

Order! Order!

Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



WINTER 2019



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OF VULTURES**
(The avian kind,
not the human vultures)

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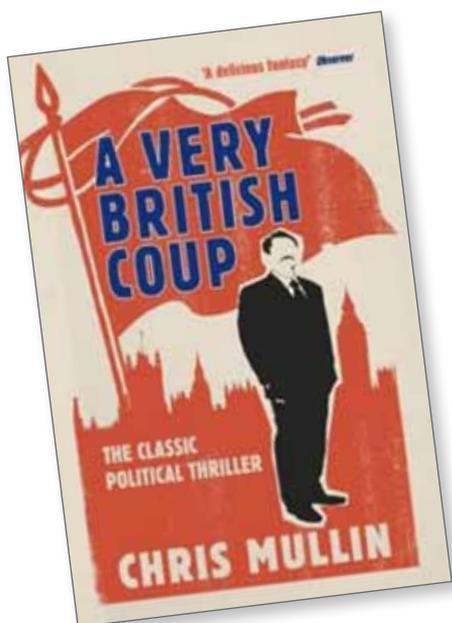
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RETELLING THE TALE OF A VERY BRITISH COUP

By Andy McSmith



A train journey made Chris Mullin decide that he had better get on and write his novel, *A Very British Coup* without delay.

He was travelling back from Labour's annual conference in 1981 with Tony Banks, Peter Hain, and Stuart Holland – all current or future Labour MPs – and talking about Tony Benn, who was then at the height of his fame.

Mullin, who was guest speaker at the Association's summer meeting in July, recalled that, "One of our number said 'How would the establishment react if Tony Benn became prime minister?' Somebody else said that would make a good subject for a novel, whereupon Stuart Holland revealed that by a swimming pool in Greece the previous summer, he had tapped out four chapters of such a novel. Peter Hain then said that he and a friend had just related to publishers a proposal for such a novel, and I thought 'If I'm going to do it, I'd better get on with it.'"

A Very British Coup told the story of Harry Perkins, a former steel worker from Sheffield, who became prime minister in 1989, only to have his tenure in office destroyed by a combination of newspaper proprietors, civil servants, the US government, and the UK's armed forces. Recently, its publishers have tried marketing it as 'the novel that foretold the rise of Corbyn', which, Mullin thinks, "is pushing it a bit – but, you know, they've got to sell books." It was first published in 1982.

Back then, Mullin added, "I was a journalist on *Tribune*, a little left wing publication of which George Orwell used to be literary editor, and we had a little advert on the back, selling the novel. The first cheque for £6.95 – which was then the going rate for a hardback – came from the American embassy. So we packed it up and sent it off.

"The next thing that happened was an invitation to lunch with a minister in the American embassy, who was the top person after the ambassador. So there came a day when he sent his bullet-proof Cadillac to *Tribune's* multi-storey headquarters to convey me to his mansion in Kensington. I thought there would be lots of guests, but no, there was just him, one of his officials, and me.

"I said to him: 'Why are you bothering with a minnow like me?' He said: 'Well, I reckon you're among the top one thousand opinion formers in this country.' So I said: 'I must be about number 999.' He said: 'The other 999 have been here too.'"

Some of what Mullin imagined turned out to disturbingly near the knuckle. In the novel, there is an MI5 agent on the council of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Three years after its appearance, a disillusioned former MI5 officer revealed that Harry Newton, who had been a strident activist in the Yorkshire CND until his death in 1983, was an MI5 plant.

In the novel, the security services are vetting BBC employees. In 1986, it emerged that a senior MI5 officer, Brigadier Ronnie Stonham, was based permanently at BBC headquarters as one of a line of spooks who had been vetting BBC personnel since the 1930s. He was followed by another, Michael Hodder – reputedly, the last. There is a persistent story that Brigadier Stonham's office was in Room 101, the same room that gave George Orwell inspiration for *1984*. Actually, he was a couple of doors away, in Room 105.

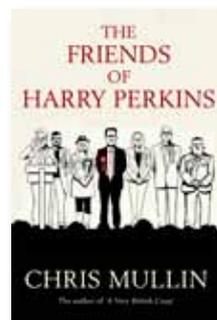
Mullin said: "After I got elected, I was invited to lunch, with one or two colleagues, with Marmaduke Hussey, a rather grand gentleman, who was then the Chairman of the BBC. The purpose

Some of what Mullin imagined turned out to disturbingly near the knuckle...

was to bend our ear on the Broadcasting Act, which was then just a gleam in Mrs Thatcher's eye. Half way through the lunch I said: 'Who works in Room 101, now that Brigadier Stonham has retired?' All around the table you could hear the sound of knives and forks hitting plates, and Marmaduke, choking on his smoked salmon, said: 'I think that's one for you, Patricia.' There was a lady called Patricia down the end of the table. She hummed and ha'ed, and said she thought it was the special assistant to the Director General.

"I said: 'Yes, what's his name, and what does he do?' We only had the top brass of the BBC round that table, and nobody could think of his name. I said: 'I'll tell you what, we're only two floors up, why don't I just nip down and find out?' They said: 'Oh no, no, no, you can't do that!' But sure enough, it was a Major Hodder. They were still at it, even though they had been caught red-handed!"

Then in 1987, the former MI5 officer, Peter Wright published his sensational memoir, *Spycatcher*, adding yet more credibility to *A Very British Coup* just when it was being adapted to make a very successful television drama. The novel has been reprinted many times.



Its long delayed sequel, *The Friends of Harry Perkins*, published this year, is shorter, and set in the near future, with Brexit, English nationalism and the rise of

China interwoven into the plot. The opening sentence says: "Harry Perkins was buried on the day America declared war on China" – and the ending is not what anyone would call a happy one. We can only hope that this time the author is not accurately foretelling the future.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER 3RD CONFIRMATION

Tribulations of an Organiser...

Everything was in place for our next event on the 3rd December, with Lords Committee Room 4a booked for an all member meeting and the River Room booked for our evening pre-Christmas drinks reception. But then we got "bounced" because the committee on HS2 was overrunning. A room in Millbank was offered which would have had to do in the last resort, but it was not an ideal venue.

However, the wonderful Lord Speaker's office said the River Room was free all that afternoon and subject to the permission of the Lord Speaker we could use it for our meetings. Our booking for the evening reception stood so there would need to be an interval of an hour from 5.00 to 6.00pm for the room to be set up. This seemed an ideal solution.

But of course, events, dear colleagues, intervened with the announcement of a general election, so I was relieved and delighted when I was able to confirm that during dissolution we could still use the River Room, and Lords catering were happy to go ahead. This meant that members would still have the opportunity of a pre-Christmas meet and chat about past and future events, as well as having a break from electioneering and also perhaps with some Christmas shopping thrown in.

SO PLEASE NOTE:

All member meeting: 3.00 to 5.00pm

The River Room of the House of Lords

Drinks reception: 6.00 to 8.00pm



I am delighted that Robert (Lord) Hayward has accepted my invitation to be our guest speaker at the all member meeting. A highly regarded political analyst and psephologist, as long ago as 1992 he correctly forecast a Conservative victory and, among other notable things, in 2015 his prediction for the election result was staggeringly accurate, and he forecast a Leave win in the 2016 referendum. Understandably, he will not give away any information about what he expects to happen

on the 12th December, but I know that members will find his insight into campaigning issues enormously interesting. His acceptance must inevitably be provisional on there not being any last minute unexpected interventions, in which case I am sure members will enjoy a robust debate about the general election amongst themselves!

Finally, most members will have responded to earlier e-mails about attendance at the evening reception, but if you have not, and wish to come, then please contact me on grocotts@parliament.uk when I will advise if there are still places available. Partners are welcome, but the maximum attendance is 80. The event is free and there are no tickets, but a guest list is sent to the Lord Speaker's office.

Sally Grocott



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

by John Austin, Chair of the Parliamentary Outreach Trust

AT A RECENT Special General

Meeting, the Trust amended its governance arrangements to restrict the number of Trustees but to establish an Executive Committee to manage the organisation. The Executive Committee comprises the Trustees (who are the elected Officers of the Trust) and additional elected members.

At the Annual Meeting the following Officers/Trustees were elected: John Austin (Chair), Keith Best (Secretary), Dr Edmund Marshall and Michael Meadowcroft (Vice-Chairs), Sarah McCarthy-Fry (Treasurer).

In addition, the following were elected to the Executive Committee:

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

Earlier this year we announced that the former Prime Minister, Rt Hon Gordon Brown had consented to be a Patron of the Trust. We are pleased to report that the following have also agreed to become Patrons: former Speakers of the House of Commons, Rt Hon John Bercow and

Rt Hon Baroness Betty Boothroyd, and former Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Lord Campbell of Pittenween.

The Trust has been involved in a number of educational events recently. In October Nicholas Bennett and Derek Wyatt participated in a conference for year 13 Criminology students at the Ursuline College, an 11-19 Academy in Westgate, Kent. The speakers had been asked to talk about how laws are made and how MPs can influence change.

In November, Dr Edmund Marshall and Adrian Sanders visited "Model Westminster, Exeter", a student society at Exeter University to talk about the role of MPs and the working of Parliament.

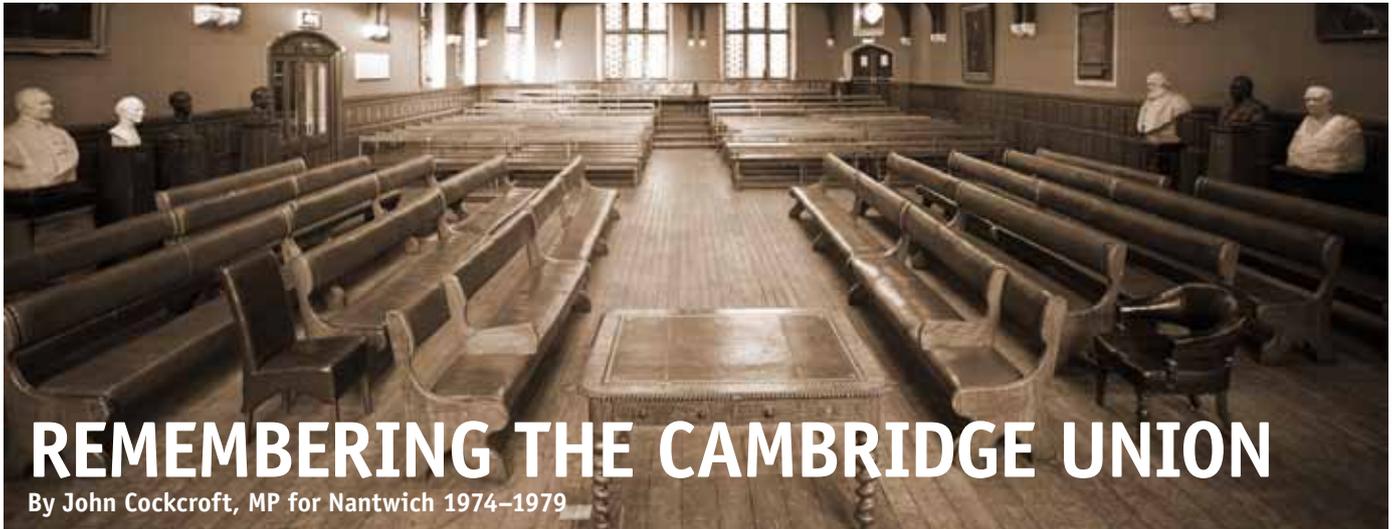
An ambitious programme is also being planned with Brunel University in London. Two sessions have been confirmed and another two are in the pipeline.

In December Tim Janman and Tom Levitt are leading a session for students at Brunel on Party politics after the EU Referendum – looking at ways in which Brexit may have challenged and essentially re-shaped the way voters support parties.

In January, Nicholas Bennett and Sylvia Heal will be leading a session on the role of Members of Parliament and the functions of MPs as both legislators and representatives of their constituencies. The session will also look at the capacity of MPs to be representatives of under-represented/minority groups. Brunel hopes to arrange two further sessions in 2020, one on the role of the Civil Service and the other on campaigning and elections.

The Trust is planning possible future engagements with Exeter, Birmingham and Leeds Universities and we are also hopeful of a breakthrough in Scotland, working with the newly formed Scottish branch of the Association. In November, one of our members, Iain Luke (Dundee East 2001-2005), took part in a parliamentary outreach event at Dundee University with a sitting SNP MP.

If any Members of the Association who are not on our list of volunteers would like to become involved, please let me know at admin@parlyoutreach.org.uk. We would also like to hear from Members who may have links with and contacts at universities and colleges.



REMEMBERING THE CAMBRIDGE UNION

By John Cockcroft, MP for Nantwich 1974–1979

The Cambridge Union debating society has long been a crucible for political careers.

Ex-presidents include Kenneth Clarke, Norman Fowler, Norman Lamont, Geoffrey Howe, John Knott, Leon Brittan, Christopher Tugendhart, Helene Hayman, Ariana Huffington and many others.

I was a student at Cambridge from 1955-1958, reading modern history and economics, both subjects of which were relevant to many Union debates. It was also useful that I could invite my tutors to speak at the events. Union Presidents can only stand for one term; I was President of the Union over Michaelmas term (autumn to early winter) 1958.

I was a late starter in speaking at the Union. However, I was given the anti-Suez slot at the height of that crisis. I sat next to the deputy Prime Minister, R.A. Butler, at the supper before the debate. He seemed tired and on edge, not surprisingly. The official Conservative party line was to justify the Suez escapade. But during a union meeting I said that it was incomprehensible, incompetent and irresponsible. I had a standing ovation from a packed house of over a thousand students.

My Suez speech helped to gain the backing of Liberal and Labour undergraduates. Also, St John's College has always had a very large undergraduate population and many office holders in the Union. One evening in June 1958, Percy, who ran the buttery – the in-house pub at St John's – said, at 9.45pm, to members at the bar, that they must vote for Mr Cockcroft and that he was closing the pub between 9.45 and 10pm, so that they could go to vote. Such informal canvassing was inevitable, if technically frowned upon.

Motions for the weekly debates during my time included, in November 1958, that 'Churchill College should be built elsewhere' and, in the same month: 'the world is the poorer for the splitting of the atom'. Speakers at my final, Presidential debate in December 1958 included Sir Harry Hinsley, future Master of St Johns, Cambridge, and Sir John Cockcroft, future master of Churchill College.

The debating chamber is similar aesthetically to the House of Commons, but is square rather than oblong. Attendees face each other across the Chamber and there is a spacious gallery for observers. In the 1950s women were only allowed in the gallery and could not take part in debates.

In those days the facilities were limited; there was a cellar where parties could be held, a basic library, two administrative rooms and a restaurant where prices varied from two

The debating chamber is similar aesthetically to the House of Commons, but is square rather than oblong

and sixpence to seven and sixpence. The permanent staff, Mr Elwood, Mr Thomson and Mr Thody, had low salaries and no pensions, but were dedicated to the spirit of the Union.

In more recent times – a decade ago – the Union was struggling financially. Since then, Bill Bailey, a former senior intelligence officer, has turned its fortunes around. The building is now let out to conferences, seminars, wedding occasions and various other social functions, some of which are lucrative. The site, in central Cambridge, is very convenient. Distinguished speakers still think it worth their while to debate there.

Much was made of the Union's two hundredth anniversary, coinciding with the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. There was considerable interest in the Union's long history.

The Oxford Union has of course an equally distinguished history, having produced more Prime Ministers than its Cambridge counterpart. There is a long tradition in both Unions of people standing for the Presidencies on their own merits with little political standing.

In the wider context, the Oxford and Cambridge Unions could – and can – be regarded as elitist. Boris Johnson, for instance, was president of the Oxford Union. The Cambridge Union has always been more democratic. Geoffrey Howe and John Knott, for example, did not go to Eton. Helene Hayman, the first woman President, went to Wolverhampton Grammar school. Even in the 1950s, St Johns, perhaps the most Union-orientated college, had more state educated undergraduates than private school educated. So to some extent, the history of the two Unions is that of the history of Britain.

It is significant that they have not lost their appeal and relevance in a more egalitarian age. The Cambridge Union has adapted to changing circumstances for instance, Miss World contestants took part in a recent debate.

The Cambridge Students' Union is more diverse in its activities, and has cheaper membership, than the Cambridge Union Debating Society. However, the Union can look forward to a bright future, having adapted so markedly to the inevitability of social change.

VULTURES:

THEY MAY BE UGLY – BUT THEY DO US ALL A GREAT SERVICE

By John Randall

Vultures of the avian kind need better PR.

An opinion poll would no doubt have them well down into negative ratings. Their name is often used pejoratively – vulture funds, vulture capitalists. In the cinema they are inevitably portrayed as harbingers of impending demise as the water bottle runs dry in some remorseless desert or other.

They do not deserve this negativity as – even if they are not particularly cute – vultures are nature's heroes. They are an efficient clean-up crew. They are an integral part of our ecosystem. As a result of their predilection to a carrion diet, they prevent the spread of diseases produced by decaying carcasses. They also help livestock farmers, not only because they clean up the fields, but they also eliminate the need for the treatment and incineration of thousands of tons of animal remains every year.

These birds are best known as ultimate scavengers feeding on carcasses of dead animals. The bald head for which vultures are known, and which does not enhance their aesthetic appearance, is another adaptation to their feeding behaviour. Feathers on the head would become seriously soiled and even destroyed when the birds entered their heads into fresh carcasses.

Their gastric acid is extremely corrosive, allowing them to easily digest rotting carcasses infested with many potentially dangerous bacteria. By consuming dead animals, vultures prevent the spreading of diseases such as anthrax and rabies. The New World species, such as Turkey Vultures, much beloved of old Westerns, actually also urinate down their legs. The strong acids of the urine kill bacteria and cool them down in extreme heat.

Vultures are found on all continents except Antarctica and Australia. There are two groups: 'Old World' and 'New World'. New World vultures are found in North and South America and Old World vultures in Africa, Asia and Europe. The groups are not closely related; the resemblances are because they perform a similar role in their respective ecosystems. One big difference is that Old World vultures depend on sight to find food, whereas many New World vultures have a very good sense of smell – unusually for birds – and can smell dead animals from a distance of up to at least a mile.

Vultures do not only inhabit desert and hot places of high temperatures. The Andean Condor ranges from sea level to the high Andes. Many species are associated with mountains as far ranging as the Himalayas to the Pyrenees. In southern Asia they were a very familiar urban bird but alas they are a very uncommon sight in cities today. Vultures are disappearing over nearly all of their range.

In the 1990s, 99% of the Indian subcontinent's vultures were wiped out. The presence of diclofenac, a veterinary drug, in just 1% of livestock carcasses abandoned in fields was enough to virtually eliminate the vulture populations. Since the drug was banned, populations in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Iran

are beginning to recover, but they are still nowhere near what they once were.

Over the past 30 years, the number of vultures in West Africa has fallen by 95% outside protected areas. 75% of all vultures are spiralling towards extinction. In all, 16 of the 23 vulture species living on our planet are threatened.

All European vulture species have a highly vulnerable status, and their distribution ranges have been severely restricted in the last century. Threats such as illegal poisoning, lack of food availability and collisions at wind farms and power lines are putting the recovery of some populations at risk.

Working together, conservation partners, scientists, charities, governments and local groups have created some significant species conservation action plans. These plans are tools for identifying and prioritising measures to restore the populations of vultures across their range. They provide information about the status, ecology, threats and current conservation measures for each species of vulture and list key actions that are required to improve their conservation status.

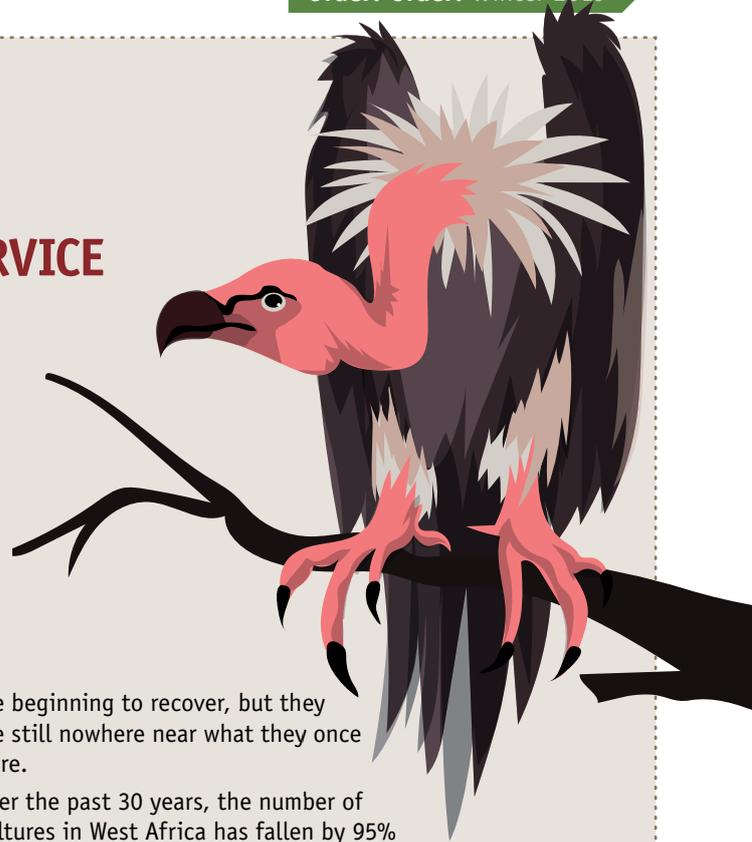
Thanks to vultures' free cleaning service, millions of euros are saved in waste management and the potential emission of hundreds of thousands of tons of CO2 per year is avoided, for the benefit of all. Most of the EU's vultures – over 80% – are found in Spain, but Portugal and Italy also have significant populations.

In a world where vultures are threatened, the governments of Spain, Italy and Portugal, along with the EU, have a renewed responsibility to ensure the health of Europe's vulture populations. Only a few years ago Europe's vultures were being menaced by the toxic threat of diclofenac that, though safe for humans and livestock, is deadly for birds of prey.

After some serious campaigns combined with a dose of common sense and political will this dangerous veterinary drug has been banned in the EU. There are concerns that new drugs might prove just as deadly as diclofenac which could have so easily wiped out vultures in Europe and Asia.

Our world cannot afford to lose these iconic and important species.

**Baron Randall of Uxbridge was MP for Uxbridge 1997–2010
and for Uxbridge & South Ruislip 2010–2015**





1982: A FALKLANDS NIGHTMARE

What will become of those millions of travellers cheques?

by Jacques Arnold, MP for Gravesham 1987-1997,
previously Regional Director for Latin America at Thomas Cook

We all remember the Falklands War and the heroism of the Armed Forces in regaining the islands, but for me there are additional memories of those extraordinary events.

Two years previously, I had established an office for Thomas Cook in Buenos Aires, to service their travellers cheques business, providing a service to the Argentine banks and exchange houses. In short order, providing a local service in Spanish, tailor-made for the local market, we were cutting swathes through the big American competitors.

Based in England, I awoke on the 2nd April 1982 to hear the shocking news of the Argentine invasion of the islands, and wondered what effect that would have on my local business. I rang the leading Argentine *cambista* to ask for his views. I could almost see him clasp his forehead when he exclaimed, “We have an economy in crisis, inflation going through the roof, and now these military idiots have picked a fight with you – this is a disaster for my country!”

I had an immediate problem – blank travellers cheques! US\$30 million of them, a quarter of a million pounds worth, and some other currencies. The sterling was useless, and could be confiscated, and worse. They were secure in a cabinet in the vault of a local Belgian bank, but could be vulnerable. I resolved to send the sterling to Uruguay for safe-keeping. “Take a bag to Uruguay? No Señor, we don’t do that!” said the security company. Ingenuity was required, and through contacts we eventually found an Argentine Cavalry officer, who would take it in his armoured car to the border at Unzué, for a consid-

eration. Mission successful – the Uruguayan security company then took the bag to Montevideo, where it was secured in a local bank. I wonder what General Galtieri would have made of a subordinate, using Army equipment to aid the enemy!!

The next problem was our stocks in the Falklands itself. The Falklands Island Trading Company sold our cheques, and we had established a supply route whereby its manager on periodic “civilisation leave” in Buenos Aires, would collect them. We would see him safely on to the plane to Comodoro Rivadavia, where he would take the Argentine Air Force flight to Port Stanley. The Argentines had an Air Commodore stationed in Stanley to manage these flights. He had had the Governor’s permission to fly in a pre-fab to build himself a house. It took two Hercules aircraft to transport it. With hindsight, they were testing the resilience of the runway to take such heavy aircraft. Today, the building houses the Falklands Islands Museum.

The trading company had the local banking business in those days. They not only sold the cheques to local travellers, but also to British Forces. We used to have a garrison of 40 marines, periodically changing the guard. When each detachment finished their tour of duty, they would be offered the option of being shipped home, or taking the money and back-packing across South America to return to base in the UK. Most of these adventurous young men took the latter option, taking the cash in our



The Argentine pre-fab, now the Falklands Islands Museum

U.S. cheques, bought at the trading company.

When the Argentines chose to invade the islands, we coincidentally had two detachments on the islands, one about to leave. As we all know, they fell back on Government House, and were ordered to surrender. The Argentines repatriated them to the UK through Montevideo. However, the outgoing detachment already had their cheques. One spearhead of the Argentine forces attacked the empty Moody Brook Royal Marines barracks, up Stanley Sound, with orders to destroy it. Some of the Argentines made sure they looted the kitbags of the Marines before doing so.

The first I knew of the episode came two weeks later. A staff member from the refunds department came into my office in Peterborough. “You do the Falklands Islands, don’t you?” “Why?”, said I. “A young man has come into our



3Y35: Moody Brook barracks, after the Argentine attack



The Falklands Islands Company.

branch in Newcastle, saying he had lost his travellers cheques. On completing the claim form, when it asked if he had reported his loss to the police of the jurisdiction in which had lost them, before leaving, he had responded no. In that event, the case had to be referred to Head Office for determination”.

I asked if he was a Royal Marine.

“Oh, yes. But, so what?” Alarmed, I told her “ring the branch, find the prettiest cashier, tell her to call him a hero, make a fuss of him, and give him a full refund immediately”.

Phew! I had visions of the *Daily Mail* headline “Callous Thomas Cook refuses Falklands Hero his refund”. I circulated all Thomas Cook branches, warning them of the matter, to ensure they gave prompt refunds to any other Royal Marines who might wander in.

Then, there was the question of the travellers cheques. We had a stock of US\$100,000 at the trading company. What had become of them? Had the Argentines confiscated them? A month later I had a phone call from the Trading Company’s agents in London. Could they wire us the money to our account in New York? Certainly! But, where did it come from? It turned out that the Argentines had taken the cheques, but they had paid for them, under their policy of cooperating with the islands’ civilian economy.

The final act in the drama was the recovery of many of the marines’ stolen cheques. In August a company security inspector sauntered into my office “We’ve got some of your cheques back”, he said. I followed him. There in his office were some tightly rolled, very grubby, cheques, encased in transparent plastic envelopes. “Where

did they come from?” “The M.O.D.”, said he. Apparently, the Argentine POWs were loaded on board the Canberra for shipment back to Argentina. On boarding, they were apparently

strip-searched, and attended by doctors. The thieves among them had only one place left to hide their ill-gotten gains. They were recovered with tweezers! The remaining cheques are presumably ground into the mud on Mount Tumbledown. “Would you like to verify the individual cheque numbers for cancellation, Mr. Arnold?” “No, I won’t interfere in your duties!”

I also had a more delicate problem with the Manager I had recruited for the Buenos Aires office – he was a full British Passport holder. I had visions of him being interned, so I told him to go on a protracted sales tour from the far south to the north of Chile, and into other countries, to get him out of Argentina. “Do I have to?”, said he. “You know Margaret Thatcher, tell her not to be so silly about these useless islands!”. Sulkily, he set off. My next call from him was from Punta Arenas in southern Chile. “It is great here. Every Chilean I meet is so friendly, as we have taken on the unpopular Argentines. I am sitting in the British Club drinking with an ITN news team, who are hoping for some activity to report!”

The Argentines surrendered in June, 1982. I set out in August to assess the damage. In Brazil, I was met by my banking contacts. All they wanted to talk about was the war. “The RAF did this, the RAF did that! Argentina, you got your bottom smacked! Who are the monkeys now, eh? The sniffy Porteños, residents of Buenos Aires, have long considered that their pure European blood puts them way above the mixed-blood Brazilians, the monkeys. Payback time!

I had visions of the Daily Mail headline “Callous Thomas Cook refuses Falklands Hero his refund”

On to Buenos Aires. The military were gone from government. The brown paper hiding the many English names of hotels, bar, shops and offices had disappeared. No hostility. Business as usual, but with a newfound optimism – the years of dictatorship were over. The leading *cambista* gave a lunch at the Stock Exchange, a convivial occasion. Finally he stood up, in the heart of the capital of our recent foe, and called “I give you the toast – The Queen of England!” “Victorino, are you mad?”, said I, alarmed. “Certainly not! If it hadn’t been for you British, we would never have got rid of those incompetent b*****s!!”

What a trauma, between two nations so intertwined in our histories. Galtieri was the ultimate macho – he could drink his sergeants under the table! He needed a distraction from the incompetent way he ran the country. Chile? No, their armed forces are too good. Britain? That island, 7,000 miles away in the mist, run by a couple of women. A pushover, no doubt! The rest is history.

We restored relations in 1989. Argentina has not been served well by their politicians since. The Kirchners, husband and wife, have served the country particularly badly, and Cristina has again shrilly banged the Falklands drum to create a distraction. The rest of Latin America doesn’t give a damn about the islands. But they will pay lip-service to their continental partner. Their support is as wide as the River Plate – but ankle deep!

Don’t cry for me Argentina! The people of the country have finally in their despair elected a good new President. Mauricio Macri is sensible on the economy, finance, investment and trade – and on the relevance of the islands. He has a great challenge. I hope our own government will respond positively and fast to his appearance on the scene.

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

SIR HUGH BAYLEY City of York 1992–2015



WHEN I STOOD DOWN IN 2015

I went to Nevis, in the Caribbean, to renovate a house in Gingerland where my wife, Fenella, was born. It is a typical local house

– no air-conditioning or pool – but has a half acre “yard” of tropical fruit trees. The monkeys take most of what grows, but we get enough mangoes to eat, and make chutney.

Fenella spends half her time there, and I visit when I can, but have taken on some other things.

David Miliband, who runs the New York-based International Rescue Committee, asked me to join his Board. My mother’s family were Jewish migrants from central Europe who survived the Second World War because they had refuge in the UK, so I have a direct personal interest in helping refugees fleeing persecution today.

I was appointed as a lay member of the Nursing and Midwifery Council, where I use my experience as a health economist and, from years ago, a Unison official representing nurses and midwives.

Recently I applied to be Commissioner of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact – the equivalent of Ofsted for the aid programme – and, astonishingly, was appointed by a Conservative Secretary of State, Penny Mordaunt.

I do some freelance work for UNDP in the Middle East and for the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in Malaysia and, as reported in Order, Order, in Myanmar.

I helped a friend to set up a new charity, drill2Drink, to provide clean water and sanitation in remote parts of Africa, and am one of its Trustees.

I still ski for the Parliamentary ski team, and I’m winning trophies with the benefit of an age-related handicap. As one Swiss MP put it, with refreshing candour, I win the UK veteran’s race because the handicap takes more seconds off my time than age puts on!

NIGEL WATERSON Eastbourne 1992–2010



THERE AREN’T MANY FORMER MPs who get the opportunity to implement in the real world ground-breaking legislation they had a hand in drafting! When I left in 2010, I wondered (briefly as fate had it) what I would do next. I had already decided that, if re-elected, that would have been my last parliament. So on any view my time as a politician was at an end.

I had spent seven years as Shadow Pensions Minister, and had led for the Tories on all the major pensions legislation – setting up a Regulator, the PPF and launching auto enrolment (the latter policy was incidentally a great example of cross party consensus).

I had barely left the green benches when I was approached to chair a new “master trust” – NOW:Pensions. This led to 9 years of fascinating work implementing a policy I had been intimately concerned with as a politician. In a few short years we went from no members and no funds to 1.7 million members working for over 30,000 employers to become the third largest master trust in the country. And I might say without a penny of public subsidy, unlike the government-backed NEST.

In addition, until late 2017, I was Chair of the Equity Release Council which saw considerable growth in that area. Now large numbers of older people are safely accessing their housing wealth, and enjoying a more comfortable retirement as a result.

I feel immensely fortunate to have had gainful and interesting employment since leaving the House. More importantly, I have had the opportunity – in different ways – to improve the lot of many people in retirement – instead of just talking about it!

CHARLOTTE ATKINS Staffordshire Moorlands 1997–2010



I stood and won the supposedly unwinnable Leek South County Council division

IN PARLIAMENT, I campaigned for investment in our waterways and helped create the charity, the Canal and River Trust, which took over responsibilities for canals from British Waterways. So, not surprisingly, I became the chair of CRT’s Central Shires Board which covers Staffordshire. It was rewarding to set up the voluntary board and work with the waterways’ full time staff to build more community activity and engagement.

I also became a Trustee of Rudyard Sailability, a local charity providing water based activities at Rudyard Lake for people with disabilities. I helped them win their long battle for planning permission for a fully accessible boat store, allowing people with disabilities to launch their own electronically powered, adapted sailing dinghies.

While taking a break from politics, a spirited campaign to save a much loved floral roundabout in my home town of Leek asked for my help in delivering their petition to Downing Street. So I got involved. Then I was persuaded to stand in a by election and return the seat to Labour. So in February 2012, I became a town and district councillor. The following year, I stood and won the supposedly unwinnable Leek South County Council division.

Being a County and District Councillor is a useful platform from which to lead the fight to save our local community hospitals, to expose the impact of ongoing austerity on the most vulnerable, to scrutinise the work of our councils and hold them to account as well as seeking better ways of delivering vital services cooperatively.

BOB WALTERS

North Dorset 1997–2015



MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT have many reasons for retiring, some involuntary. After 18 rewarding years in the Commons and approaching 70, I thought, “When will my constituents start whispering ‘when’s that old fart going to stand down?’” So, 2015 was a good time to move on.

At various times in my latter years in the House I had been Leader of the delegation to the Council of Europe and Western European Union, Chair of the British Group of the IPU and vice chair of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly. Serving as the final President of the WEU Assembly gave me insight into European institutions, particularly in the defence field.

Since retirement I have been President of the European Security and Defence Association, served on the Advisory Board of the Berlin Security Conference, and chaired the European prize jury of *Civisme Défense Armées Nation* (CiDAN). In the last few years I have also been invited to advise the Prime Minister of Macedonia and the Foreign Minister of Turkey on their respective relationships with the EU, NATO and other European nations.

I could never justify owning a boat when I had a full-time job, but in 2015 I bought a beautiful sailing boat which I now keep in the Aegean Sea. My wife and I are very lucky to be on the water for several months of the year, often with friends and family.

People ask me if I miss the House. Although I still live in my old constituency, I stay out of politics locally. I would hate to be an MP at the moment because Brexit has been so divisive. I do not believe those who supported “Leave” voted to make the country poorer, less able to influence its destiny or less powerful in the world. After three and a half years Parliament is unable to resolve this issue. Referenda are a bad way to take complex decisions, but perhaps the only way we will settle this one. But that is for my successor to worry about.

BRIAN BINLEY

Northampton South 2005–2015



I am, for my sins, an associate director of Northampton Town FC

LIFE DOESN'T END when you leave Parliament, and your ability to impact upon the society you live in certainly doesn't end. I have been very busy since I came out of the House of Commons in 2015. I have worked as an adviser to Sovereign Strategy, a leading public affairs company, and indeed had a wonderful trip to Washington, organised by Intuit, with Prince Michael of Kent and David Harvey, the General Secretary of the Genesis organisation. We met many small business leaders and put them in touch with their English counterparts.

In addition to my work with the Genesis Initiative, of which Prince Michael is patron, I have for the past four years been a director of SEMLEP – the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership – serving two million people in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and parts of Buckinghamshire. We are involved in creating the infrastructure necessary to ensure that the Oxford and Cambridge Arc provides jobs and attracts the necessary inward investment for generations to come.

I have also worked with DBFB and CityFibre in providing fibre to every household in Northampton and the surrounding area. Our next task is to ensure that the satellite towns in Northamptonshire are equally well served with regard to the digital economy.

In other words, I have been able to be involved in a sizeable number of projects which benefit my old constituency of Northampton South and the larger SEMLEP area.

Finally, I am, for my sins, an associate director of Northampton Town FC. I am really saddened that my success in other areas has not been met with the same degree of success in the sphere of Second Division football – but I live in hope!

STEPHEN LADYMAN

South Thanet 1997–2010



MINE HAS BEEN A portfolio career since leaving the house – including various transport related projects and chairmanship of Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, a mental health and community health Trust that serves Somerset, where I now live. I also chair the Somerset NHS Sustainable Transformation Partnership.

The main focus of my work since 2010 though has been to build on my interest in Extra-Care property for older people. Extra-Care is a model of age appropriate housing that I first encountered as a Health Minister and which I firmly believe offers us the best hope of supporting the ageing population in the years ahead. In schemes of this type older people live independently in self-contained properties, communal facilities such as a restaurant are available to encourage socialisation and reduce loneliness and carers are available on site to give any additional support that might be needed. Research shows that older people living in this type of accommodation live longer, stay healthier and cost public services less than those who try to soldier on in traditional residential property.

After a couple of years as Chief Executive of one of the biggest Extra-Care providers in the country I started my own business, Oak Retirement Ltd., to develop more schemes following the Extra-Care model, the latest of which is shortly to open in Titchfield, Hampshire. I also chair the Retirement Housing Group, a trade body that represents companies involved in the development of retirement housing.

One of the biggest challenges for those of us who develop Extra Care housing is ensuring that decision makers understand what it is and what it can offer – so if any current Parliamentarians want to find out more and visit a scheme, just get in touch.



FROM THE RAILWAYS TO PARLIAMENT, AND BACK

Lawrie Quinn, MP for Scarborough and Whitby 1997–2005, on his life's journey

They say you remember your first day at school, your first teacher, first trip to hospital and a notable event in history experienced in your lifetime. My first technicolour memory is the pain on my mother's face as I happily joined the class of Miss Batey at Pennine Way Infants in Carlisle as a five year old! This was shortly followed by visiting my Dad in Carlisle Infirmary as he recovered from an emergency operation.

Then there was the grief of our next door neighbour as she minded me and my brother Jim whilst Mam visited Dad at hospital: we were watching a November 1963 episode of *Emergency Ward 10*, in flickering black and white, in our council home in the North of England, when we were hit by news of the murder of J.F.Kennedy. I was almost six, son of a waitress and a train driver, I was lucky enough to grow up in Cumberland's finest city – only city, in fact – in a strong resilient community which shared the little we had. I was brought up to respect everyone I met in the journey of life, told to enjoy the places and people I was fortunate enough to meet but above all else learn from the hard knocks in life, despise bullies and help the innocent, weak and vulnerable.

I hear you ask, "Where did it go wrong, this saintly mission mapped out by Sheila and Jimmy Quinn for their first born? How was I side tracked by nearly eight years as a Labour MP?"

I was proud to serve my community in the 'Gasworks' – as London's cabbies call Westminster, but the shock of rejection when I was publicly dismissed at the 2005 General Election count at the famous Scarborough Spa complex (previously known in national politics for Harold Wilson's 'White Heat of Technology' speech) probably saved me from an early grave.

I remember the 18 hour days, with a lot of sitting on those green leather benches, the bad life style, the increasing disconnection from my family, non-political friends and the toll of serving the diverse communities of the Yorkshire coast as their first Labour MP. With 14 years' hindsight, I can say that my candle was burnt out at both ends.

After the formalities of conceding to Robert Goodwill, dismissing loyal constituency workers, winding up offices in Whitby and Scarborough, closing over 28,000 live pieces of constituency casework, safely disposing of confidential and sensitive documents – well that took until the end of November 2005 – with the constituency home disposed of and staff redundancies securely achieved, I had to think hard about what happens next!

Putting Hansard into storage, I returned to my former profession as a Railway Civil Engineer – though not to the newly formed Network Rail. Bechtel placed me at the head of their Projects Delivery Team in Tubelines, working out of a glass fronted Canary Wharf office in East London.

I spent four years working on complex railway delivery projects on the Northern, Piccadilly & Jubilee lines and oversaw over 96 railway interventions on the Tube until Mr Johnson levered

With 14 years' hindsight, I can say that my candle was burnt out at both ends

Tubelines back into public ownership under the shadows of the Cameron-Clegg government in 2010.

Working alongside the Managing Director of a global business was something I never anticipated as I'd trained in British Rail as a Management Trainee way back in 1979 – but in 2010 I was brought into the Bechtel Global Rail Team, working from an office off Ludgate Hill, helping to manage a multi-billion dollar global business, a long way from the daily life of a backbencher from sleepy North Yorkshire.

Between 2010 and 2015 I worked on rail projects for United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, Turkey, USA, and Hong Kong, and was lucky enough to be in at the tail end of delivering West Coast Mainline upgrade, Crossrail and the faultless introduction of St Pancras International, and HS1 – all game changers for my industry.

In 2014 I supported the preparation for a major project bid for the new Metro for Saudi Arabia's capital, Riyadh, but subsequently decided I didn't want to take a long assignment in the Kingdom. Consequently I spent almost a year working in Bristol on Defence Procurement projects, until I joined my current employer, Atkins, as a Programme & Project Director, in April 2016.

I returned to Northern House in York earlier this year after 22 years semi-resident in Westminster then Tower Hamlets.

As I focus on Northern Powerhouse Rail opportunities, HS2 in the North and the challenges of a post-Brexit Britain, I feel the journey had come full circle. I can see the attractions of real retirement. I tell Ann, the long suffering Mrs Q, that I'll retire when Brexit happens – so I'm likely to be fully engaged as a railway engineer and programme director for some time to come: who knows!

A former Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote to me after I departed Westminster in 2005 with the upbeat assessment that I would probably make a better contribution to national life as a Civil Engineer than on those green benches. Before you decide whether Alistair was right can I just mention outside of my paid professional responsibilities I have been delighted to make a contribution as Chairman of the Railway Civil Engineers Association, Chairman of the Railway Engineer's Forum and most recently as Chair of the Institution of Civil Engineers London.

Returning to York has allowed me to go back to my political roots as my local Labour Party Branch Secretary and as my good friend Peter Mandelson quipped several years ago, I continue on the programme for "recovering politicians" as I face down the prospect of real retirement later this year.

PROTECTING HARRIS TWEED

(WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM FIDEL CASTRO)

Brian Wilson, MP for Cunninghame North 1987–2005

When I became Trade Minister in 1998, I made it a personal mission to normalise commercial relations with Cuba, to be treated no better or worse than anyone else. I flew to Havana and into dinner with Fidel Castro.

One of my fellow guests was Ian Taylor, who ran Vitol, the oil trading company. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Vitol kept Cuba supplied with oil and Ian remained a respected figure.

We became good friends and he always said if there was some useful investment he could make in his father's native Scotland, he would do so. Fast forward to 2005 when I stood down from the Commons for purely family reasons and we moved to my wife's native Isle of Lewis.

Soon after, Harris Tweed – a venerable industry crucial to the island's economy – was in shock. The main mill had been bought by a Yorkshire textiles magnate whose plan was not to sell fabric to anyone else but turn it all into his own range of men's jackets.

Everyone else saw the writing on the wall. Once there was a stockpile of these jackets, where would work come from for the weavers? Always having tried to support the industry, I was asked if I could help.

There was a semi-derelict mill at Shawbost on the west side of Lewis which was capable of being brought back to life. But who would invest? I knew the answer and Ian Taylor proved as good as his word.

Thus was born Harris Tweed Hebrides with Ian as principal investor, myself as chairman and front-man while Ian Angus Mackenzie, who had been chief executive of the Harris Tweed Authority assumed the same role within the new company to apply a lifetime's industry knowledge.

It has been a great success story. We have a strong company which gives work to around 240 people including the independent home weavers on which Harris Tweed uniquely depends. None of this could have happened without an Act of the UK Parliament.

Harris Tweed is protected by the oldest British trademark in continuous use, dating back more than a century. In the early 1990s, an episode served notice that this brand protection was not as strong as had been assumed.

Vivienne Westwood adopted an Orb trade mark which bore more than a passing similarity. Legal action was contemplated but advice was that it was unlikely to succeed due to there being sufficient points of difference. And anyway, who owned an Orb?

A more visionary approach was adopted. The Harris Tweed Association, then a looser trade body, promoted Private Legislation. Remarkably, it passed all its stages without objection to become the Harris Tweed Act of 1993.

This made Harris Tweed the only fabric in the world protected by its own Act of Parliament – which remains fundamental to the industry's existence. If it could be made elsewhere and called Harris Tweed, it would be a threat to the economy of the Hebrides. That is impossible because of the Act which now is the duty of a statutory body, the Harris Tweed Authority, to defend.

The legal definition of Harris Tweed is that it must be made from pure virgin wool, handwoven at the home of the weaver in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. Only then can it be sold as Harris Tweed. In such local circumstances, there is a lot to be said for protectionism!

When Harris Tweed Hebrides was launched, over 90 per cent of production went into men's jackets. That figure is now under half as markets at home and abroad have diversified into ladies' fashion, accessories and interiors.

We sell to design houses in Paris, New York and Tokyo while forging collaborations with prestigious UK brands to maintain the high-end cachet of Harris Tweed. Equally, we need the volume of end-product sales to feed a hungry mill. It is a delicate but ever-exciting balancing

act, conducted from the very edge of Europe.

One example of expansion into interiors is the new Standard Hotel, that amazing refurb of Camden Town Hall annexe. It uses Harris Tweed extensively and, after visiting Lewis, its general manager, Bruce Robertson wrote: "Sustaining a community, sustainable manufacturing is simply the best ... perfect for hotel use". That'll do nicely!

For me, it has been a wholly unexpected and enjoyable post-political experience. My former Parliamentary assistant, Mark Hogarth, who knew the fashion business, became Creative Director and we have travelled the world proclaiming the product's virtues and having a few laughs along the way.

A couple of years ago, Mark and I were invited by an Indian client to make a presentation at their sales convention. Of all the things I thought I might be doing when I left Parliament, promoting Harris Tweed in Goa was not among them!

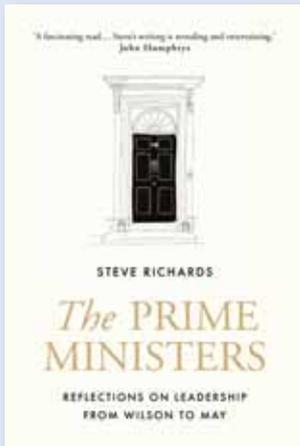
In 2012, the Institute of Directors kindly named me as their Global Director of the Year. The award was handed over by Michael Portillo and I had a wee smile at the thought of all those (including M. Portillo) who had long insisted that "Labour doesn't understand business"!

Coming out of Parliament in 2005 allowed me to do a few other things including serving on the board of Celtic Football Club for the past 14 years, a labour of love if ever there was one.

So there really is something to be said for life outside politics. And for me, a crucial element of it all began over dinner with Fidel Castro in Havana.



A GOOD READ



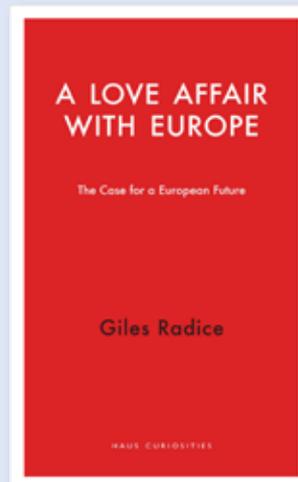
WHY PRIME MINISTERS FAIL

Andy McSmith

The Prime Ministers: reflections on Leadership from Wilson to May

by Steve Richard

Published by Atlantic Books



A PATRIOT FOR EUROPE

Joyce Quin

A Love Affair With Europe

by Giles Radice

Published by Haus Curiosities

IN HIS OCCASIONAL TELEVISION APPEARANCES, Tony Blair – whether you agree with him, or not – puts the case for Remain admirably crisply, and is equally to the point when talking about the Labour Party. Yet when asked this month whether he would campaign in the general election, he said he might, but could not say whether anyone would listen to him.

How can it happen that someone who was so popular two decades ago – when, frankly, he spoke in nothing but bland clichés and soundbites – has so little credit now that almost no one wants to listen?

Another poser: To be Home Secretary, especially a Conservative Home Secretary, is to hold one of the most perilous jobs in politics. The political graveyard is full of ex Home Secretaries. Only two have gone on to be Prime Minister, and one of those, Jim Callaghan, was in the Home Office for only a short spell that ended six years before he moved into No 10. So how could Theresa May, who glided upwards after six years as Home Secretary, be so hopeless as Prime Minister?

These are two of the conundrums that Steve Richards tackles in his study of Prime Ministers from Wilson to May. He writes that you see the seeds of a Prime Minister's downfall in the very events and personal qualities that enabled a reach to high office.

The Conservatives scored one major success in that bleak year, 1974, when Margaret Thatcher launched a campaign promise to abolish the rates. A little over a year later, her domestic image received a rocket boost when the Kremlin denounced her as the 'Iron Lady'. By 1990, she had fulfilled that promise to abolish the rates, and was still conducting foreign policy like an Iron Lady when the cold war ended. Together, those factors were what brought her down.

Tony Blair's early political experiences were all of Labour being humiliated by the Iron Lady, notably during the Falklands War, and getting a terrible press. His success was built on good relations with the media moguls, on the largely meaningless soubriquet 'New Labour' and he aimed to be as tough as Thatcher in dealing with dictators. Now the words most associated with Tony Blair are 'Iraq' and 'spin'.

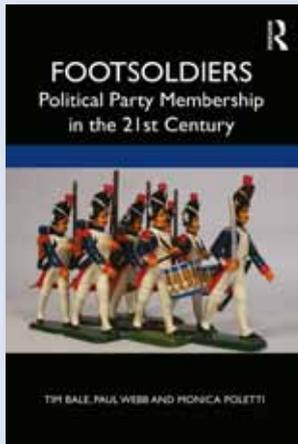
Theresa May was almost his polar opposite. She never cultivated journalists. She spent long periods out of the public eye, occasionally surfacing with a speech that created political waves, before returning to grapple with policy detail. That modus worked well at the Home Office, but Brexit demanded a Prime Minister with the narrative skill of a Thatcher, or Blair, to persuade the public that it was not a hopeless mess. May scarcely even tried to explain.

There is this, and much more, all in one very readable volume.

GILES RADICE'S LATEST BOOK *A LOVE AFFAIR WITH EUROPE* is subtitled 'The Case for A European Future'. Taken together this title and subtitle neatly convey that the book is about both a deeply-held personal attachment to Europe by the author as well as a lucid and logically-argued case for the UK to remain part of the EU.

Having read some of Giles Radice's previous books, such as his *Diaries* and *The New Germans* I was struck by the slimness of this 60 page volume – described by Polly Toynbee as Giles' "little red book" – and was even more struck on reading it how succinctly it dealt with a huge subject, and dealing with it comprehensively without, seemingly, omitting anything relevant. Succinct as in the following paragraph describing the premiership of David Cameron: "...the pragmatic Euroscepticism of the Conservative Leader David Cameron failed to satisfy either the growing body of ideological Eurosceptics or the dwindling band of pro-Europeans in the Tory Party. For Cameron this would eventually lead to both personal and national disaster." Yes, indeed, but alongside this analysis are also some striking Euro-statistics about trade and investment which we need to be reminded of, such as the example of Belgium – our eighth biggest trading partner – and the country to which we export twice as much as we do to India! Giles Radice – whose love affair with Europe began as a 19 year-old discovering the continent on his bicycle – has been consistent in his commitment to the EEC/ European Community/EU throughout his long political career. He describes himself as a "Patriot for Europe" but alongside this, his love for Britain, for his home county of Lincolnshire and his former North-East Parliamentary constituency are all also in evidence. A strong strand of his opposition to Brexit is his belief that it is Britain and some of its most vulnerable regions that stand to lose most.

While Giles Radice deplores the role of the anti-European press of recent years, in huge contrast to the pro-European press majority in the 1975 Referendum, he criticises even more strongly our politicians – "above all the party leaders" – for failing to make a positive European case for virtually all of the period of our EU membership. It is hard to disagree, although I know from my own attempts as a Minister just how hard it is to get positive coverage about the EU and to convey the reality that most European Ministerial meetings are consensual and result in sensible co-operative measures. One of my Parliamentary colleagues said to me after reading this book that it was a great pity it had not appeared just before the Referendum campaign. A fair point, but even at this late stage this highly readable book deserves a wide audience during what we must assume is the period of the Brexit end-game.



PARTY MEMBERS – A THREATENED SPECIES?

Denis MacShane

*Footsoldiers:
Political Party Membership
in the 21st Century*

by Tim Bale, Paul Webb &
Monica Poletti

Published by Routledge

EVERY MP DEPENDS ON PARTY MEMBERS within the constituency. They do the donkey work of canvassing, tell the MP what they think of the party, its leader and its policies. They raise funds, run street stalls and pot-luck suppers. They are the beating heart of democracy.

They now decide who will be prime minister. Just 90,000 Tory Party members elected Boris Johnson. Had Tory MPs decided on the Conservative leader, Johnson would never have been chosen. But Tory rank and file members adored him.

Twenty five years ago, Labour moderates embraced the idea that allowing every party member to decide leaders and policy would produce a Labour party closer to voters. But the iron political law of unintended consequences kicked in. Labour's membership rose to over 500,000 after Ed Miliband changed party policy to allow anyone to join for £3 – less than the price of a pint – which has produced the most left wing and centrally controlled Labour Party in decades. When Labour MPs wanted to remove Jeremy Corbyn, he turned to the party members and trounced his opponents.

Until now rank and file party political members have not received much academic attention. Now Professor Tim Bale, who has emerged as the doyen of top political scientists, and two colleagues have put together a thorough study full of fascinating detail for any professional politician.

It is striking how old party members are. In 2017 56% of Tory Party members, 55% of Labour members and 76% of UKIP members were over 56. The LibDems and SNP were a bit younger, but not much. No party's members in the 18-25 age group constitute more than 10% per of total membership. 46% of Labour members read the Guardian, 33% of Tories read the Telegraph, while 28% of SNP members, 24% of Greens, and 22% of UKIP members read no paper at all. Which begs the question where do they get their political ideas?

In 2017, 72.5% of Labour members – but only 17.9% of Tory members and 5.2 per cent of UKIP members – said they would be happy with a Muslim candidate.

In the 1950s there were more than 4 million party members. By the 1970s this figure was halved. It went down regularly with modest spikes as parties looked like winning power as the Tories did in 1979, and then Labour in 1997. The Ed Miliband £3 membership saw Labour Party members soaring to over 500,000, but already this figure is sinking.

There are endless statistics that will fascinate anyone whose life has been spent in politics. But they do not answer the two key questions. Of the 52 million voting age citizens in the UK why are so few attracted to linking up with political parties which are core organisations of any democracy worthy of the name? And does this matter?



A MAN WITH A COAT OF MANY COLOURS

Gerry Hayes

*Jacob's Ladder: The
Unauthorised Biography
of Jacob Rees-Mogg*

by Michael Ashcroft,

Published by Biteback

Ashcroft has done a remarkable job in weaving together the story of a mass of contradictions

THIS BOOK IS NOT A SONG OF PRAISE for Jacob Rees-Mogg. It is an honest attempt to try and discover who he really is. Is the double breasted suit and nineteenth century affectation armour to protect him from the character that he has created? Or is this rather peculiar man the real deal?

Jacob Rees-Mogg is an enigma within a riddle. And a man who is a mass of contradictions. Intensely private, but with a penchant for being a show off. Who takes the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church so literally that they must be obeyed to the letter, no matter what the consequences. He is ruthless in the pursuit of money for its own sake rather from what it can buy. And a man who from the age of twelve wanted to be Prime Minister by the time he is was seventy.

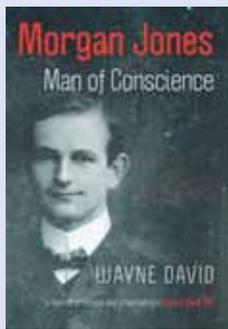
All his great opportunities in life were given to him by his father William's connections. They were very close. The role played by Nanny Crook is still pivotal. She used to change his linen once a week at both Eton and Oxford. And it was at Eton that the persona that we know became fixed, but not without cost. He was a 'tragic figure' subject to vicious bullying. Two framed photographs of the Queen and Margaret Thatcher didn't help. Things were not much better at Oxford. Observers are not sure whether he really cared.

His ruthlessness in business and his private life has shocked some of his friends. He broke off a potential romance on the advice of a priest as she was a divorcee. He staged an attempted coup against his friend and employer at Lloyd George management. Mogg was also the godfather to his disabled son. He also had to leave the board of the hospital of St John and St Elizabeth because he didn't approve of doctors prescribing the contraceptive pill.

Needless to say he thought that John Major was a 'stinker', Cameron a 'jellyfish' and his bitter comments urging Theresa May to resign prompted his friend Simon Hoare MP to remark, 'that's not the Jacob I know...churlish, irresponsible, unsportsmanlike'. To be fair, Hoare is mostly complimentary, but occasionally lifts the veil with a fascinating insight. 'I think he is of the right, but doesn't necessarily like the right'.

Ashcroft has done a remarkable job in weaving together the story of a mass of contradictions. The ruthlessness, the charm, the talent, the religious fervour, the ambition, all hidden beneath the image of a Spy caricature.

But who is the real Rees-Mogg? I doubt that he knows the answer or even wants to. I hope that one day he finds out.



'MAN OF CONSCIENCE' RESCUED FROM OBSCURITY

Hywel Francis

Morgan Jones: Man of Conscience

by Wayne David

Published by Welsh Academic Press

WAYNE DAVID HAS NOW PRODUCED two thoroughly researched and readable biographies of his predecessors as MPs for Caerphilly. Nothing startling about that – given that Wayne is an accomplished Welsh labour historian.

What is striking about *Remaining True: A Biography of Ness Edwards* (2006) and now *Morgan Jones: Man of Conscience* is that they tell the life-stories of two conscientious objectors who represented their constituency sequentially for five decades, from 1921 to 1968. Surely that must be some very special world parliamentary record.

Morgan Jones was the first conscientious objector to be elected to the House of Commons, in 1921, – an achievement is all the more remarkable given how close it was to the end of the Great War and the 'Khaki Election' of 1918.

Whilst Morgan Jones has always been recognised – at least in Wales – for being the first C.O. in Parliament, Wayne David has set out to rescue his significant Parliamentary career from almost total obscurity.

When Morgan Jones died in 1939, aged only fifty-three, it was widely recognised that this was due to the privations he endured in prison between 1917 and 1919. But his heavy Parliamentary workload was also a contributory factor.

Wayne David speculates that Morgan Jones would have risen to high office in the post-war Labour Government. It is irrefutable that his contributions across an impressive range of policy areas in the inter-war period revealed undoubted political acumen, but also a capacity to anticipate emerging progressive Labour policies in the decades after World War Two.

As a former teacher, he was naturally keen to engage in education policy. Whilst his opportunities were limited as a junior Education Minister (twice) his work alongside Fabians such as RH Tawney in the 1930's anticipated the emergence of comprehensive education in the 1960's.

Similarly his journey as an internationalist from Christian pacifism to a commitment to international collective security meant that he was outspoken in his condemnation of the advance of Fascism across Europe particularly the bombing of Guernica and the persecution of Jews.

His evolving support for Indian Independence, improved social and trade union rights in the West Indies and a national homeland for the Jewish people all anticipated things to come.

At the same time – alongside his internationalism – he was a very early advocate of various forms of Welsh Devolution. Sceptics might have called him a 'premature' devolutionist.

Wayne David has done a great service to the memory of Morgan Jones, a significant Welsh Parliamentarian in difficult times who helped shape the post-war world, although he never lived to be part of that world.

TRIBUTES

MICHAEL ENGLISH

24 December 1930 – 13 July 2019

Labour MP for Nottingham West 1964–1983

Remembered by Sally Grocott



Had Michael been alive today he would have had a great deal to say about the constitutional arguments raging over Brexit. He was a recognised authority on parliamentary procedure, whose expertise would have been very useful in the on-going controversies.

Michael was always opposed to membership of the Common Market, serving as secretary of a group of like-minded Labour MPs. He was PPS to the anti-Market Douglas Jay, only to be sacked in 1967 when he abstained on a vote to join. He was later reinstated but was sacked again in October for rebelling against the government. He was vociferous during the 1975 Referendum campaign and strongly criticised Harold Wilson for threatening to sack anti-EC ministers.

In the 1960s Michael was a member of the Publications and Parliamentary Proceedings Committee where he raised the possibility of the broadcasting of the House. A report in favour was published, but was rejected in a free vote by a majority of one. He was later a member of the Select Committee set up to consider the possibility of a trial.

In 1971 he had carried out a poll of members and thought there was a majority for televising parliament, but permanent radio broadcasts did not begin until 1978, after a dry run in 1975. Television cameras were first permitted in the Lords in 1984, and, finally, in 1990 television broadcasting of the Commons was allowed, after an eighteen months trial.

During eighteen years in parliament, Michael argued, among other things, that hereditary peers should not be allowed to sit in the Lords, and that there should be a register of MPs' interests, particularly with regard to payments from lobbyists. He served as Chairman of Labour's parliamentary affairs group from 1970 to 1976.

Michael English was born in Southport, attending grammar school there. He studied law at Liverpool University, but chose not to go into practice. He joined the Labour Party aged 18 and four years later was elected to Rochdale Borough Council. In 1959 he contested Shipley, then a safe Conservative seat. In 1964, he fought Nottingham West, where Peter Tapsell was the sitting MP with a majority of just 164. Michael won with a majority of 2,272, and held the seat until it was abolished in boundary changes in 1983.

Later, Michael served on the London Borough of Lambeth and on a number of local organisations, and chaired the London Local Involvement Network. He was a long standing member of the Association and an assiduous attender at all member meetings. His wife Carol survives him with their son and daughter.

ROD RICHARDS

12 March 1947 – 13 July 2019

Conservative MP for Clwyd North West 1992–1997

Remembered by Nick Bennett

Rod Richards was a true son of Wales, rugby player, Welsh speaker, passionate and a loyal friend.

I first got to know him when I was candidate for Pembroke in 1987, and he was standing in neighbouring Carmarthen. In the company of friends, he was witty and charming. Sadly he would let his temper get the better of him when dealing with

colleagues from other parties.

The son of Ivor and Jenny Richards, Rod grew up in Llanelli, a Labour bastion dominated by steel, mining and the docks, where his father worked as a fitter. His father's industrial accident and the perceived indifference of the union first drew Rod towards Conservatism. Later, his study of Friedman and Hayek and belief that with hard work a person from humble background could succeed in politics naturally attracted him to Mrs Thatcher's Conservatism.

Educated at Llandovery College and Llanelli Grammar School he dropped out of Aberystwyth university after a year, joined the Royal Marines, then returned to University in Swansea at the age of 24 and obtained a First in economics. During a philosophy lecture, he met his wife Elizabeth, nee Knight. He recalled: "It was a high brow meeting of minds: we were both in fits of laughter as neither of us understood a word". They married in 1975 and had three children – Rhodri, Trystan, and Elen.

After a stint as an economic forecaster for the BBC, Rod joined the security services in Northern Ireland, returning to Wales in 1983 as a newsreader on the Welsh language channel S4C. He had to resign when he became a parliamentary candidate, so he and Liz bought a pub in Ystradgynlais in Powys. As his son recalled, "It was incredibly hard work as Mum and Dad both had jobs aside from the pub". He installed a tenant who later decamped owing more than £10,000.

Rod lost the Vale of Glamorgan by-election to Labour in 1989, but won Clwyd North West in 1992, with the largest Conservative majority in Wales. Within two years he was a Welsh Office minister. Sadly his career came to abrupt end when the *News of the World* revealed his affair with a woman 20 years his junior. A year later he lost his seat in the 1997 Labour landslide. Afterwards – he said – with two children at private school, several homes and no income, "I fished around for some work, and being an ex-Tory MP and an ex Tory Minister was as about as popular as a rat on a communion plate".

He was still popular in the Welsh Party and was chosen to lead the party in the new Welsh Assembly in 1999, but stood aside after more trouble in his personal life. As he later admitted he had a serious alcohol problem. An incident in Richmond led to a court case, in which he was found not guilty. By 2002 debts of £300,000 were about to lead to bankruptcy, and he resigned his seat.

Rod's political career was over, as was his marriage to Liz, but he conquered his drink problems and lived out the rest of his life in Richmond. Cancer was diagnosed in 2010, but he survived a further eight years, seeing his daughter married and his eight grandchildren born.

SIR KENNETH WARREN

August 15 1926 – June 29 2019

Conservative MP for Hastings and Rye 1970–1992

Remembered by Andy McSmith

I was a little surprised to see the headline on Sir Kenneth Warren's obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* which fondly described him as a "loyal ally of Margaret Thatcher." He undoubtedly was, at the beginning of her long stretch as party leader, but my brief time of knowing him told a different story.

I wholeheartedly agree with the obituary writers who paid tribute to his kindness and his sense of humour. When I first met him, he was a long established presence on the Conservative back benches, a much respected chairman of the trade and industry select committee. He had nothing to gain from befriending a new arrived Lobby journalist, yet was very courteous, friendly and funny with me.

It is a well-known story that when first elected for Hastings in 1970, he bought the number plate 1066 from his predecessor, so that voters would know who he was as

he drove around his constituency. Once, when he received a letter mistakenly addressed to Warren Hastings MP, he returned it marked: "This member died in 1818."

I recall seeing him in the Chamber after what I suspect was a long, relaxing lunch. As the debate ground on, there was a disturbance below the aisle when Labour MPs accused the Estimate Committee chairman of being fast asleep. This produced no response from the alleged culprit, who was leaning back with his head and outstretched arms on the back of the bench. Afterwards, I suggested to him that he had perhaps nodded off, but he claimed, dead pan: "I was resting my eyes."

He was one of the team who organised Margaret Thatcher's victory in the leadership in 1975, but unlike almost everyone else involved, was never rewarded with a government post above the level of PPS. I do not know why, but I wonder if his fondness for jokes made her doubt his reliability.

But the way she treated Sir Geoffrey Howe in July 1989, he told me, was "very cruel" and would probably be her undoing, and forecast that Michael Heseltine would succeed her. Not long afterwards I had a written note from him to say that he had spoken to him and suggested that I arrange to meet him. Being on the fringe of a plot against the Prime Minister was heady stuff for someone as new to Parliament as I was.



PARLIAMENTS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE BALKANS

by John Austin, Chair of the Parliamentary Outreach Trust

At the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2003 the Deputy Speaker of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Dr Milorad Drlevic, sought my support, as Chair of the British Group of the IPU (BGIPU), for setting up an inter-parliamentary forum for the west Balkans, a region recovering from years of internal conflicts, wars and ethnic divisions.

PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM MONTENEGRO were also seeking independence and separation from Serbia. After the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1992, Serbia and Montenegro established a new federation, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which lasted until 2003 when it became the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Despite the Union they operated as separate entities except in the areas of foreign policy and defence. They even had different currencies – Serbia kept the dinar and Montenegro chose the euro. Montenegro was keen for full independence, which it achieved in 2006.

Montenegro was the smallest of the former Yugoslav republics (population 650,000), in a union with Serbia, the largest (population 7 million), but was keen to establish itself on the international stage. Tiny Montenegro planned to set up an international forum where parliamentarians from the region could meet freely together, whatever the positions of their respective governments, to discuss issues of common concern. They were fulfilling the aims and ideals of the founders of the IPU, a French MP Frédéric Passy and the UK's William Randall Cremer, who in 1889 had brought parliamentarians together to engage in dialogue to promote representative democracy and peace.

BGIPU was unable to provide material support to the venture, but through its members and officers, provided encouragement and advice and one year later the Cetinje Forum was born. The Forum was named after the former Royal Capital of Montenegro where it was held in 2004 when Nigel Evans MP (Ribble Valley) and I were invited to address the inaugural meeting. We were accompanied

by Kenneth Courtenay, Secretary of the BGIPU who, with his team, had done much to support the Montenegrin initiative.

In July this year, I received a surprise invitation from the parliament of Montenegro to address the 15th anniversary Cetinje Parliamentary Forum.

In 2004 political differences made it impossible for Kosovo to be represented. Today many issues still divide the region but where dialogue between governments has not always been possible, the Cetinje Forum has continued to meet, bringing parliamentarians together often with representatives from neighbouring countries and on my return, 15 years later, for the 21st Cetinje Forum, not only were all the countries of the former Yugoslavia present, including Kosovo, but they were also joined by parliamentarians from Albania.

The theme of this year's Forum was Parliament and the Media with sessions on press and journalistic freedom and the role of public broadcasters in promoting political dialogue. The Forum was opened by the Speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro, Ivan Brajovic, and in addition to MPs from the region, speakers included Margareta Cederfelt (Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE), Patrik Penninckx (Head of Information Society Dept., Council of Europe), Richard Burnley (Director of Legal Policy, European Broadcasting Union) and Directors and representatives of public broadcasting from Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia. I had been invited to give the closing address, commenting on both the discussions and on the role of the Forum.

A copy of the transcript of my address can be found at <https://www.johnaust.in/2019/10/political-notes.html>



NANCY ASTOR STATUE

On 28th November 2019 at 1pm, 100 years to the day since her successful election was announced, the first statue of the first woman in the British Parliament will be unveiled. The statue of Nancy Astor is a community project crowdfunded in just 89 days by almost 1,000 people. Hayley Gibbs (pictured left with the silicon mould ready for bronze pouring at the end of September) was selected from a competition as the statue sculptress earlier this year. The statue is due to be unveiled by a senior member of Parliament on a site outside the Astor's former family home (now belonging to the city council) on Plymouth Hoe.

TO FOLLOW THE FINAL STAGES PLEASE VISIT:

Facebook.com/ladyastorstatue **Twitter: @ladyastorstatue** **www.ladyastorstatue100.co.uk**

Transport to and from London Paddington station on the day of the unveiling, on the newly-named Nancy Astor train, for any serving or former woman member of the House of Commons is FREE. Details will appear on these links in the next few weeks.

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