

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



SUMMER 2020

ALSO IN THIS EDITION...



2 SALLY GROCCOTT
Thank you, Joe Ashton



7 JERRY HAYES
When Special Advisers get above themselves



11 DAVID HOWELL
In praise of Robin Chichester-Clark



16 CHRIS PATTEN
My friend Tristan Garel-Jones



ROCK MUSIC DIDN'T CHANGE THE WORLD, BUT IT CHANGED ME



Stephen Pound on Rock, Politics & Mama Cass p.4 & 5



THANKS JOE

By Sally Grocott

Quite simply there would be no Association of Former MPs as we know it if Joe hadn't pursued the idea some nineteen years ago just before he retired from the House in 2001 after 33 years' service.

Just about every other democracy in the world had a retired members' association, and it was seen to be strange that we in the UK did not.

Joe pursued this with drive and determination, greatly helped by his friendship with the new Speaker, Michael Martin, who agreed to a meeting with him and other respected former MPs including Sir Graham Bright, Eric Martlew, Ted Graham, Elizabeth Peacock and Peter Snape. Michael's advice was that a motion needed to be passed by the House, and on the 2nd May 2001 the then Leader of the House, Margaret Beckett, tabled one which was passed unanimously and led to the setting up of a steering committee chaired by Eric Martlew.

Two years later in July 2003, the inaugural meeting of the Association was held and Joe became the first Chairman of the Executive Committee. He was looking for administrative help and as I had worked at Westminster for a number of years, and knew my way round, I offered voluntary assistance. Joe and I made a good team, both acknowledging that it would be impossible to run an effective Association without the separate skills of the other.

We had met the Serjeant at Arms, Sir Michael Cummins, an imposing figure with wide responsibilities, who agreed to allow us a room on the estate, with a second hand computer and printer. We were allowed to have our own notepaper with a Portcullis logo, but had to omit the Crown. We had help with printing our early Newsletter, with the first edition as Joe said, being "typed and sent out from the chairman's attic bedroom".



He always said that he wrote for the Sun and I wrote for the Guardian

Joe had come up with the inspired title of *Order Order* and over the years our magazine developed into the professional publication it is today. Joe could, as most of his friends would acknowledge, be somewhat cantankerous and argumentative and we quite often had some heated conversations on the phone between Sheffield and Westminster over the content of *Order Order*. He always said that he wrote for the Sun and I wrote for the Guardian, but we managed somehow to meet in the middle to please our diverse readership and we never badly fell out.

Joe stepped down as Chairman and Editor in 2010 but remained a member of the Executive. He had, I am sure, been disappointed at the lack of recognition for his long political service, but was very proud when in 2007 he was awarded an OBE for his work for the Association.

I could write pages on our journey since 2001, but here we are nineteen years later with so much achieved and an all party membership of 450. We operate on a very limited budget with a small grant from the House of Commons Commission and members' subscriptions, but we just about break even. Nineteen years ago former MPs had to have served 15 years to have the privilege of a security pass. Now most have a right of access and can dine with three family members at off-peak times. We hold three all-member meetings a year with a guest speaker, followed by a reception, enabling members to meet up with friends and colleagues.

In short we are now an established part of the Westminster scene with numerous enquiries from individuals, the media, and of course our members. But undoubtedly a major achievement in keeping friends and colleagues in touch over the years has been the publication of *Order Order* three times a year.

SO THANK YOU JOE!

FROM THE EDITOR

Andy McSmith writes:



What most surprised me about Dominic Cummings's arrival at his recent press conference in the Rose Garden was not that he was

half an hour late, but that he apologised. That was not how I remember him from my time as a Lobby Correspondent with the *Daily Telegraph*. One day, a colleague from the Financial Times and I invited him to lunch. When he eventually turned up, approximately half an hour late, his only comment was that he did not like the table we had selected, so we had to move. He then spent the meal talking non-stop about his plans to make the world a better place. I don't remember getting a single word in. I might have taken this personally, except that I heard that a very much more senior journalist than me, also from the *Daily Telegraph*, also had a lunch date with Dominic Cummings, who was then in his 20s. The eminent journalist sat waiting his young guest for an hour, then gave up.

A source close to...

But other journalists learnt to appreciate Dominic Cummings during his brief tenure as the Conservative Party's Director of Strategy in 2002, when he talked volubly about how hopeless he thought Iain Duncan Smith was, as party leader. The Lobby was also delighted when the former education minister, Tim Loughton, who had publicly criticised Michael Gove, was described by an unnamed member of Gove's staff as a "lazy, incompetent narcissist." Dominic Cummings was Gove's special adviser at that time. No prizes for guessing whether Tim Loughton is among those Tory MPs who think Cummings should be sacked.

The wit in the whips' office

On our back page, you can read a moving tribute by Chris Patten to the former Tory whip Tristan Garel-Jones, who was one of the first Tory ministers I got to know when I was new in the Lobby, working for the *Daily Mirror*. Lord Patten writes that some people on the Tory right suspected Garel-Jones of being disloyal to Margaret Thatcher. I can only record that I, of course, tried to get him to say something disloyal. The nearest I got was being treated to a very funny description of visiting Margaret and Dennis in the flat above No 10, where they were watching the news. The Thatchers saw something that made them indignant. Tristan said they were like an irate couple who at any moment were going to burst out saying 'the government should do something about this!' It was an anecdote told affectionately, its point being that Margaret Thatcher genuinely cared – but, for some, the very idea of joking about Mrs Thatcher was an affront.

No longer with us

Sadly, in these pandemic times, an unprecedented number of members of the Association of Former MPs have died, of the virus or other complications. Normally, *Order Order* would allocate at least a half page tribute to each, but that would have filled the entire issue. So here, in brief, are others not mentioned anywhere else in these pages, who are no longer with us.

Jack Dunnett, who died on 29 October last year, aged 97, is perhaps remembered more for his impact on professional football than politics. He was Labour MP for Nottingham Central, and later Nottingham East, in 1964–1983. A successful businessman, he used his wealth, as chairman of Notts County FC, to lift the club from the Fourth Division to the First in the space of 15 years. He was President of the Football League in

the 1980s, and one of the few leading figures to protest at the blanket ban on English clubs in Europe after the riot in the Heysel stadium that left 39 dead.

Peter Jackson, who died while on a cruise in Panama on 19 February, aged 91, was MP for Sheffield, and the only Labour MP to vote against the Prices and Incomes Act of 1967. Having a strong commitment to feminism, he acted as a whip to help get three private bills through Parliament. They were the 1967 Abortion Act, introduced by David Steel, the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, which partially decriminalised male homosexuality, and the 1969 Divorce Reform Act. As an anti-apartheid campaigner, he was arrested once for handing out leaflets in Liverpool, and again in Lesotho, where he was accused of entering South Africa illegally. He joined the Green Party while Tony Blair led Labour, but rejoined Labour after the election of Jeremy Corbyn.

John Lee, who died on 13 April, aged 92, missed being elected Labour MP for Reading in 1964 by just 10 votes. He comfortably won the seat in 1966, but lost in 1970. He resurfaced as MP for Birmingham Handsworth in 1974, and stood down in 1979. A barrister, with a keen interest in justice, he introduced a bill in 1974, and again in 1975, to abolish what he called the "absurd feudal flummery" of the House of Lords by scrapping all peerages and redesignating members of the upper house as senators. It was defeated by 18 votes.

Sir Hugh Rossi, who died on 14 April, aged 92, was Conservative MP for Hornsey, later Hornsey and Wood Green, in 1966–1992. The son of an Italian journalist, Gaudenzio Rossi, who renounced his citizenship over Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, he served in the whips' office under Edward Heath, and was Minister of State for Northern Ireland, 1979–81, and for Social Security in 1981–83.

EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

We explained in the Spring issue of *Order Order* that under our constitution elections to the Executive have to take place this year. Because of the many uncertainties of the past months it was sensibly decided to put back the final date for the return of self-nomination forms. **So these are again included on pages 8 and 9, with a new return date of the 31st August.** We then hope to send out ballot papers during September with the new Executive Committee meeting in October. We were all looking forward to our planned event on the 7th July but it became increasingly obvious that this could not take place. We very much hope it might be possible to arrange something for Winter 2020.

the nice
bonzo dog band
election
edgar broughton
free
blonde on blonde
gypsy
heaven

the who
moody blues
fat mattress
family
marsha hunt
and white trash
pretty things
blodwyn pig
aynsley dunbar
king crimson
joe cocker

bob dylan
the band
richie havens
julie felix
third ear band
pentangle
tom paxton
gary farr
indo jazz fusions
liverpool scene



ROCK MUSIC DID NOT CHANGE THE WORLD BUT IT CHANGED MY WORLD

By Stephen Pound

Mirrorpix/Alamy Stock Photo

The sign just inside the nightclub door said – in Russian and in English – “Nigel Evans is not to be admitted to this club ever again”.

John Whittingdale and I were in Yerevan for a heavy metal music festival and a spot of election monitoring in the company of one of the newer fresh faced young Tories – David Morris – who had played keyboards for Rick Astley, but didn't much care to be reminded of it.

Anxious to restore the reputation of the British Parliament from whatever damage Nigel had done to our good name we entered into a deep and philosophical discussion with the cream of Armenia's headbangers as well as guesting on a rather off key version of “Highway to Hell”.

Our hosts just knew so much about British and American music and we realised that even under the period of Soviet annexation the music of the West had offered an alternative to duelling balalaikas and may have shifted the dial up to eleven in terms of hastening the collapse of the USSR.

The mulberry vodka flowed and we debated the proposal that music is essentially revolutionary without coming to any firm conclusion, although all seemed so very clear on the night.

Back in Westminster I wondered if the protest and anti-war songs of my generation had really changed anything. While Dylan, Donovan, Julie Felix, Joan Baez and even Barry McGuire may have provided the soundtrack to the protest period the question is – were they articulating the emotions of the people or actually influencing the spirit of the age? Were Buffalo Springfield reflecting the rage of student activists, or actually stimulating them?

The synthesis of rock and activism may have been most evident in the mid-seventies when Tom Robinson and many a fine musician – including my local team Misty in Roots – gave us Rock against Racism. RAR may have come about as a reaction to Eric Clapton's overt support for Enoch Powell or David Bowie's unfortunate comments about the benefits to the nation that would accrue from fascism, but it brought a lot of us political activists into the world of music and gave us the unique experience of speaking to crowds of thousands who actually seemed enthusiastic.

I was in Crag Manly and the Viriles under the stage name of Rocky Thrust. But that is not a period of my youth that I care to dwell too much...

Could there ever have been a Rock for Thatcher I wondered? My conclusion is that while there may well be some very right wing musicians there was no right wing music except in the classical sense of musical conservatism.

I remember introducing Rick Wakeman to then Labour Whip Tony McNulty. When Rick said that he was instinctively a Tory as he was in favour of low taxation, strong national defence, reduced immigration and capital punishment Tony said that he should give New Labour some time as we had only just started.

Rick is actually the same age as me and was born in Ealing North. His first band was called Atlantic Blues. After a rather unfortunate incident at the South Ruislip Royal British Legion, he formed a new combo called Bishop Rick and the Vicars.

This was the time of bands with names like I.B.Friendly and the Mates, Brian Diamond and the Cutters and Bernie Woods and the Forest Flames, with whom I once guested on stage at the Greenford Carnival.

I was in Crag Manly and the Viriles under the stage name of Rocky Thrust. But that is not a period of my youth that I care to dwell too much upon since I became a civic dignitary and past Mayor of Ealing.

Looking back I have to accept that it wasn't Janis Joplin or Grace Slick who brought the Berlin Wall down but some far more insidious musicians.

The charts at the time of the fall of the wall were utterly dominated by Kylie Minogue and Jason Donovan, Marc Almond and Gene Pitney and the only whiff of revolution came from Simple Minds.



Mirrorpix/Alamy Stock Photo

Did the East German youth long for access to the Bangles and did the Stasi pick up Madonna on the shortwave and realise that all was lost?

Did all our sixties protest and flower power actually open the door to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher? Did Jim Davidson triumph where Bob Dylan failed?

Sadly I must conclude that while making music can be revolutionary it is not of itself a revolutionary act. I know that Beethoven wrote the 3rd Symphony while intoxicated by Napoleon and I accept that Chopin inspired Polish nationalists all over the world and Khachaturian's *Spartacus* is a profoundly political work but did *Masters of War* or *Eve of Destruction* really change the world?

Which brings me to Arthur Lee – the late legendary front man of that truly revolutionary band – Love.

Back in June 2002 a group of us in Parliament heard that Arthur was about to be released from jail in California on what were almost certainly trumped (sic.) up charges relating to guns and drugs.



PA images/Alamy Stock Photo

L-R: Jane Griffiths, Martin Salter, Stephen Pound, Arthur Lee, Peter Bradley and Alan Whitehead on the terrace of the House of Commons in June 2002

We invited Arthur to meet his admirers on the terrace of the House before playing his UK gigs.

Although slightly disturbed that "Forever Changes" was Ken Livingstone's favourite album we were cheered by the news that well known rock guitarist Tony Blair would like to meet the Man. A disparate group made the arrangements.

What could unite ex GCHQ multilingual spook Jane Griffiths, fanatical coarse fisherman Martin Salter, elegant public schoolboy Peter Bradley, tattooed Ealing bruiser Stephen Pound and the very interesting Dr Alan Whitehead?

Respect for Arthur Lee and a recognition of the transformative power of rock. Tony Blair couldn't make it but Speaker Michael Martin did and this confused Arthur who was under the impression that Michael was the Prime Minister. Although a succeeding Speaker may have felt that he was senior to any PM, Michael was cut from more modest cloth and admired Arthur's bandana and cowboy hat combo.

A number of police officers approached Arthur and said how much they liked his music prompting him to say that he might stay here as "even the pigs dig me, man".

From the south Caucasus to Westminster music proved that it can unite. It may not change the world but it changed our world.

Stephen was MP for Ealing North, 1997–2019

MONDAY, MONDAY THE DAY THE SINGER DIED

IT WAS MONDAY JULY 29TH 1974 and I was working as a casualty porter at the University College Hospital when they brought in the body of Cass Elliott – Mama Cass of the Mamas and Papas. Don Maclean may have said that the music died in 1959 and many people think that the good times ended at Altamont, but for me Cass Elliott's death was the end of the optimism and joyous idealism that had started in the sixties.

The pure joy and perfect harmonies of the Mamas and the Papas made your spirits soar. For those of us in Europe it promised a land of eternal sunshine and plenty.

One of the most beautiful of their songs was Twelve Thirty (Young Girls are Coming to the Canyon) and this had been covered by Sharon Tate whose horrific murder in 1969 had halted but not ended the sweet summers of the sixties. I hope that the director of last year's hit film *Bad Times* at the El Royale knew what they were up to when they used this track at a key point of the movie.

Cass Elliott had died in the Mayfair flat of the writer of *Everybody's Talking* (from the film *Midnight Cowboy*) – Harry Nilsson. Four years later Keith Moon, of The Who, died in the same place. It took a few of us to bring Mama Cass in from the ambulance bay, and the red top reptiles were already gathering by the time we closed the mortuary doors.

One artist seldom signifies a musical generation and one singer doesn't make a summer but there was something very special about Mama Cass Elliott. I felt that more than just a person had died on that day.

I'm writing this on June 4th. Today is Michelle Phillips' – the other Mama of the Mamas and the Papas – birthday. The quartet had pretty much split up at the time of Cass Elliott's passing – she had been in London for a sell-out solo show at the Palladium – but who knows if they might have got back together. Who knows if we could have heard those soaring harmonies again. Who knows if the days of innocence, exuberance and optimism could have returned.

Every time I hear Monday, Monday on the radio I remember that 1974 Monday in A&E.

I remember it with sadness and a deep regret.



Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo



FRATERNISING WITH THE OTHER SIDE

John Cockcroft remembers friends on the Labour benches.

In an age of abrasive politics, it is relevant to recall more tranquil relationships between MPs of different parties.

It's not surprising that the Conservative Whips warned me that I might be in danger of getting too friendly with too many Labour MPs. Bob Bean, Labour MP for Chatham, once said that he couldn't understand anyone as kind and intelligent as John Cockcroft could be a Conservative MP.

I seemed to have most of my conversations with Labour MPs on trains. I used to talk a lot on the train to Gwyneth Dunwoody, Labour MP for Crewe, and even carried her very heavy bags from the station to the Crewe Arms, where she used to go and have coffee to recover from the rigours of Westminster. She was very witty and outspoken, to such an extent that in 2001, the Labour Whips tried to stop her chairing the Transport Select Committee.

I was on my way North when Shirley Williams, then a Cabinet Minister, happened to be on the same train in the Buffet Car. She beckoned me over and she introduced me to her special advisor, saying: "John Cockcroft here is one of the more intelligent members of the Conservative Party."

Ian Mikado, left wing Labour MP for Tower Hamlets and his friend, Jo Richardson, MP for Barking and former Head Girl at Southend Grammar School, were convivial conversationalists. Jo and I travelled widely as members of Sub-Committee A on the Nationalised Industries Committee, looking at how European countries organised their railways. Ian told me how, during the Labour Party's annual conference in May 1940, Clement Attlee summoned Labour MPs through the night, in batches of ten, to tell them that at 9.00 o'clock the following morning he was going to send a telegram to the King, saying that the Labour Party would serve only under Churchill as Prime Minister – not Viscount Halifax, nor Neville Chamberlain. He asked his MPs to forget the Dardanelles, the General Strike, the India Act and all that, because in a desperate situation Britain needed a great war leader.

A Conservative MP once said to me, "Congratulations, John, on having as your pair, the most good-looking member of the House of Commons." He meant the very glamorous Helene Hayman, née Middleweek, future Speaker of the House of Lords. Having won Welwyn and Hatfield, unexpectedly, in October 1974, she made a point of standing up for the few women MPs. She brought her baby to the Commons and insisted on having a crèche. I said, modestly, "You're too kind; she's only my deputy and occasional pair."

I had many dealings with Michael Cox, Labour Government Chief Whip, over my Company Secretaries Bill, which envisaged compelling company secretaries to have some sort of qualification.

I had a call, saying, "It's Jim Callahan here. Would you come up, please, with the file on Railway Museums?"

He thought it was a good idea, the Conservatives did not; Margaret Thatcher thought it interfered with public liberty. In the end it was talked out by my friend Ian Mikado, who said it would be better if it were put into a larger Bill, which the Conservatives did after 1979, in their Financial Services Bill.

Russell Kerr, Labour MP for Feltham, and I had lunch together occasionally. He had a tendency to nod off after lunch when he was supposed to be chairing the Nationalised Industries Committee. The committee Clerk, Charles Winnefrith, would prod him vigorously to get him through the afternoon.

Covering the Bildeberg Conference in New England for the *Daily Telegraph*, I sat next to Dennis Healey, Chancellor of the Exchequer, at a meal or two. He talked a great deal and laughed a great deal, mainly at his own jokes, but never mentioned his outstanding military career as Beach Master for the Sicily landings.

I had known James Callaghan in the mid-60s, when I was at the Treasury and he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Shortly after I had been handed a huge file concerning moving the Railway Museum from South London to Chester and York on a hot Friday evening, I had a call, saying, "It's Jim Callahan here. Would you come up, please, with the file on Railway Museums?" which I duly did.

"You've only been here two weeks and it's a very complicated issue because of all the components of the museums," he said. "However, I know all about it. I'm not concerned about the PQ next Tuesday; I can deal with that without any sort of briefing. Would you please go and have a good weekend and try and avoid the searing heat?"

So I retreated around that endless roundabout outside the Treasury internal offices to my own office, much relieved.

He was a kind man and, when he was Prime Minister, over a decade later, he beckoned to me to see him behind the Speaker's Chair, which is the usual place for informal chats. I imagine the Labour MPs had pointed out who I was. He said, "John, I do want you to know that your brother-in-law, Tim Lancaster, is doing an excellent job for me as a Private Secretary in my Private Office and I'm sure that you and your family will be glad to hear that and I wish you well as Conservative MP for Nantwich."

John was MP for Nantwich, 1974–1979



SPECIAL ADVISERS ARE LIKE POISONERS... ONLY THE FAILURES ARE FAMOUS

By Jerry Hayes



Jeff Gilbert/Alamy Stock Photo

There is nothing new for seemingly omnipotent and omnipresent advisors to indispense themselves to a Prime Minister.

It is an ancient tradition. Often their infallible genius converts omnipotence into omnishambles. And some are exposed as just reckless chancers and are exiled to California that dumping ground of wacky ideas and inflated egos. How is Steve Hilton?

The grand daddy of them all was Sir Horace Wilson of whom Lord Woolton remarked, 'found himself enjoying tremendous power, in fact, a power unequalled by any member of the cabinet except the Prime Minister'.

Jock Colville, later to become Churchill's private secretary, was less generous, 'he became to believe himself as infallible as the Prime Minister thought him to be'.

Wilson was Neville Chamberlain's fixer, policy muse, minder, confidante, lightning rod and crutch. Which means that he was despised and feared in equal measure. He accompanied Chamberlain to Munich to negotiate with Hitler, prompting Harold Nicholson to remark that they had, 'the bright faithfulness of two curates entering a pub for the first time'.

It didn't go well.

Churchill booted him out on his first day in office.

Nowadays, most SPADS work behind the scenes. They tend to be attached to their minister as advisors and friends. They follow their ministers from department to department and eventually into the graveyard of political road kill. They have to be approved by the Prime Minister and serve at his will. They are regulated, but not as much as civil servants. Their role is to convert party graffiti and fag packet promises into policy. There were ten SPADS in 1979, twenty five in 1987 and now there are one hundred and nine. At Number 10 you can't swing a truncheon without hitting one.

The ones that I have met over the years from all parties have been super intelligent, personable and on top of their game. Many end up in Parliament, some in the Cabinet or like David Cameron, Prime Minister. Apart from those whom envious politicians feel unsettled by and zealous journalists see as fair game, most are unknown to the wider public. And that is how it should be.

The sadly missed Frank Dobson, like many of his generation, despised the spin doctors who had taken control of his party, 'they are like poisoners. There are famous poisoners and there are successful poisoners. But there are no famous, successful poisoners'.

Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell might disagree.

Tony Blair had observed with horror what happens when the Downing Street operation fails to function effectively by

watching the decline of the Major government as it expired with a sigh. He decided to centralise power and beef up the operation. It didn't always go to plan.

Harold Wilson, that master tactician and ring master of party management developed his own kitchen cabinet with people whom he could trust. Marcia Williams the gate keeper and Joe Haines who ran the media operation, were feared and despised by the usual suspects, the cabinet and the press. I remember a meeting with Margaret Thatcher in the Prime Minister's office behind the Speaker's Chair. She pointed an accusatory finger at an alcove in a corner and whispered almost in awe, 'and that is where Marcia used to sit'.

As a rule of thumb those advisors who are very close to Prime Ministers are resented by those who are elected and slithered up the greasy pole. I can think of three exceptions, Charles Powell and Stephen Sherbourne under Thatcher, and Angie Hunter under Blair. The reason is simple. They were all approachable and were devoid of arrogance and entitlement. Thatcher's judgement began to slide after the departure of Sherbourne.

But Thatcher did have some weird people orbiting Downing Street. The Bowler hatted Christopher Monckton who was never shy in offering a view which would unsettle any lively box of frogs and there was that nasty, straw hatted old man, Alfred Sherman, whose only purpose I could discern was to frighten the crows. Well, he certainly frightened me.

Yet the only advisor of this generation that people remember was Sir Alan Walters and his role in the resignation of Nigel Lawson.

But let us not forget the sterling work of Charlie Whelan, Gordon Brown's press officer who would issue attack briefs with a smile and a pint to thirsty hacks in the Red Lion. As they were mostly aimed at Blairite ministers he had to go. As did Brown's delightfully demonic fixer Damian MacBride. I like them both.

A mention in despatches too for Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy. They kept Mrs May on the rails, mostly the live one, but nearly trashed the 2017 General Election. Comedy gold.

Churchill summed up politics rather well, 'it is the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month and next year. And have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen'.

That is the role of the special advisor. It is best from the shadows. Accountability means that their political masters take the credit or carry the can. By all means let them be obscene. But not heard.

Jerry was MP for Harlow, 1983–1997



SELF-NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MPs

NAME:

.....

50 WORDS MAXIMUM ELECTION STATEMENT:

.....

PARTY:

.....

.....

DETAILS OF SERVICE AS AN MP:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ADDRESS:

.....

Signed:

.....

.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

.....

E-MAIL:

.....

Please return by 31st August to:
Sally Grocott
Association of Former MPs, House of Commons,
Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, LONDON SW1A 2NE
or by email to: grocotts@parliament.uk





SELF-NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION AS **CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MPs

NAME:

.....

50 WORDS MAXIMUM ELECTION STATEMENT:

.....

PARTY:

.....

.....

DETAILS OF SERVICE AS AN MP:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ADDRESS:

.....

Signed:

.....

.....

.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

.....

E-MAIL:

.....

Please return by 31st August to:
Sally Grocott
Association of Former MPs, House of Commons,
Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, LONDON SW1A 2NE
or by email to: grocotts@parliament.uk



A GOOD READ



THREE AGES IN THE LIFE OF THE TORY RIGHT

Tim Janman

*Britain's Conservative Right since 1945,
Traditional Toryism in a Cold Climate*

by Kevin Hickson

Published by Palgrave Macmillan

THIS IS THE 15TH BOOK BY ACADEMIC KEVIN HICKSON, a senior lecturer in British Politics at Liverpool University.

The thoroughness of his research reflects this pedigree. Hickson is not a Tory by labelling, but he does, I think, have a fascination for the Tory Right, particularly for what he describes as the socially conservative Right. Not so much, the free market Right. This divide he identifies is less the case now than it was, but still persists – think of Nick Timothy vs Daniel Hannan, or Sir John Hayes MP vs Liz Truss MP. Most on the right have a foot in both camps and, as the author admits, there is often a tension, even a contradiction between these two competing aspects of right wing thought.

One of the most illuminating aspects of this book, certainly for the more casual acquaintance of British politics, is that just like the Labour Left, the Tory Right is not homogenous. Differences of view, which can take the form of principle or tactics, are common.

The book looks at the main policy concerns of the Conservative Right since WW2 and how they have evolved. In the forties, fifties and sixties, the British Empire was a cornerstone of the Tory Right, but by the early sixties, whilst some such as Julian Amery still yearned for the Empire, others such as Enoch Powell and later Dr Rhodes Boyson, who took a different view, gradually gained ascendancy. Differences in their view of the Empire led to other differences, on immigration control and UK becoming involved in European integration.

Via its eight chapters the author details what he sees as the key themes of what is important to Tory right wingers. These are: Empire, Immigration, Europe, Constitution, The Union, The Economy, Welfare and Society. Across these chapters Hickson identifies and quotes leading figures from the Right, not only politicians, but thinkers, economists and writers too. Often this is in the context of the national debate, or within the context of an internal Tory Party struggle between its right wing and its centrists and sometimes, it is to do with splits within the Right itself e.g., those who supported Mrs Thatcher rolling back the state and increasing individual freedom vs those who remained wedded to a more hierarchical model of society, almost born out of English feudalism and who sought greater social protection and economic protectionism.

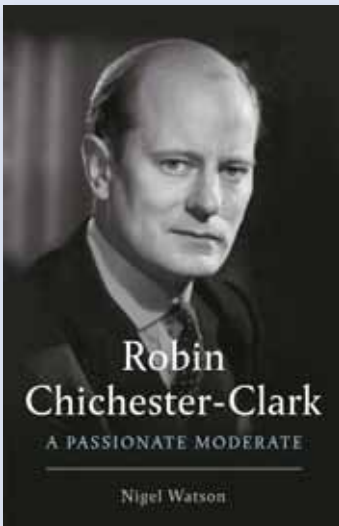
Hickson divides the 75 years he covers into three periods: 1945–1979, 1979–1990 and 1990 onwards (although personally I would end the third period in 2015 and have

a fourth from 2016, due to Brexit). In the first period “the Right are best understood as diehards”. This period saw the loss of the British Empire and Britain’s decline as a world power, which caused an identity crisis for the Right. The Suez withdrawal, the expansion of the central state into health, welfare and the economy, and social liberalisation were all significant to the country and opposed by the Tory Right. It stopped none of them.

The second period 1979–1990 is far more successful from the Right’s perspective, as a focused, determined and principled leader brought public spending under some sort of control, reduced tax, shrank the size of the public sector to about 35% of GDP and tamed the lunacy of often Marxist controlled trade unions. Most importantly the governments of Margaret Thatcher created a new economic consensus that New Labour dared not go against, their only more typical forays being introducing a Minimum Wage and the latter two Labour governments, chronic overspending. Her defence of the Falklands won over many of her right wing critics, or at least placated them.

Surely this reversal of socialism was music to the ears of the Tory Right. Well for most (the author substantially underplays this in my view) it was, but there were some on the Tory Right who saw Mrs Thatcher as an economic liberal over-influenced by Hayek. For others it was about the pace of change. John Biffen objected to those who wanted permanent revolution from the right, as he described full on Thatcherites as “Tory Maoists”. For others, it was not just Mrs Thatcher’s fixation with free markets that jarred (these people like Angus Maude and Julian Amery preferred a more interventionist approach to protect the old order). A big gripe was that she did very little to repeal socially liberal legislation from the 60s and 70s. This was very disappointing indeed. Of course a charitable explanation was that she had enough on her plate and much of this liberal legislation had been brought about by private members bills, albeit with tacit government support to ensure they could not be blocked – an exception being the destruction of most Grammar schools.

The final period is again difficult for the Tory Right, as it had to face the horrors of John Major on Europe, the constitutional vandalism of New Labour (especially on House of Lords reform and devolution) and the ‘modernisation’ agenda of David Cameron. However looking forward, whilst socially liberal, the new Government is delivering a full Brexit (hopefully) and is committed to free enterprise and free trade. As Meat Loaf would say “two outta three ain’t bad”.



THE MAN FROM MOYOLA

David Howell

*Robin Chichester-Clark,
A Passionate Moderate*

by Nigel Watson

Published by Profile Books

THESE ARE BAD TIMES FOR MODERATION AND MODERATE KINDS OF VIEW. The digital revolution, placing in mass hands the power of opinion projection on

a scale hitherto unimaginable, has driven balance and the wise and reasoned middle ground out of public debate and turned politics into a contest of extremes.

But there is one corner part of the United Kingdom where people can rightly shrug their shoulders and ask what's new – it was ever thus. That part is the six counties of Northern Ireland and it is there that the subject of this well-crafted memoir, Robin Chichester-Clark, was born on the banks of the river Moyola in County Londonderry, – destined to grow into a man of wise and tolerant views in the heart of a land of extremes.

If life was just labels it would be easy to typify Robin as a product of what this book calls 'establishment Unionism' – the upper-class-dominated style of Ulster rule which recognised the deep dangers of a divided society, sought to ameliorate discrimination against the Catholic minority in a variety of practical ways, but somehow was never quite ready to address, in a truly decisive manner, the basic and fundamental causes of the division, or the sense of injustice, leading directly to violence, which it generated.

Terence O'Neill, the Northern Ireland PM and Robin's close associate, was a classic example of this genre, pushing for reforms but always being left behind by the rising mixture of anger and hatred, and of course just beneath that the unavoidable fact and reality of partition, providing unending fuel for nationalism in its most virulent form, challenging the very existence of Northern Ireland.

...destined to grow into a man of wise and tolerant views in the heart of a land of extremes

But Robin, though concerned and involved – not least by having a brother as Northern Ireland PM in succession to O'Neill – had broader horizons, and, perhaps sensing the hopelessness of the ever more polarised Northern Ireland dilemma, turned to Westminster level politics to make his contribution.

There he found like-minded moderates still shaping the Conservative party, but with one vital difference – that most of them, from the top downwards, were both disinterested and ignorant, in equal measure, when it came to Northern Ireland and Irish affairs.

The twelve Ulster Unionist MPs at Westminster, several of them extraordinarily eloquent, were not really being listened to and were just seen as useful additional votes for the Tories. This must have been Robin's struggle, but his natural talents caught the eye of the Conservative leadership and he was soon on the front bench, and after in 1970 Ted Heath came to power, in an important middle-rank Ministerial position – although not immediately, due to complex and rising sensitivities and the onset of direct rule.

Although we served in the same government our paths crossed little, mainly I suspect because while his role was at Westminster mine was by then in Belfast with Whitelaw and his Ministerial team, following the fall of Stormont. Perhaps his calm advice might have helped us find our way through the labyrinths of fear, hatred and blood which confronted us at the height of the violence.

But it was not to be. After 1974, just as Ted Heath was swept away and a new kind of Toryism began to form inside the Party at Westminster, so the bellowing intolerance of the Paisleyites in Ulster swept way Robin's kind of moderation and the Unionist party with it.

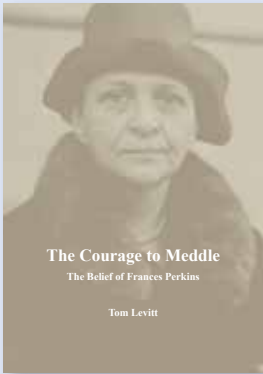
The memoir reveals that while politics shut out Robin Chichester-Clark he had other avenues to follow. As the late Denis Healey used to say, in politics it is essential to have a hinterland. Robin Chichester-Clark had a hinterland of music and family and love of his Irish roots.

Perhaps that is what defines a true moderate in politics – someone who is never consumed by obsessive political activism and blind conviction, but whilst serving to the best of his or her abilities always has other values, other missions, and other stars to follow.

Lord Howell was – among other posts he held – a minister for Northern Ireland in 1972, when Robin Chichester-Clark was MP for Londonderry.



Homer Snykes/Alamy Stock Photo



THE HALF VISIBLE MOVER BEHIND THE NEW DEAL

Linda Gilroy

The Courage to Meddle, The Belief of Frances Perkins

by Tom Levitt

Published by KPD

TWO YEARS AGO, TOM TOLD ME ABOUT FRANCES PERKINS, the first woman to serve in the U.S. Cabinet from 1933–1945.

She was “the most influential woman in democratic politics anywhere in the first half of the twentieth century”. He is not someone to indulge in hyperbole, so I was intrigued. Her Wikipedia entry certainly suggested she was interesting, but it spoke of her “cool personality that held her aloof from the crowd” ... “her Boston upbringing held her back from mingling freely and exhibiting personal affection. She was well-suited for the high-level efforts to effect sweeping reforms, but never caught the public’s eye or its affection”. Could such a character be the most important woman in early twentieth century politics?

The book Tom went on to write about her was launched during the week we all went into lockdown. Does it stand up to his accolade? With forensic sensitivity he traces how Perkins’ family, education, evolving faith, and early work prepared her for the role she was to take on as Secretary for Labor under President. F.D Roosevelt. From her grandmother’s advice onwards (“when in doubt do what is right”) he describes her extraordinary ability to stick to her principles and values whilst working with politicians of all persuasions and people in business; some of whom did right by their workers and consumers, some of whom

did not. The death of 146 workers in the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire made an indelible mark on her. Thereafter she left no stone unturned in developing safe workplace regulations and a culture in which they could thrive. She was at her peak in the roaring twenties and forging the New Deal in response to the 1929 Crash and the Great Depression

The ‘Courage to Meddle’ was Frances’ own phrase. Tom describes how strong pragmatism alongside her beliefs ensured she achieved change amidst some of the most challenging social, personal, and economic times imaginable. His own work in promoting and evaluating responsible and sustainable business informs the final pages of the book. How far did Perkins achieve her goals? Have her achievements stood the test of time? What is the legacy of the New Deal? The significant progress she secured for people’s safety and conditions at work occurred in circumstances quite different from, yet paradoxically similar to, those of today. Arguably without her the New Deal could have failed to make its mark on history in the way it did. Yes, Tom’s description of Frances does stand up. It is hard to see how she could have deployed her energies to greater effect. Anyone looking at what faces us in the coming decades may find inspiration in this book – and perhaps ‘The Courage to Meddle’.

This volume is available through Amazon, as a Kindle or paperback.



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin

THE CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES has brought our educational programme to a halt and, with the cancellation of this year’s European Study Programme by Louisiana State University, our annual seminar has also fallen victim to Covid-19. As universities and schools have been relying more on on-line teaching we are in discussion with some universities about the possibility of our members participating in virtual seminars, via the internet. Even after the pandemic has passed, it is possible that educational institutions will rely more on online learning and the Trust will be

looking at ways in which we might be involved.

Another feature of this crisis has been the increase in use of technology for virtual meetings. The Trust is no exception. The Trustees are holding their first virtual meeting using Zoom this month.

After consultation with the Association, the Trustees have decided to extend membership of the Trust to former UK Members of the European Parliament and former Members of the UK devolved Parliaments/Assembly. This will require an amendment to our constitution, which

was to be considered at our AGM in July, originally planned to coincide with the summer meeting of the Association. Neither meeting will now take place.

The Trustees are considering the possibility of conducting the formal business of our AGM electronically including an email ballot of members on the constitutional changes and the annual election of Trustees and Committee Members. Following the virtual Trustees’ Meeting in June, decisions and recommendations will be circulated to all Trust Members.

Currently we have email addresses for all members of the Association who have expressed interest in our work. Membership of the Trust is open to all Members of the Association of Former MPs. If you are an Association Member and wish to participate in the work of the Trust but are not currently on our list please let us know at admin@parlyoutreach.org.uk Members can keep track of the Trust’s activities on our website at www.parlyoutreach.org.uk

TRIBUTES

JOE ASHTON

9 October 1933–30 March 2020

Labour MP for Bassetlaw, 1968–2001

Remembered by Denis MacShane



LABOUR MPS WHO WERE in the Commons prior to the 1997 Blair landslide will never forget an intervention Joe Ashton made to the Parliamentary Labour Party soon before the election.

“We’re going to win and then you’ll find out that winning is never much fun for Labour. Bit by bit, you’ll learn that the decisions a

Labour government has to take are hated by all Labour people. Firstly, you’ll go to your constituency meetings and the party officers will turn their backs on you. Then local councillors won’t talk to you. Your old friends will stop sharing a pint. Even at home your wife and kids will still turn away. In the end the only friends you’ll still have will be here in the Commons so get to know each other and learn to stick together as it’s going to be awful.”

That was Joe. In fact, his predictions that the horrors of the 1974–1979 Labour government – when he stood down as Tony Benn’s PPS because he stopped believing in Bennism – would be repeated after 1997 were wrong. That kind of dislike only got going in the last year or so under Gordon Brown.

But it was a joy to have a pint with Joe in Strangers’ and get an endless flow of caustic wit about the failings of the big Labour

beasts he worked with after his entry into the Commons in 1968.

He was a Sheffield metalworker through and through, the closest real-life Labour MP to the famous Sheffield man of iron, Harry Perkins, the hero of Chris Mullin’s *A Very British Coup*.

Like so many time served qualified Sheffield engineering industry craftsmen, Ashton was as clever, erudite, and smart with words as any of the PPE Oxford boys who get all the top jobs in Labour. He was a coruscating newspaper columnist for the *Guardian*, the *Daily Mirror*, *Labour Weekly*, or the *Sheffield Star* punching out fast no-nonsense words that grabbed the reader quickly.

Like so many of his generation of Labour MPs who went into opposition in 1979, and then thanks to the sharp turn to the unelectable left of Labour, he spent his best years in opposition waiting until retirement age before Labour again held power.

In between reminding the Bennite graduates who turned Labour hard left after 1980 that they would never win power Ashton went back to his early days to become a shop steward for MPs defending them against campaigns for deselection which did such damage to Labour after 1980s. He founded the Association for Former Members of Parliament in 2001 and was one of its mainstays.

He stood down in 2001 as MP for Bassetlaw which he won in a 1968 by-election and suffered from dementia in the period before his death.

BILL OLNER

9 May 1942–18 May 2020

Labour MP for Nuneaton, 1992–2010

Remembered by Mike O’Brien



BILL OLNER LOVED NUNEATON and his greatest joy was to have served as its Mayor and then to represent his home town in Parliament for 18 years. Today, Nuneaton has lost its great champion.

He was a decent, honest man, very much the local politician, and a great friend to me. His only ambition was

to do right by local people. After his beloved wife Jill, Nuneaton always came first. Parliamentary colleagues will remember Bill as a warm hearted man who made friends easily, especially over a few pints in Strangers or Annie’s Bar.

Bill was steeped in Labour politics. Whilst training as an aerospace engineer at Rolls-Royce, he got involved with his trade union and became a Rolls Royce shop steward. He then joined Nuneaton Labour Party and became a local councillor for 21 years. From 1982 to 1987 he was the Nuneaton council leader, battling cuts by the Thatcher government. He later became Mayor and used his Mayoral year to help raise funds to open the

Mary Ann Evans Hospice in Nuneaton. Setting up the Hospice was something Bill was rightly proud of.

Bill was constantly questioning ministers during the John Major and the Labour governments. Most of his questions had a Nuneaton focus, but after a constituency case raised the issue of children being abducted and taken out of the country, he began a long campaign to get legal improvements to deal with child abduction and he set up a Parliamentary group to campaign on the issue. His interest in engineering also saw him become chair of the All Party Parliamentary Engineering Group, where he campaigned to improve training and apprenticeships.

In 2007, Bill announced he would retire in 2010; but he was a politician to his very fingertips. Within three years he was elected to Warwickshire County Council for Arbury & Stockingford ward and after May 2017 for Abbey Ward. He remained an active presence in local party politics and on the County Council until shortly before his untimely death.

Nuneaton has lost a local champion and he will be sadly missed by his many friends. He will be remembered as a local MP who cared deeply about the town and its people.

Bill is survived by his wife Jill. They have no children.

RICHARD TRACEY

8 February 1943 – 19 March 2020

Conservative MP for Surbiton, 1983–1997

Remembered by Nicholas Bennett

VIBRANT, WITH A ZEST FOR LIFE, looking and acting like a man ten years less than his real age, Richard Tracey's sudden death was a shock not only for his family but for all his friends.

It would be difficult to find a member of any political party who had a bad word to say about Dick.

Although a committed Conservative all his life he eschewed partisanship and was liked and respected across the political spectrum for his common sense and calm approach to issues. Amiable, with a positive approach to life, he had a sunny disposition and was excellent company.

Although Dick was never a councillor, he was one of the architects of the campaign which saw Wandsworth Council fall to the Conservatives in 1978 and subsequently he chaired the Putney Conservative Association. As a councillor in another south London borough this is when we first met and enjoyed a forty year friendship.

Dick was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon in 1943 and attended the King Edward VI grammar school before graduating with a law degree from Birmingham University. A career in journalism beckoned and after a stint as a leader writer on the *Daily Express* he joined the BBC and, for 12 years, he was a presenter on a variety of programmes from *Today* to *The Money Programme*. It was at this time that Dick met his future wife Kathy Gardner. Kathy recalls "We met when he was working for the BBC on a documentary programme called *Wheelbase*, Britain's first television magazine programme dedicated to motor racing, the predecessor of *Top Gear*. I was working for a telecommunications company that had introduced a car radio/telephone and he interviewed me about it. There was a national rail strike on and typically we retired to a nearby pub while we waited for taxis to take us home". This was to be the start of a long and very happy marriage. Kathy enjoyed a successful 29 year political career in her own right, serving as a cabinet member on Wandsworth Council.

Dick was a strong family man. His four children, Simon, Nicola, Emma and Polly say they can never remember him raising his voice to them. "Dick", says Kathy "was a great dad he loved it as he never knew his own father. He loved watching them perform, never missed a school play. He went to every sports event possible that the kids were in, mini rugby, rugby, netball, football, rowing, hockey, skiing, school sports days and finally many horse events gymkhanas, cross country, dressage, show jumping etc. The children say he never missed an event. He was very proud of them and his eight grandchildren".

"He had to leave me in hospital after the birth of our first child to fight Northampton North in the October 1974 General Election". He lost to Labour's Maureen Colquhoun by 1500 votes. He showed the same sense of timing when his youngest daughter was born just six weeks after he was selected to replace the retiring MP Sir Nigel Fisher as candidate for Surbiton. He

It would be difficult to find a member of any political party who had a bad word to say about Dick

was elected with a majority of 8700 over the SDP/Lib Alliance in 1983. In the same election Nigel's son was elected as a Labour MP.

He held the constituency in the following two elections with majorities of just short of 10,000. Within a short time, he was appointed PPS to Geoffrey Pattie, Minister of State for Trade and Industry. After just two years, he was appointed a minister at the Department of the Environment. As Sports Minister he was a high profile PUS. He advocated football membership cards to fight the scourge of hooliganism on the terraces, and he saved Fulham's Craven Cottage ground from redevelopment and gained it listed status.

Supported by the Sports Council and the BMA, Dick worked on a voluntary agreement with the tobacco industry on sports sponsorship. He viewed Marlboro's Formula One sponsorship as a backdoor evasion of the 1965 ban on cigarette advertising on television and harmful to children watching the races. Unfortunately a change of Secretary of State in 1986 saw the chain smoking Nicholas Ridley take charge of the Department. Dick's efforts were blocked and it took until 2003 for tobacco sponsorship to be banned. After the 1987 election Dick returned to the backbenches, where he served on the Public Accounts Committee and was chairman of the Party's Greater London MPs.

In 1997 the Boundary Commission merged the southern part of the neighbouring Kingston constituency with Surbiton to form Kingston and Surbiton. Dick and Kingston's MP, the former Chancellor Norman Lamont both applied for the new seat. Dick was selected, but lost to the Lib Dem Ed Davey by just 56 votes – the second smallest majority in the election.

Never one to rest on his laurels Dick re-entered public office as Greater London Assembly Member for Merton and Wandsworth in 2008 and served for eight years in tandem with Boris Johnson's mayoralty at City Hall. He served as Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group and persuaded Boris to extend the fast riverboat services to Putney.

Whilst still on the GLA he joined the Executive of the Association of Former MPs and was a valued colleague. After retiring from the GLA he remained politically active, pounding the local streets canvassing and delivering leaflets. Kathy remarked "It was a great consolation for us that he was enjoying life right up to the end".

Dick and I would regularly go for a drink after the Executive. My fondest memory from last summer was the two of us on the bench outside the Red Lion sipping pints and greeting old parliamentary chums in the afternoon sunshine. As I said to him at the time "they won't be thinking 'there are two distinguished former ministers of the Crown discussing the state of the nation' rather there are 'two old codgers gossiping over a pint'".

PETER VIGGERS

13 March 1938–19 March 2020

Conservative MP for Gosport, February 1974–2010

Remembered by Lord Lexden

SOME PEOPLE ARE REMEMBERED for just one thing after their death to the exclusion of everything else they achieved. Peter Viggers, an MP for thirty-six years, whose obituary was published in *The Times* on April 14, will always be associated with the parliamentary expenses scandal of 2009. Three

years earlier he had made a claim for the cost of a duck house at his second home. Though he received no payment for this claim, which was entirely within the rules, it became a symbol for the scandal.

The man caught up in this incident was a hugely successful businessman with extensive City interests and a hard-working constituency MP whose achievements at Westminster included legislation that granted pensions to a number of pre-1950 war widows who had been unfairly denied them.

Peter Viggers excelled as trade and industry minister in Northern Ireland in the late Eighties, a time of unrelenting political turmoil. He averted a potentially crippling electricity strike with a well-timed broadcast, forced the banks to discard outdated practices and stopped paying grants to the tourist industry until it came up with an effective marketing strategy. In the teeth of local opposition, he privatised the Harland & Wolff shipyard and Short Brothers' aerospace factories.

"Peter, I hope you understand", Margaret Thatcher said when, amazingly, she sacked him in July 1989 after this record of success, an incident recounted in his delightfully wry memoir, *Vigorous Times* (2014) in which he also gave his side of the notorious duck house story. Just before returning to London from Washington to face the music in 2009, he thought he was about to have his third heart attack as he sat on a park bench. "A large black man, unshaven but neatly dressed, approached me. 'Brother, are you saved?' he said." In reply, the exquisitely polite Viggers just whispered, "Please leave me."

THE RT HON LORD (TED) GRAHAM OF EDMONTON

26 March 1925–21 March 2020

Labour MP for Edmonton, February 1974–198

Remembered by Lord Bryan Davies

THE OLDEST OF FIVE CHILDREN, Ted was brought up in an unemployed railway worker's home on the Scotswood Road, Newcastle. He always looked on education as the route to self improvement but despite passing the 11+ he missed out on grammar school due to the family's poverty.

He made up for this later in 1976 by being the only MP to graduate from the Open University.

Ted had a narrow escape while on war service with the Royal Marines. On exercise in preparation for D Day his unit was hit by friendly fire from an American source and Ted was wounded in the stomach. He was only saved by the prompt action of an American surgeon.

He had progressed along another career path. His first job was on a grocery delivery bike for the local Co-op, and when he entered Parliament he was Secretary of the Cooperative Party nationally, working from the Co-op's major office in North Enfield. He was elected to Enfield Edmonton in February 1974. In 1976 Ted was appointed by Jim Callaghan to the Whips Office during the three years of Labour's defence of a majority of three in a period of high inflation and industrial unrest. Labour lost the vote of confidence by one vote, despite the most strenuous efforts of the Whips Office, and Mrs Thatcher won the subsequent general election.

In Opposition, Ted continued as a Whip, but lost his seat in the 1983 election. Michael Foot rescued him, and several other former Whips, by appointing him to the House of Lords. They worked hard to secure regular minor defeats of the Tories but Mrs Thatcher's government moved resolutely on with its right wing agenda and majority in the Commons. Ted continued high level activity for the Cooperative Party, and was President of Congress in the late eighties. In 1990 he became Chief Whip in the Lords where the Conservative Government came under increased pressure with Ted marshalling his increased numbers to engineer defeats. Nevertheless, their Commons majority ensured the progress of their legislation until Labour won the 1997 election.

Ted, to his almost irreconcilable disappointment, was not re-appointed Chief Whip in 1997 under the newly elected Labour Government. Perhaps the greatest reverse of his career did not however prevent him from being highly active and he was elected Chairman of the Party in the Lords. He was made a Privy Councillor in 1998.

Ted's private life was beset by tragedy in the next decade. His wife Margaret died of the dreadful hereditary disease of myotonic dystrophy and the deaths of his two sons Martin and Ian followed in a relatively short period of time. Ted showed strength and conviction in his politics and unfailing loyalty to his causes. Even with his powers failing in his nineties, he still wrote regularly to colleagues with his views on contemporary issues.

A tough life, one in which Ted overcame so many reverses, yet recorded real achievements. A life lived by an immensely resourceful and energetic man totally committed to the values of the Labour movement.



Sierra de Gredos

TRISTAN GAREL-JONES

28 February 1941–23 March 2020
Conservative MP for Watson, 1979–1997
Remembered by Chris Patten

MY BEST FRIEND, TRISTAN GAREL-JONES, died as he would have wanted after smoking a last cigarette in the garden of his house in Spain looking up at the Sierra de Gredos. Within a day, his body was ashes waiting to be scattered across the olive groves around his house. No religious pomp, no ceremony.

We both loved the public poetry of C.P.Cavafy and one of our favourite poems was the one about the Macedonian King Demetrios who, after his abdication –

*“...didn't behave
so they said
at all like a king
He took off his golden robes
threw away his purple buskins
and quickly dressing himself
in simple clothes, he slipped out
just like an actor who
the play over
changes his costume and goes away.”*

Tristan was a complicated actor, the product of two cultures – or maybe three, Spanish, English and Welsh. We became friends when we were both parliamentary candidates and entered the Commons together in 1979. We had homes in Westminster and our families grew up together. Tristan's Spanish wife, Catali, became a particularly close friend and is god-mother to our youngest daughter.

She has come on a walking holiday with my wife, Lavender, and me most years for more than a decade. Tristan never came. For him, walking – or in later years being wheeled – through an airport terminal was the closest he came to exercise.

Catali and I shared the same Catholic faith, but Tristan remained a well-informed atheist and humanist to the end. He built a little chapel for Catali in their Spanish garden, with these words inscribed over the entrance “This chapel was built by Tristan, an unbeliever, for Catali, a believer, in whom Tristan believes.”

Tristan and I shared the same views on most issues, moderate, pro-European, socially liberal conservatives. We were both huge admirers and friends of John Major. But Tristan was much more interested in party management than me. He was never happier than in his days as a whip and never deserved the reputation for being disloyal to Margaret Thatcher with which he was saddled by the stupid right of the party. Unlike them, and me, he found it virtually impossible to carry occasional criticism into acts of open disloyalty. I doubt whether he voted against a Conservative whip more than two or three times in his life. He rightly identified the gap between right-wing expressions of loyalty and their performance whenever things got politically hot. His offer to help Margaret Thatcher's leadership election campaign in 1990 was foolishly turned down by those running it so incompetently.

While we gossiped about politics a couple of times a week, I never

shared Tristan's love of the institution and ambience of parliament. He was happiest at Westminster – Lords or Commons – than anywhere else except his house in Spain. He enjoyed the canteen food and the chat, spending hours in bars and smoking rooms despite the fact that he was a life-long teetotaler; he more than made up for never consuming alcohol by his consumption of tobacco pretending that he did not know it was killing him.

Tristan was an excellent business manager and then Foreign Office minister. He almost single-handedly created an active British engagement with Central and South America. He was on friendly terms with ministers and presidents there, talking to them in fluent Spanish, which he also used alongside good French in EU discussions. He was direct and charming with opposite numbers around the world believing in using the telephone and not depending on formal diplomatic correspondence. When offered promotion to the Cabinet by John Major, he turned it down deciding that the time had come to try another career this time in banking, where he operated successfully on the principle that if he had something explained to him twice and still could not understand it, it probably did not make sense.

Tristan was funny, hugely kind (not least to the children of friends), well-read, an enthusiastic collector of modern Spanish art, and as keen on bull-fighting as I am on cricket. I loved him and will miss him more than I can say.

ASSOCIATION CONTACT DETAILS

Sally Grocott, grocotts@parliament.uk, Telephone 020 7219 8207
Association of Former MPs, House of Commons, Room G13, 1 Parliament St, London SW1A 2NE