailed Boris Johnson becoming Prime Minister as 'the Britain Trump' and thought Brexit was a great idea. But this was not translated into any useful help to the UK and Johnson, especially on the idea of a UK-US trade deal which Johnson said prior to the Brexit vote would be easy to achieve.

Trump's nuclear sabre rattling over North Korea alarmed No 10. But then someone leaked a memo Kim Darroch had written, in which he called Trump "incompetent" and "inept" and warned against a full royal show state visit for

So either Prime Minister Sunak or Prime Minister Starmer will have to deal with President Trump

the US president. Trump demanded that Darroch be fired, and craven Johnson and whoever was foreign secretary at the time gave way – and ended Darroch's hitherto distinguished diplomatic career.

At the time I wrote in the *Independent* that the best way of replying to Trump would be to put Darroch in the Lords, and to my surprise my suggestion was taken up. The noble Lord Darroch now continues in public service and is rightly called upon to comment upon US political developments though his real expertise is Europe.

So either Prime Minister Sunak or Prime Minister Starmer will have to deal with President Trump, if as is very

possible, he beats Joe Biden and returns to the White House.

Sunak and Trump share immense wealth and neither drink alcohol, but other than that the spread-sheet PM, who is a detail and paper man extraordinaire, has nothing in common with Trump.

Barely understood in Britain is that a US president has little power compared to a British prime minister in terms of making law. A US-UK trade deal needs to be enacted in Congress and quite often the President does not have a majority there.

Trump is no fan of the EU, but the State Department just quietly ignored his rambling prejudices and when he was President laid on plenty of visits full of pomp, ceremony and photo-calls to different EU capitals which kept him quiet.

The big worry for any British Prime Minister irrespective of party is whether a reborn President Trump would activate his pro-Putin prejudices and wind down US support for Ukraine if as seems likely the Ukraine resistance to Putin's invasion goes on and on. Among Trump's ultra right-wing supporters in the Republican Party there are plenty of old style isolationists who resent the US being dragged into, as they see it, once again, an intra-European war.

There are also European leaders like Viktor Orban, the anti-EU autocrat who runs Hungary, now joined by the new Slovakian prime minister, Robert Fico, who would like to cut a deal with Putin and sell Ukraine down the River Dnieper.

It is perhaps too early to say what the impact of Hamas's butchery of Jewish children and old ladies will be, or that of the Israeli response of trying to turn Gaza into an empty desert in Bibi Netanyahu's Trump-like belief that Hamas will fade away if enough Palestinians – from babies to their grandmothers and their hospitals and schools – are forced to cope without water, food, or power.

A re-elected President Trump would go all-out in support of the rightist Israeli ideological supremacists and their motto "From the River (Jordan) to the sea (the Eastern Mediterranean)" which is regularly invoked by Republican candidates as they search for Jewish votes in America, but it is far from clear that the next British Prime Minister can sign up for this anti-Palestinian crusade, which can only inflame the Muslim world.

Every international observer agrees that

It is hard to see anything he has in common with a liberal left lawyer, like Keir Starmer

UK influence had been much reduced since Brexit. The EU is a major global player, deciding international rules in conjunction with the US, China, and soon, India. A UK that no longer shapes Europe's policy is simply less important to the rest of the world.

Sir Keir Starmer will have his own Labour-specific problems. To put it mildly, Trump has been denounced and derided by the liberal-left and Labour in a way that no other US president has been since America broke free of British rule more than two centuries ago.

Sir Keir has kept a low profile on foreign policy as he has recentred Labour into an electable party of government. David Lammy, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, was educated at Harvard and has good US contacts, including the former president, Barack Obama. But that will be of little help if a vengeful President Trump returns to the White House determined to punish all those who failed to offer any support during his recent years in the wilderness.

Trump offered no support to Boris Johnson, the closest he had to a soul brother in European politics. It is hard to see anything he has in common with a liberal left lawyer, like Keir Starmer, whose career was based on supporting woke human rights causes.

Trump may also turn on China and refuse to work on international agreements to reduce global warming. British business and the City does not want to rupture links with China which may be what Trump would expect from allies. A Britain that is no longer part of Europe's global team can issue statements but the tri-party – Sunak+Starmer+Davey – line of keeping a long distance from Europe can only weaken Britain's diplomatic heft.

So, if Donald Trump is re-elected the next British prime minister is not going to enjoy the following four years as the so-called "special relationship" is exposed as void of content or purpose.

Denis MacShane was a PPS and Minister at the FCO between 1997 and 2005. He has written books on American and European international politics.



THE CANDID CANDIDATE

Hugo Summerson

Political Incident No. 5

It was April 11th 1992, the week after I lost my Walthamstow seat. I had returned to the constituency for the necessary mopping-up operations. As I walked, or sidled, self-consciously up the High Street I spotted Mary and Charles walking towards me. It was too late to cross the road.

"Oh hello, Mr. Summerson!" Mary cried.

I knew Mary and Charles well. A middle-aged couple, they had been assiduous attenders at my surgery, held at the Town Hall on the first Friday of every month and open to all without appointment, even if it meant I was there until midnight or after. When I arrived at 6.45pm and walked through the waiting room there they would always, invariably, already be, waiting patiently.

When their turn came Mary (who was the taller) would lead in, Charles in her wake.

"Hello, Mr. Summerson!" Mary would start. Then she would set out their views on current affairs both at home and abroad. Every so often she would turn to Charles and say "Isn't that right, Charles?" and he would reply "Yes, dear." Occasionally Charles was allowed to start a sentence, and Mary would finish it for him.

They never asked me to do anything for them, but always asked kindly after me, and as they were so friendly, supportive and well-mannered – although I would grind my teeth because they always took half an hour of my surgery time – I would say to myself "two Tory votes, two Tory votes", and when your majority is 1,512 you need every vote you can get.

"Such a shame for Conservative supporters here", I said.

"Eh?" said Mary.

"I knew I could always rely on your votes."

"Oh no", said Mary. "We vote Labour. We always vote Labour. Isn't that right, Charles?"

"Yes, dear."

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



TIM EGGAR
Enfield North, 1979–1997

I WAS FORTUNATE: 18 years in the Commons, 11 as a Minister, never in Opposition! In 1995, aged 44, decided to stand down at the next election. Many reasons; but I certainly had had enough of Parliamentary party infighting.

Apart from three ministerial years I had been involved in energy issues ever since leaving university, so was lucky to be offered several oil and gas related jobs. By mid-1998, I was CEO of an oil and gas company, but when the price of oil dropped to \$9 a barrel, the company was taken over. Who said politics is a risky business!

Five years as an energy investment banker has been followed by the past 18 years as Chairman of small and medium sized companies, most of them energy related and international; some publicly quoted, others with a family or private equity ownership. I always tried to have a pro bono role until recently as Chairman of a school governing body.

In 2019, I was appointed Chair of the North Sea Transitional Authority. It has proved to be a challenging time aiming to ensure an effective transition to net zero. I have served seven Secretaries of State but had the real pleasure of working with able and dedicated public servants doing a critical role well. In common with other ALBS our effectiveness is blunted by excessive central government micromanagement.

Regrets? None at leaving the Commons. But I have never been able to replicate the very rewarding constituency work.

Observations? Despair at the mutual and growing incomprehension between the political and business sectors. Neither appear to understand or want to understand just how difficult and challenging the role of the other “side” is.



MAUREEN HICKS
Wolverhampton North East, 1987–1992

PERHAPS WITH THE EXCEPTION of some of the Eton ‘likely lads’, few plan a career as a Member of Parliament – and certainly not as one of few Conservative lady MP’s; let alone winning a Black Country seat held by Labour for 40 years. My

goal – hell bent on joining Margaret Thatcher’s government.

Job security comes low on an MP’s expectations, which is as well when you find yourself ‘out on your ear’ overnight, coping with the emotional turmoil of rejection and the reality of re-starting life outside of the Big House. Yet in spite of its precariousness, candidates continue to queue up to be selected – onlookers might judge us quite ‘mad’.

The idea of being like an out of work actress hanging round at the Whitehall stage door by becoming a lobbyist – as so many do – did not appeal. Getting out of London and an opportunity to do whatever I wanted became my priority.

Serving as a Public Relations Non-Executive Director for a mental health trust whetted my interest in health. An approach from a large in-patient hospice in the Midlands to restore its financial stability and communications profile plus the challenge of building a new day hospice led to my passionate commitment to the hospice movement. Various responsibilities could be juggled alongside being a voluntary Vice Chair of the Isle of Wight Mountbatten Hospice and a unique opportunity to head up a historic towns National Pilot Visitor Management Public/Private Partnership Programme.

Once the children were at University, the chance to explore the world. What better, admittedly minus the colourful wardrobe, than to become a ‘mini Portillo’ – years of wonderful adventures exploring the world on some of the most fantastic rail journeys, as a Freelance Tour Director for Great Rail Journeys. A far cry from my Cloisters desk below Big Ben. Fond memories.



GERRY MALONE
Winchester, 1992–1997

HAVING LOST the June general election in Winchester to Lib Dem Mark Oaten by 2 votes, the High Court overturned the result in July. Improperly franked ballot papers prevented me having a majority of 2.

At the ensuing by-election on 20th November, I was drubbed by 21,556. As I woefully opined, ‘If we didn’t know who’d won in June, we know now.’ My very own opera buffa!

Politics – my nine years in the House of Commons were the most fulfilling of my life – had ‘terminated’. What passion would follow? Turned out that, earning a living aside, my interest in opera would fill the hole electoral defeat had created.

I enjoy the freedom to roam the world in search of well performed familiar repertoire – or, more exciting, original works. My old chum, journalist Iain Martin, asked me to become opera critic of his online publication ReactionLife. I foolishly agreed.

Opera is politics. I supported English National Opera in its successful campaign for survival following the cut in Arts Council Funding that threatened its existence.

I was asked to join the board of the Metropolitan Opera Club in New York. I saw the Met’s current production of Verdi’s Nabucco – about the Babylonian destruction of the Jerusalem Temple – on the morning Hamas invaded southern Israel.

In the UK the artform is flourishing. Longborough, Nevill Holt, Grange Park, Holland Park, Garsington, as well as the more familiar Glyndebourne, all delivered stunning productions this year.



DAVID STEWART
Inverness East, Nairn and
Lochaber, 1997–2005

REPRESENTING THE LARGEST constituency in Britain for eight years was a logistical challenge, but as a Highlander it was an immense opportunity to serve local people. After my election defeat in 2005, I was fortunate to pick

up employment almost immediately, as Assistant Director for a national charity. In 2007, the pull of elected office came back into the frame and I was elected to the Scottish Parliament as Labour MSP on the Highlands and Islands regional list. I had always been a strong supporter of Scottish devolution and swapped my weekly flights from Inverness to London with driving from Edinburgh to the Highlands.

I served three terms in Holyrood and was given the opportunity to carry out more senior roles as I gained experience; from Chief Whip, Petitions Committee Convenor to front bench Shadow Health Minister. I particularly liked the Scottish Parliament's Private Members Bill procedure, which did not rely on a ballot to proceed. Through cross-party support, I succeeded with two bills, which improved local authority powers over dangerous buildings and, just before I retired, brought in legislation to require all new housing to have sprinkler fire safety systems.

Since my retiral two years ago, I have completed a Masters Degree at Edinburgh University on the history of the Highlands and Islands Medical Service of 1913 – a state-subsidised system of health brought in 35 years before the NHS.

Next steps? Well, I guess they will be baby steps, as I am going to be a grandfather for the first time, when son Andrew and daughter-in-law Kirti have their first child in the States next year!



ANNE SNELGROVE
South Swindon, 2005–2010

2010, WHEN I LOST MY SEAT, seems a distant memory now. My life today is happy retirement: gardening, book club, theatre visits, and creating stained glass. I don't miss direct involvement in politics at all, although I still love to keep up with what's going on.

I stood and lost again in 2015 and although I loved my local party and enjoyed the campaign, decided that was it for politics and life had more things to offer. We moved away from my old constituency, and it was a great relief to be anonymous again. Anonymity is a much-underrated condition.

Happily, I found a teaching job in a secondary school very close to where we lived, and spent several years just teaching drama again. After years of travelling and living away from my husband, it was wonderful to have a 10-minute journey to and from work. It was also lovely to have contact with young people; I'd forgotten how much I enjoyed their directness, creativity and energy. Within 5 minutes of my first lesson, they'd found out about my nefarious past via internet searches. Year 7s were often confused about my status though, with one asking me if I was the Prime Minister. Now that would have been an interesting job share.

I'd had cancer for a second time in 2013, and eventually the long-term effects of treatment meant that it was difficult to stand for long periods. Teaching takes a huge amount of energy and a chronic condition means that energy is in short supply, so I retired just before Covid. It's marvellous now to have time to indulge all my passions and work on my own creativity.



IAN SWALES
Redcar, 2005–2010

AFTER RETIRING from Parliament in 2015 I took on a few part time roles. Returning to my chemical industry roots I spent three years as Non-Exec Chair of process industry trade body NEPIC. Also wanting to give something back to the Redcar area I became founding Chair of a

children's mental health charity and a Governor of the local FE College. In 2018 I became a Director, now Chair, of the grant giving Woodsmith Foundation. I get to play Father Christmas all year round! At the same time, I joined the Board of Redcar racecourse, which I also really enjoy.

The most frequent question I get is "do you miss Parliament?". I'd be lying if I said a straight no. The vibrancy, the humour, the people one meets and the chance to get things done are a heady mixture. But I don't miss the tribalism, toxic social media, IPSA and eight hours a week travelling. It was certainly a huge privilege to represent Redcar, where I have lived since the 1970's. I keep in touch with most of the young people who worked for me who are now making names for themselves all the way from Dubai to the Bank of England.

I have seven grandchildren and they are a real joy. The family, especially my wife, are pleased to have more of my time. I also get time to follow a few hobbies, travelling, walking, bridge and genealogy.

SCOTTISH BRANCH UPDATE

Gordon Banks,
Chair of the Scottish branch



SINCE MY LAST UPDATE in the summer edition of *Order Order*, the Scottish branch have held an Executive meeting and an all members meeting in Queen Elizabeth House, Edinburgh on 24 August where Professor Jim Gallacher spoke to members.

We were delighted that Jim was able to speak to us as his career as head of the Scottish justice department, private secretary to two Secretaries of State for Scotland, a member of the No 10 policy unit, leading advisor to the UK government on devolution and constitutional issues, and his work with Gordon Brown and Better Together outlines the quality and understanding that he holds for the issues facing Scotland today. His contribution was extremely well received.

The branch also held an Executive meeting on 20th September in Lochgelly to plan further ahead.

We are endeavouring to secure a speaker for a meeting early in the new year and have outlined a programme to take us up to September 2024 for which we have invited out to possible speakers, I will keep you all advised on developments asap.

You may be aware that the position of Treasurer has been vacant for some time but I am delighted to inform everyone that David Hamilton has now agreed to take on this role, so thanks to David and welcome to the position!

As usual should any branch member have any suggestions regarding possible speakers, I would welcome you contacting me on Gordon.banks@cartmore.com. Securing speakers is always a challenge so any forward suggestions or contacts are always appreciated.

Obviously, as we are moving towards a General Election there is the guarantee that current members will be standing down or will in some cases lose their seats. If you have contact with any current members, it would be useful if you could make them aware of the UK Association and the Scottish branch, so that they may consider joining us at some point in the future.

Our current Executive Committee members are:

Gordon Banks- Chair
Sir Michael Hirst – Vice Chair
Lindsay Roy CBE – Secretary
Sir David Hamilton – Treasurer
Sir Robert Smith
Gavin Strang



Left to right: Mary Flaherty, Pat Breen and Dr Martin Mansergh

MEETING IRISH PARLIAMENTARIANS

In what was the first meeting of its kind – but certainly will not be the last – three senior members of the Irish Association of Former Parliamentarians have visited the House of Commons to meet their British equivalents.

The visitors were Mary Flaherty, a former Fine Gael member of the Dail, who chairs their Association, Dr Martin Mansergh, the vice chair, from Fianna Fail, and Pat Breen, from Fine Gael. All three served as ministers of state at different times when their respective parties were in power.

They had a pre-arranged meeting with Eric Martlew and Nicholas Bennett, the chair and vice-chair of the British association, and executive members John Austin and Laurie Quinn. They also, by chance, met the Speaker, Sir Lindsay Hoyle.

The Irish Association is in regular contact with other bodies across Europe, but for years there had been no contact between the associations from these two closely neighbouring countries, until this meeting on 10th November. This was primarily because the British association decided to discontinue sending representatives to European events. The Irish visitors had assumed this was an upshot of Brexit, which was, at most, only partly true.

The main reason is the British association has no budget to cover the cost of travelling to and staying over in Europe. It might seem odd that the Irish can afford something that the British say that they cannot. The membership of the British association is a little over twice the size of the Irish, there being around twice as many ex-MPs as ex-members of the Dail. The Irish Association received an annual grant of 15 thousand euros (roughly £13k) and charges members a fee of 50 euros (c £44). The British association's grant is about £1k higher, and the fee is lower, at £40, so there is no great difference in the income of the organisations.

But the Irish association does not produce anything equivalent to *Order Order*, which is the British Association's biggest expense, by far – though the visitors, who were thoroughly impressed, took a small stack of copies back to Ireland to think about whether they should produce something similar.

One advantage they have over the British is that it is far cheaper and simpler to hold a members' meeting in Dublin than in London. The cost of travel even

from the furthest points of Ireland is not prohibitive, and most members of the Irish association know someone in the capital who can put them up.

This was a 'get to know you' meeting, with no pre-arranged agenda, but one firm decision came out of it: there will be more bilateral meetings between the two associations.



'NORMALISED' ABUSE THREATENS DEMOCRACY – AND IT'S GETTING WORSE

The constant abuse aimed at politicians is becoming a threat to democracy, according to the former Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith.

Abuse is putting good people off standing for Parliament, or for a seat on a local council. Its effect is sometimes harder on the staff employed by MPs than on the politicians themselves, because they are likely to be the abusers' first point of contact.

Speaking to the Association annual general meeting in July, she said that she counted herself as relatively lucky, despite losing her Redditch seat in 2010 in circumstances she would probably prefer to forget. "My only consolation," she said, "was how excited my two teenage sons were about the fact that my photo was on the front page of the BBC website with the headline – 'biggest loser'. There's nothing your kids like more than something like that to hold against you!"

But when she ejected from Parliament, she was still relatively young and with an impressive c.v. that included being Britain's first female home secretary, and the second youngest home secretary after Winston Churchill. She is now probably best known – at least to those who dip into social media – for the podcast she does with the LBC presenter and former Tory activist, Iain Dale.

Possibly less well known, but certainly no less important, she chairs the board of trustees of the Jo Cox Foundation, created in memory of the politician murdered seven years ago by a right-wing extremist. One of its projects is a commission which is seeking ways to reduce the vitriol that politicians and their staff have to cope with.

"Abuse is getting worse," she observed. "By a considerable extent worse now than it was in our time. Firstly, it's becoming normalised. The way people talk and think about politicians is changing. Secondly, people think it is wholly legitimate to abuse people, their motives, and activity as elected politicians.

"Thirdly, it discriminates. It's much more likely to happen to you if you are a woman, if you are a woman of colour, and it doesn't just impact on politicians themselves. Sometimes it impacts on politicians less even than it impacts their staff and their family.

"Finally, it's an attack on democracy, because it puts people off wanting to stand for Parliament, or to be local councillors, and if we do that, if we put off the people



Jacqui Smith and Association Chairman Eric Martlew at the summer all members' meeting

who we need to come forward, to bring the whole range of experiences that we know are so crucial in politics, then we will have undermined our democracy."

The problem is not all about social media, she added, though social media has made it easier for abuse to reach its target. The commission is asking people in politics, and former MPs, to share their experiences and make suggestions.

Their aim is not to encourage politicians to get soft with each other. Jo Cox was not "soft", but she was polite. "We've got to be able to find the differences between us, argue about them, debate robustly, but that does not mean that we have to suffer abuse or even intimidation."

Her own career shows that you can get to the top in politics without indulging in personal abuse – though there are one or two people who severely tested her belief in good manners. One was the then Home Secretary, Suella Braverman. She did not mention her by name during the talk, but she stressed that the way to deal with public anxiety about immigration is to focus relentlessly on making the system more efficient.

"I made this self-denying ordinance that I won't criticise Home Secretaries, because I understand how difficult the job is," she said. "However, I have fallen off that particular wagon, because I think that whatever you decided in policy terms what to do, in immigration it means a relentless focus on getting the bureaucracy to work properly, and it needs to be based on a sense of justice and fairness – not cheap headlines.

"I think home secretaries go off the rails when they focus on headlines, and not on that nit-picking, ongoing work to make the system work."

MENTORING DEFEATED MPS

Andrew Bingham

AS THE NEXT ELECTION draws ever closer it no doubt stirs memories in all of us, some good and some bad.

Losing one's seat is very painful. If this comes unexpectedly there is the initial shock of seeing one's livelihood and whole way of life torn away in an instant. Even if it is expected, it is still an unpleasant experience to lose your job in a room full of people cheering, sometimes even in front the television cameras.

Once the initial shock dies away, it is replaced with a sense of emptiness and desolation; the diary empties immediately, the phone stops ringing and the welfare of your staff as well as your own future employment preoccupy your thoughts.

At this point, it is a very lonely place to be in, with little support or assistance from outside. (IPSA will assist with the mechanics of winding down offices, but offer little pastoral support, or indeed understanding of the emotional impact).

It is that aspect that has instigated this request to all Members. Following discussions with the House and IPSA, the Executive feel that our Association can play a role in this situation.

We would like to assemble a small cross-party group of Members who would be willing to help and mentor defeated MPs at this very difficult time. We are looking for volunteer Members across the country as it may well be that losing Members who wish to take advantage of the service will not be London based. Ideally Members who lost their seats during the last four elections, as their experience would be more relevant.

Obviously, a former Member who lost their seat would understand the support that could help, but anyone with experience of supporting people following an event of loss would be able to assist. An election defeat can be just as great a trauma for someone who expected to lose, as to a Member taken by surprise. Equally, it doesn't follow that everyone who loses, for whatever reason, needs support, but to know it is there may be all that is needed.

With the next election due within the next 13 months this is an ideal time to pull this group together so we can be on hand when the time comes.

If you would be interested in offering your time please contact Laura Blake at blakelb@parliament.uk.

A GOOD READ



A ROMP THROUGH A 13 YEAR PSYCHO-DRAMA

Peter Heaton-Jones

The Right to Rule: Thirteen Years, Five Prime Ministers and the Implosion of the Tories

By Ben Riley-Smith

Published by John Murray Press

WRITING ABOUT CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL HISTORY is a thankless task. Things move at such bewildering speed that a book can often feel out of date before it's even hit the shelves. Take David Cameron's premiership; it dominates the first quarter of Ben Riley-Smith's account, which then moves on apace to the nineteen or so other Prime Ministers we've had since then. So, we'll have to wait for a future paperback edition to cover the unforeseen return to frontline politics of Baron Cameron of Chipping Norton – a turn of events as unlikely as any which actually make it into the book.

The Right to Rule has a subtitle – 'Thirteen years, five Prime Ministers and the implosion of the Tories' – which sums up the thread running through its 400-odd pages. The picture it paints is one of frenetic activity, organised chaos and a Conservative Party which has stopped at nothing to stay in power since 2010.

I emerged blinking into Parliament at the 2015 General Election. The ruthless targeting of our coalition partners was the key to success for those of us standing as Conservative candidates in hitherto LibDem strongholds, and helped produce the Party's first outright win in 23 years. Riley-Smith has interesting backroom gossip on how that unlikely victory was choreographed by the CCHQ machine, and his account of the campaign was one of the first sections to grab my attention. That's the clever thing about this book; its ten not-too-long chapters each cover a specific period of the recent Tory psycho-drama, making it a cinch to dip into the

The picture it paints is one of frenetic activity, organised chaos and a Conservative Party which has stopped at nothing to stay in power since 2010

parts of most interest. But that structure also allows for the opposite reader experience, more of which shortly.

Ben Riley-Smith is the well-connected political editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, and he's interviewed most of the key players of the last thirteen years. There are some delicious new tit-bits. One is a never-before-seen photograph of the infamous 'reshuffle whiteboard' on which PMs plot the fate of ministers with sticky paper and marker pens. Riley-Smith's scoop shows us the board used by Boris Johnson in the vain scramble to stitch together a new team as his government disintegrated in the summer of 2022. Michael Gove's sudden sacking sees him unceremoniously replaced by a scribbled name-card held on with a torn-up Post-It note. He had the last laugh, of course.

Naturally enough, the Boris years are among the most, err, entertaining parts of this book. During his wilderness period on the backbenches, Riley-Smith tells us that Johnson was scathing about the calibre of some of his hardcore followers. 'They were political offcuts – 'The Munsters' as Johnson would joke, in reference to the TV show featuring Frankenstein and other misshapen ghouls. He even hummed the 'Addams Family' theme tune when discussing them, according to two sources: 'Duddle-der-der, click-click, duddle-der-der, click-click'. At times the humour was darker. 'I've cornered the market in sex pests,' he joked once, according to one source...Johnson's office denied the claims.'

This is a fast-paced and entertainingly-written romp through the greatest hits of the Tories' thirteen years in power. However, it's been such a well-documented period that at times this book does seem to struggle to unearth any searing new revelations. And I couldn't shake off the feeling that when it comes to the more painful events – May's Brexit battles, Johnson's Partygate scandals, Truss's 49 days – we already know more than enough. Fatigue and familiarity have set in, and I found myself speed-reading through those chapters, despite their undoubted significance. And that's why the bite-sized structure of the narrative counts against this book; it makes choosing what not to read rather too easy.

The final chapter deals with the premiership of Rishi Sunak. There are some good insights into his character – he's developed his own colour-coded filing system, pioneered the 'three-page brief' for policy papers, and probably has a photographic memory. Riley-Smith paints a picture of the current Prime Minister as a more Machiavellian figure than might be suggested by his public persona as a nerdy technocrat. Then again that's probably a prerequisite for making it to the top of the modern Tory Party, given its propensity for plotting, skulduggery and the dark arts, all of which are on full display in the pages of this book. As Riley-Smith quotes a former leader, William Hague, as saying, 'The Conservative Party is like an absolute monarchy, moderated by regicide'.

That paperback edition, assuming it comes after the next general election, may be able to finish this bloody Tory story in all its gory detail.

Peter Heaton-Jones was Conservative MP for North Devon 2015–2019, and now works as a public affairs consultant.

A STRANGE PLOT INDEED

Jerry Hayes

*The Plot:
The Political Assassination of Boris Johnson*
by Nadine Dorries

Published by HarperCollins

I HAVE REVIEWED QUITE A FEW TURKEYS OVER THE YEARS, but *The Plot* is so eye-wateringly awful, so appallingly written, so laughingly inaccurate and so psychotically obsessive that it takes us into Bernard Matthews territory. It is not just a shrine to the martyrdom of St Boris, it is so gushingly worshipful of BJ that it borders on the pornographic.

Sadly, it is testimony to the Nadness of Miss Dorries.

If only she had popped into the Priory for some anger management therapy we would have been spared three hundred and thirty six pages of foam flecked raging against Sunak, Cummings, Gove, Dougie Smith and the mysterious Dr No, a rabbit murdering, arsonist who has controlled Conservative Prime Ministers with guile, threats and blackmail for nearly forty years. Deranged fantasy.

'If I had known then the secrets that had festered at the heart of the Conservative Party unspoken for many years and the Gordian Knot that I would begin to unravel, leading me to people and events that interlinked and draped across Westminster and Number 10 like ghostly spiders web....'

Everything in this book has a James Bond theme. Every chapter a Bond title. Even the code names she gives to her unnamed 'sources' are Bond characters. She even refers to Michael Gove, the man who 'brought down Iain Duncan Smith, May, Johnson and Truss' as Gove finger.

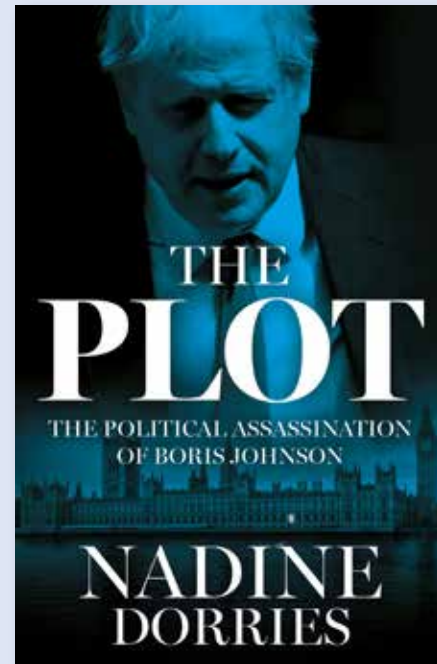
This is a Labour of love not for the truth but for Boris.

'People tell me that Gove was in awe of you...that you had everything he didn't. Your charm, your personality, your confidence. You praise him for his oratory skills but he seems to have been blinded by your light....'

Of course, this shadowy group named 'the movement' coupled with the Govite WhatsApp 'Order of the Phoenix' controls everything, with Prime Ministers merely being their pawns in their lust for power. Sadly Nads doesn't quite get that when insiders used to call Cummings 'the Dark Lord' it wasn't out of reverence. Rather the opposite.

Dorries interviews her Bond characters in a private room at 5 Hertford Street in Mayfair which seems to be full of the sort of people that you might meet in Dubai or in a gentleman's club in Basildon. Here she sips white wine spritzers, dines on nibbles and is aghast at the wickedness of the Movement. What really shocked her was that Cummings used to talk to the press! That so many of them spoke to legendary journalists Simon Walters and Tim Shipman at the *Sunday Times*. Whatever next?

Yet, what is so deeply troubling about this book is that there is a complete disregard for reality. Dear, kind, wonderful Boris who got all the big calls right, and never had a bad word for anyone, was kept in the dark about everything that went wrong on his watch.



...what is so deeply troubling about this book is that there is a complete disregard for reality

On proroguing Parliament to force an election, 'No one had prepared him for that (the Supreme Court Judgement) because the legal advice had never been that Brenda Hale would possibly reach that judgement...his civil service legal advisors had never indicated that, they had totally failed him.....people would say he lied to the Queen....I could see the doubt in his mind over prorogation and I wish now he had gone with his instincts.'

On Partygate, 'Boris had absolutely no knowledge that they were taking place. Nobody, but nobody, would have mentioned that they were happening'.

And a few choice words about Simon Case the Cabinet Secretary. 'Inexperienced, humourless, lacking emotional intelligence.'

Let's not forget about Sunak the man with the 'fake smile'. 'As the Prime Minister addressed the cabinet, I noticed Rishi Sunak rudely half turn his back on Boris and twitch in his seat....it was if he could barely contain his irritation that it was the Prime Minister addressing the cabinet and not him.'

Sunak just can't do anything right. When he brought gifts for the Johnson children, he was, 'over the top nice. Like sickly sweetly nice. He was on the floor playing with the children.... he's so clever'. The rotter.

Nadine, there is no plot which undermines democracy run by the Movement or any other secret group. We just have venal, ambitious politicians who leak to the press, who plot, who backstab, who are disloyal and give politicians who are overwhelmingly honest, a bad name.

In the last chapter Nads pops into the Johnsons Cotswold retreat. Boris is playing with little Wilf. 'What's the game called daddy?'

Boris replies, 'give a toss'. Well, there's a first.

Jerry Hayes was MP for Harlow, 1983–1997

A STOCKING FILLER OF POLITICAL TRIFLES

Steve Pound

Planes, Trains and Toilet Doors: 50 Places That Changed British Politics

By Matt Chorley

Published by HarperCollins



MATT CHORLEY really is a literary and commercial genius.

Ostensibly a snapper up of unconsidered trifles, a collector of political ephemera that could delight even the most obsessive reader of this journal and a humourist of some repute he has produced in *Planes, Trains and Toilet Doors* a book that is on the one hand a Santa's sack of obscure information and on the other a Christmas competition to while away many a winters day and probably cause outbreaks of

inter familial violence throughout the land.

This is a book that reveals the author's deep and quite mystifying knowledge of the most obscure. Who but Matt Chorley could correctly name the electoral firsts that occurred in Gillygate School, Pontefract in 1872 and Frome Memorial Hall in 1929? Who but he would really care?

What Matt Chorley has done is to compile a compendium of odds and sods of British political life from the early days of duelling to the impact of speed cameras on dual carriageways. Thus, he links the facing off of William Pitt the Younger with George Tierney on Putney Heath in 1798 with Chris Huhne's career ending encounter with a speed camera on the M11 on Wednesday 12th March 2003.

All this is done with a lightness of touch and many a merry aside and reminds us of some of the horrors that we may have banished from the memory.

In between the anecdotes are notes of real seriousness.

The Brighton Grand Hotel bombing is treated with seriousness and sympathy and the death of Hugh Gaitskell is expressed as a threnody for the lost leader.

The appearance of Jeremy Corbyn at Glastonbury is written up in deadpan but the underlying message is excoriating.

And as for the two political firsts referred to above?

Thursday August 15th 1872 saw the first ever election conducted by secret ballot. A melancholy note was sounded in *The Times* which concluded 'Persons of great experience declare that they never saw a contested election in which less intoxicating liquor was drunk'.

The Frome Memorial Hall on Thursday April 25th 1929 heard the first party election broadcast issuing from Bristol by courtesy of the Marconiphone Company and allowing Stanley Baldwin to address all Somerset without the need for a dozen exhausting stomp speeches.

This and more awaits the purchaser of this truly remarkable book that is the ideal present both for a friend and for oneself.

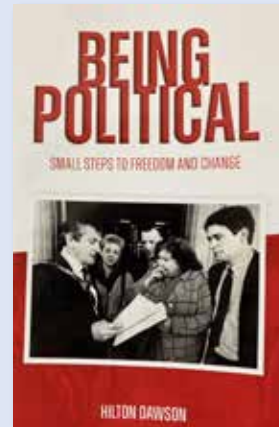
Stephen Pound was MP for Ealing North, 1997–2010

MUST CHANGE THE WORLD— NOT SURE HOW

Win Griffiths

Being Political by Hilton Dawson

Published by Northumbria People



BEING POLITICAL FOR HILTON DAWSON IS EVERYTHING. It's become his all-consuming passion. This book is not quite an autobiography nor a seminal work on political philosophy. His frustration with our political system and political awareness among the general public has driven him to produce his antidote to the London elite's domination and undermining of real political participation.

Unfortunately, his frustration with our existing political parties, the failure of the media to report fully, fairly and properly on politics has led him into flights of fancy: a new world of dreams but hardly connected to the actions needed to bring them about

The book picks up his '70 years spent in the world being political It is my best effort to reflect on experiences distilled over decades Learning from people'.

His narrative is not chronological as he jumps to and fro, from his commitment to the welfare of children, his love of his childhood home of Newbiggin-By-The-Sea, to his constituency work and the world beyond. In his career as a social worker, he saw much that needed changing. At 25, he joined the Labour Party. He recounts his enthusiastic involvement in campaigning and being elected as a councillor and then as MP for Lancaster and Wyre in 1997.

It is difficult to know why Hilton left Labour in 2013. He reflects that in 2003, when he voted against going to war with Iraq (like me) he should have gone further, stood down from Parliament and fought a by-election as an Independent. Perhaps a decade of this smouldering in his mind brought the breach: only he knows.

Hilton strongly believes that people, and especially children, should be listened to, so that the world can be changed but, he writes, in today's ailing democracy, this is impossible. To change it, he wants a massive programme of citizenship education which has a global approach – but nowhere is the means of achieving this explained. Indeed this is a feature of the book revolutionary proposals but with no suggestion as to how they may be achieved.

Hilton's proposal to re-invigorate democracy has two main strands, poles apart. Locally, he created the North East Party in 2014, believing that a North East Assembly would create mass participation democracy.

At the other end of the spectrum, he wants world government based on a democratically elected United Nations. There are no ideas as to how this may be achieved. Like many of the dreams in this book no idea of how to do it.

Win Griffiths was MP for Bridgend, 1987–2005

PEERAGES, PILLS AND PREGNANCIES

Sally Keeble

*Marcia Williams:
The Life and Times of Baroness Falkender*
by Linda McDougall
Published by Biteback

TWO SECRET CHILDREN born 10 months apart to a party worker and a married journalist, screaming matches with the Prime Minister, pill-popping, dodgy peerages, death threats even.

Linda McDougall's challenging account of the life of Marcia Williams – later Baroness Falkender of the infamous Lavender List – shines a light on the dysfunctions of Downing Street.

If anything, what happened to Marcia was worse than anything contemporary Downing Street staffers have endured.

For a political aide to have a secret pregnancy would be impossible today. For her to have two secret pregnancies by a newspaper's political editor would be unimaginable. For the civil service to collude in having the babies and their mother hidden away in the vicious circumstances described by McDougall would be intolerable.

To make matters worse, Dr Joe Stone, who treated Marcia during her pregnancies and later depression, prescribed her Valium, mother's horrible little helper. Marcia became dependent, if not addicted. By all accounts Dr Stone loathed his patient, and on one occasion suggested to Number 10 staffers Joe Haines and Bernard, later Lord, Donaghue, that they "dispose" of her.

What is surprising is that through all of this Marcia Williams continued to work for Harold Wilson in an enduring political partnership that gave Labour its longest period of government pre-Blair.

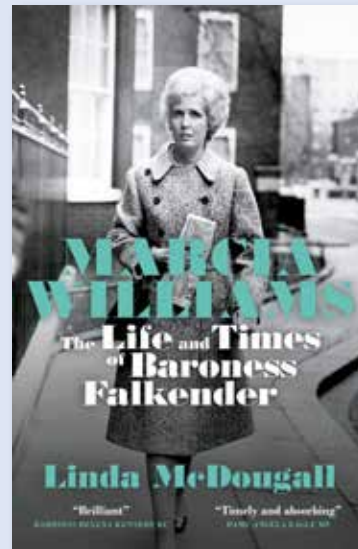
Marcia's story starts prosaically enough in the village of Long Buckby, still a rural backwater in Northamptonshire. Star-struck as a teenager in Northampton, she went on to Queen Mary's University in East London where she got a BA in History. After that she made what was probably her first strategic mistake. She learned to type.

Without that she might have started along the route to becoming an MP, like her near contemporaries Maureen Colquhoun, who became MP for Northampton North, or even Margaret Thatcher. Instead, she became a secretary.

It was while she was working at Labour HQ that she talent-spotted Harold Wilson, and hitched her career-wagon to his. She became his secretary, first when he was a backbench MP and then Leader of the Opposition. When he became Prime Minister in 1964, she followed him into 10, Downing Street.

The civil servants there had never encountered anyone like her. McDougall's account of their difficulties in dealing with a noisy, politically assertive woman are hysterical, if familiar. Where would she sit? What work would she do? What would her job title be?

And it wasn't just the civil servants who had difficulties with her. Labour Party figures don't come out of the story too well, or journalists. Their explanations for her relationship with the Prime Minister ran along familiar lines:



If anything, what happened to Marcia was worse than anything contemporary Downing Street staffers have endured

— Sex: McDougall speculates that if the relationship between Marcia and Harold was sexual, it was only briefly so, well before they entered Downing Street. Wilson kept his family life with Mary and their sons separate, and McDougall argues that his retirement was to fulfil a promise made to his wife. No mention of his health.

— Secrets: There are intimations that Marcia had some secrets about Harold which she would release if crossed. However, this never happened, and there was no indication of what the secrets were – if they ever existed.

— Money: Politics had long been the preserve of people with private incomes. Even when I worked at Labour HQ as a press officer in the infamous 1983 General Election Campaign, I well remember the difficulties some Labour MPs had when they lost their seats and had to re-enter normal life with nothing. Not to mention the staffers who worked for free. Marcia needed money, not least for her sons. Her relationship with the Prime Minister was her main financial asset, and McDougall documents her efforts to get a decent income.

— Corruption: Marcia is best remembered for the Lavender List of Harold's resignation honours, which included, notoriously, Lord Kagan, later convicted of fraud, Sir Eric Miller, who committed suicide while being investigated for fraud, and virulently Eurosceptic James Goldsmith. However inappropriate, there was no suggestion that either Marcia or Harold sold peerages. But the scandal that surrounded the list was more stench than whiff.

So what conclusion does McDougall reach of Marcia? She says her aim in writing the book was to rehabilitate her reputation as a "groundbreaking female Labour Party pioneer."

She certainly establishes that Marcia was a ground-breaker, often badly behaved, but not the manipulative *femme fatale* that some depict her. And she strips away some of the myths surrounding Harold Wilson and his politics.

However, under this fascinating account, what comes over is a woman who was mistreated by a misogynistic and cruel institution at the heart of our political system. Has 10 Downing Street changed? Watch the Covid Inquiry hearings.

Sally Keeble was MP for Northampton North, 1997–2010



PARLIAMENTARY ASHES

Andrew Bingham

Whilst the nation was gripped by Ashes fever earlier this year, the Lords and Commons Cricket team were pitting their skills against a visiting team from the Australian Parliament in a two-match series.

The first was played at the Whitgift School in Croydon, , who had kindly agreed to host the game; the second a day later at the Rectory Field, home of Blackheath CC.

The Ashes were held by the Lords and Commons following their victory in Australia in 2017/18 so the Australian Parliamentarians arrived intent on wrestling them back. The UK Parliamentarians were equally determined to hang on to them.

The day dawned fair for the first game at Whitgift School's beautiful ground. The Australians, batting first, made a strong start despite losing Colin Bettles with the score on 18. Michael McCormack MP and Senator Matt Canavan batted serenely before both of them retired unbeaten when they passed 30 runs to allow as many colleagues the chance to bat.

From this point things began to go wrong and wickets began to fall, including two quick wickets to Bob Blackman MP with his legendary 'moon balls'. A late bright and breezy 32 from 15 balls by Bryce Wilson steered the Australians to a respectable 150/5 off their 20 overs with the aforementioned Bob Blackman being the pick of the bowlers with 2/22. However, James Daly received a nasty blow to the head whilst wicket keeping, which would prevent him from any further active involvement in the series

Lords and Commons weathered the early loss of opener Lord Lancaster before adding 65 for the second wicket with Andrew Anthony and Bilal Chohan following the earlier lead and retiring once past 30. Lord Wrottesley pitched in with a run a ball 15, with Ed Jones adding an unbeaten 30 before the Lords and Commons were seen home by Lord Faulks with three overs to spare finishing on 154 for 3.

The following day, the teams moved to Blackheath, in South East London. The Australians arrived thirsty for revenge, having travelled in style by boat to Woolwich, courtesy of Uber. After a hearty breakfast laid on by Blackheath CC, and an agreement to extend the game to 25 overs, the Lords and Commons went out to bat.

After four overs they were reduced to 17 for 3 with Senator Matt Canavan picking up two of the early wickets. Baroness Evans, making her second appearance for the Lords and Commons was caught off the bowling of the Australian's equivalent ladies team member, Marjorie O'Neill MP. There followed some big hitting from Lord O'Shaughnessy, ably supported by Nick King. The two Parliamentary Grahams, Stuart and Richard, weighed in with 10 runs apiece before James Wild avoided domestic difficulties by matching Baroness Evans score of 1. Lords and Commons amassed a formidable 208/8 in their 25 overs.

The Australians got off to a flying start, thrashing 73 runs off the first 10 overs with Michael McCormack MP once again carrying his bat for an unbeaten 31. Penetrative bowling from Graham Stuart took two quick wickets and as Marjorie O'Neill held up one end. Matt Canavan and Rick Wilson plundered the bowling however. Three quick wickets ripped the heart out of the Australian middle order putting them further and further behind the run rate leaving the lower order just too much to do. They eventually finished at 187/7 after their 25 overs giving the Lords and Commons a 21-run victory and a 2-0 win in the series, thereby retaining the Parliamentary Ashes.

The Ashes were duly presented at a reception that evening when the teams socialised together, swapping anecdotes

both cricket based, and political. The 2023 Parliamentary Ashes continued to build the great relationships between the two Parliaments, new friendships were made and doubtless will be renewed in 2024/5 when the Australians, now 2 -1 down in Parliamentary Ashes series, have already thrown down the challenge to the Lords and Commons to return down under to defend their crown.

Senator Richard Colbeck, Minister for Sport under Scott Morrison said: "In 2023 Australia brought together its first touring party to the UK for two matches played in great spirit with the Lords and Commons prevailing in both to retain the Parliamentary Ashes

"Having played in all three series of the Parliamentary Ashes in the modern era (2007 to current) I can only attest to the value of engaging through the forum of sport. The spirit and passion of Ashes competition is no less than at any other level although going through the process to become a Member of Parliament as a path to representing one's country is an unusual one. There is no doubt of the enjoyment had by all who have participated, both as a member of a touring party and playing to represent our country. We all had a bloody good time!"

James Daly MP, Chairman of the Lords and Commons Cricket team added: "Despite my bump on the head rendering me unable to fully participate, both games were great fun and we built really good relationships with our Australian counterparts. Victory was sweet but once again the value of cricket shone through as both sides and their families mingled together on the last evening reflecting on two very pleasant days cricket".

Andrew Bingham was MP for High Peak, 2010–2017

TRIBUTES

ANN CLWYD

21 March 1937 – 21 July 2023

Labour MP for Cynon Valley, 1984–2019

Remembered by Sir David Hanson



UK Parliament

ANN CLWYD WAS A FIGHTER, a trail blazer, a humanitarian and for over 40 years an elected Labour representative in Wales as both a Member of the European Parliament and House of Commons.

Fiercely proud of her North Wales roots Ann was born and raised in the hills of North Wales in what was my old constituency of Delyn. She was always reminding me she was a “Holywell grammar school girl” when we sat for a cup of tea in the tea room of the Commons.

A journalist by trade, Ann’s route to elected office was not easy – Parliament losses in Denbigh (1970) and Gloucester (1974) were the precursor to winning a Euro seat for Mid and West Wales in 1974.

When Labour MP Ioan Evans died in 1984, Ann won the Cynon valley seat and held it to retirement for the next 35 years.

In Parliament she proved a fierce campaigner at home and abroad – serving in the Shadow Cabinet as Heritage Shadow, women and equalities, Wales and overseas development.

When the coal dispute of the mid 80s reached its peak she

stood with the miners of the valleys, and when the pit closure programme of 1992 was announced, she joined the miners of Tower colliery – famously staying underground for 27 hours in a successful pit to prevent the threatened closure of the pit. I was personally grateful when she also came back to North Wales to support the miners in Delyn constituency.

She worked hard to pave a way for women to improve their life at home but also internationally – raising the condition of women in Iraq and introducing legislation to outlaw female genital mutilation. Her interest in Iraq was prompted by the plight of the Kurds, whose struggle to preserve their language and national identity struck a chord with Ann because of her Welsh roots.

She served as Chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party, joined the Privy Council, and served as envoy to Iraq after the conflict.

And in later life she stood up to take on an NHS she was proud of but one she felt was letting her husband down in his last days.

Ann was a House of Commons person through and through – in the chamber, in the tea rooms and in the corridors.

She championed the people of the South Wales valleys and she looked to stand for Labour values on the world stage.

Not for her the quiet life. She wanted change and she fought to the end to make it happen.

EDMUND MARSHALL

13 May 1940 – 5 October 2023

Labour MP for Goole May 1971–1983

Remembered by Keith Best



I HAD THE PRIVILEGE and pleasure of serving as an MP at the same time as Dr Edmund Marshall for a few years before he left in 1983 when his constituency of Goole was abolished.

Edmund was a committed Christian Methodist preacher (later he was to advise the Church of England Bishop of Wakefield

on ecumenical matters and, from 2000 to 2015, was a member of the General Synod of the Church of England) and also had considerable academic acumen (he gained a double first in mathematics and a PhD from Liverpool University and lectured in that subject). As a thinking politician his journey was interesting: a Liberal Party councillor on Wallasey Borough Council 1963–65 and Parliamentary candidate for Louth in the 1960s before joining the Labour Party in 1967 and being elected to Parliament in 1971 in a by-election. He rose rapidly, becoming PPS in the Home Office and Chair of both the Select Committee on Trade and Industry and the Select Committee on the Channel Tunnel Bill in which he played a pivotal role.

Edmund had a highly developed sense of social justice and the need to support the vulnerable. In Parliament he campaigned

for concessionary television licences for the elderly and removal of value added tax on toilet paper and sanitary towels. In 1973, arguing for bonus payments for pensioners he claimed “There is nothing more annoying in politics than for discrimination to be caused between people who appear to be in the same category but some of whom are denied the rights enjoyed by the others.” He demanded that the Prime Minister broadcast an explanation about the exclusion from the scope of the pensioners’ bonus all those in receipt of invalidity and widows’ pensions.

Two years after leaving Westminster he joined the SDP and then the Liberal Democrats. From 2015 I worked closely with him when he became a trustee of the Parliamentary Outreach Trust. He took that responsibility very seriously and became a Vice Chair; he was actively involved, including participating in a meeting on the work of Parliament at the University of Exeter. Edmund was a passionate advocate of electoral reform (like myself) and his last engagement for the Trust was to speak on this subject in an online seminar last autumn with students from Edinburgh University. He was always easy company and the points he made during discussions were highly pertinent.

He has written two books: *Parliament and the Public* (Macmillan 1982) and *Business and Society* (Routledge 1993).

Our thoughts and prayers are with Edmund’s family for a life well-lived who made a considerable contribution to public life.



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS MEMBERS' FUND

What is the Members' Fund?

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

What are its current aims and how is it funded?

Its aims are to continue to make annual grant payments to existing claimants and to provide one-off payments to former MPs and/or their spouses, children and any other financial dependants who are experiencing financial hardship. All current Members automatically contribute £2.20 per month by deduction from their salary. The Trustees manage and invest the assets of the Fund, and Member contributions, along with investment income, fund the payments made.

How is it managed?

It is managed by a board of Trustees, one Trustee must be a former Member and six Trustees are serving Members appointed by the House.

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

Who may benefit from one-off payments?

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

How do I apply for assistance?

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

Enquiries and further information:

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