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THE HOUSE

Parliament's Magazine

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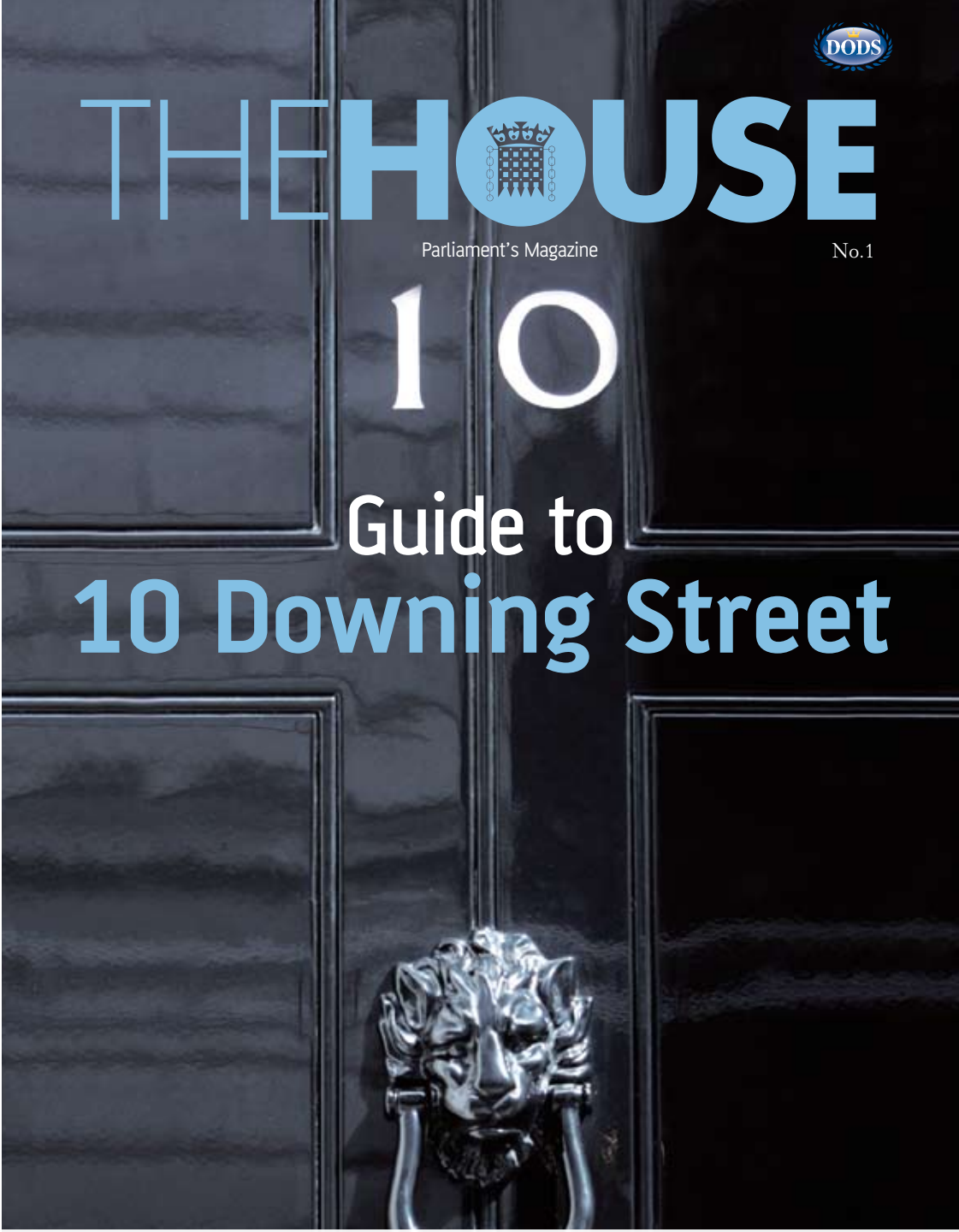
Guide to 10 Downing Street



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DODS PoliticsHome

We all know what the entrance to No 10 Downing Street looks like. But few understand what goes on behind that famous front door. The centre of power, within walking distance of Parliament and Buckingham Palace, has its own way of operating, depending on the incumbent. David Cameron, unlike his predecessors since Harold Wilson, does not have a policy unit. However, he has a team of special advisors and has appointed Jeremy Heywood as his Cabinet Secretary, an experienced old hand who has served several Prime Ministers. This guide throws some light on the workings of 10 Downing Street, with the help of those who have worked there, as well as those still in the place.

GISELA STUART MP Editor

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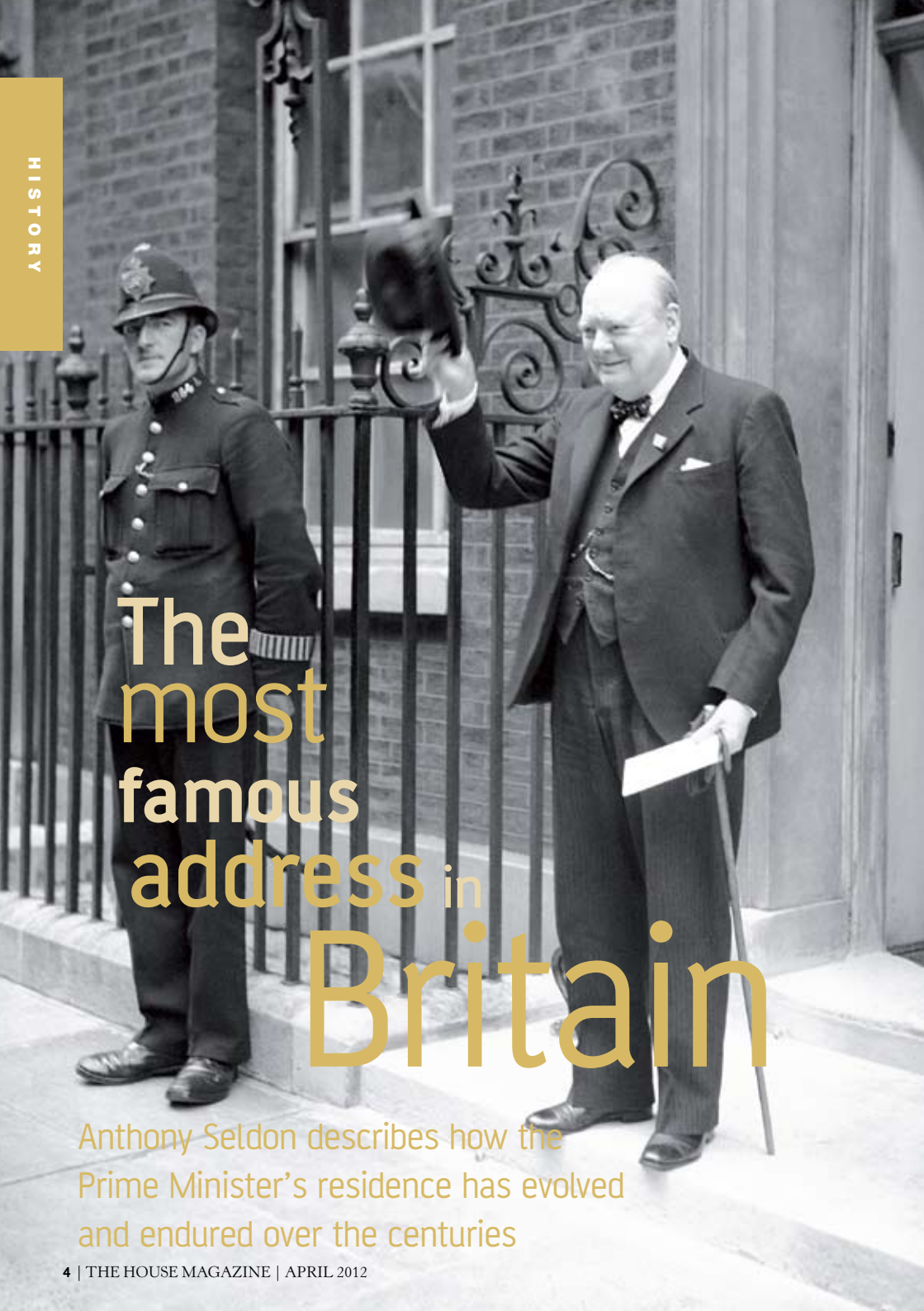

The most famous address in Britain

Anthony Seldon describes how the Prime Minister's residence has evolved and endured over the centuries

Anthony Seldon explains the history of the terraced house at the heart of the British state

Number 10, Downing Street may or may not be the most famous political office in the world. It is certainly the oddest, being in effect a terraced house which was lucky to survive in a cul de sac which has now all but disappeared.

One cannot fully appreciate what goes on in the building today without understanding a little of its history over the last 277 years. In 1682, George Downing, who had been head of intelligence for Oliver Cromwell after the beheading of Charles I, began to build a series of 15 houses in what is now known as Downing Street. The present Number 10 in fact consists of two houses, the smaller built by Downing at the front and a grander residence built on slightly higher ground, erected in about 1677.

George II (1727-60) offered Number 10 to Sir Robert Walpole, generally accepted to be the country's first Prime Minister. Walpole declined the offer as a personal gift, but later accepted it in his capacity as 'First Lord of the Treasury' The brass letter box on the black front door to Number 10 still bears these very words. The popular Palladian architect, William Kent, was employed to adapt the buildings at the front and rear to a residence suitable for Walpole. Kent linked both houses, creating grand rooms and staircases in the larger house at the back. Walpole himself lived in the house until 1742, but for a time after that the house was occupied by lesser politicians. It enjoyed a revival when William Pitt (the 'Younger'), the longest serving inhabitant of the building (1783-1801, 1804-06) moved in. He deemed further work necessary to what he described as his 'vast, awkward house'. Robert Taylor, another distinguished architect of his day, was employed to enhance the building, and a second connecting corridor was built between both houses, creating the inner courtyard still present today. The Cabinet Room as it now stands was created in 1796, by knocking down a wall and extending the room to the east, using two double Corinthian columns to support the structure. They still stand proudly two hundred years later.

> "2013 will see the 50th anniversary of Downing Street in its new guise"

In the 1820s, another celebrated architect, John Soane, was employed to spruce up the house further, creating the wood-panelled State Drawing Room, as well as the smaller dining room or breakfast room on the first floor at the side of the house. But the nineteenth century saw mixed fortunes for the house, and it ›

Left: Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the steps of 10 Downing Street

> “In the post-war period, a consensus was emerging that this awkward house…had served its time”

narrowly survived a plan in 1839 to demolish all Downing's houses on the north side of the street. In the late 1860s, the buildings on the south side of Downing Street were pulled down to make way for George Gilbert-Scott's imposing and monumental Foreign Office, which utterly dwarfs Number 10 on the other side of the road. Number 10 had another narrow escape when, in 1879, fire destroyed Number 12, leaving just Number 10 and Number 11 standing from the initial cul de sac. When Benjamin Disraeli moved into Number 10 in 1877, he demanded improvements and modifications which included hot running water. Electric lighting came to the house in 1894, replacing the gas and candlelight that had up until that point been the source of all illumination. Telephones seem to have been introduced in the same decade.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the building steadily decay. Neville

Chamberlain, who became Prime Minister in 1937, had ambitious plans to rectify the problems and give Number 10 a facelift, which disappeared from view with his own departure in 1940. The house suffered near misses and structural damage during the Blitz in the autumn of 1940, and in the post-war period, a consensus emerged that this awkward house, far from ideal as either a residence or an office for the Prime Minister, had served its time.

Incoming Prime Minister Harold Macmillan duly established a committee in July 1957 to consider 'proposals for reconstruction' of Number 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street. Years of Whitehall squabbling followed, concluding in a compromise to retain the facades of Number 10 and 11 with substantial re-building inside, and to reconstruct Number 12 wholesale. Macmillan and his staff moved out of Downing Street in July 1960 and settled into Admiralty House, between Trafalgar Square and The Mall, to clear the space for work scheduled to take two years or less. But trade union disputes, and the shocking state of the building and its foundations, led to the project taking over three years. It was not until September 1963 at a final cost of £1 million, over double the initial estimate, that Macmillan was able to move back into his new Downing Street office and home. Within a month, he had fallen from power, damaged irreparably by the Profumo Scandal.

Next year, 2013, will see the 50th anniversary of Downing Street in its new guise. The building today is still very substantially the same as that which Macmillan re-entered in 1963. In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher employed the classical architect, Quinlan Terry, who had worked on the building in 1960-63, to undertake some elaborate interior redecoration in the three interlinked State

James Callaghan, Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and David Cameron: Prime Ministers, past and present prepare to enter, or leave, the famous building

For more on the history of 10 Downing Street, please visit http://www.number10.gov.uk/history-and-tour/

Drawing Rooms at the back, overlooking the garden. As Terry said of Mrs Thatcher, "she wanted the rooms to be more imposing. She wanted pictures of achievers, like Nelson and Wellington, and she felt that, after the Falklands War, the time had come to do something mildly triumphalist and confident".

The building survived an IRA mortar bomb landing in the garden in February 1991.

> **"If Walpole were to walk into Number 10 today there is much about the building he would still recognise"**

With Number 10 an ever greater terrorist target, the building was strengthened during the summers of 1993 and 1995, and new computer cabling installed to bring it into the digital age. Residential accommodation on the top floors of Numbers 10, 11 and 12 has been altered with the coming and going of Prime Ministers, and Number 12 morphed from the Chief Whip's office to a communication centre for the P.M. Officials have been removed from the office at the end of the Cabinet Room, which became the 'den' of Tony Blair and now David Cameron.

If Walpole were to walk into Number 10 today, there is much about the building he would still recognise. Its survival through the vicissitudes of approaching 300 years is one of the wonders of British history.

Anthony Seldon is author of several books on Number 10 and Prime Ministers

The return of Sir Humphrey

Is it wise for David Cameron to trust the Civil Service to run the Downing Street Policy Unit? **Paul Waugh** investigates

In an interview for *The House* magazine earlier this year, David Cameron let slip what he felt was one of his earliest mistakes in office. It was not the embryonic NHS Bill, the Building Schools for Future row or even a diplomatic faux-pas overseas. No, it was his failure to get a grip on his Downing Street Policy Unit.

"I've boosted the policy unit, who are doing a great job actually," the PM told us. "That's something I didn't get right first time round. We were so keen to get the Coalition going and everything working here, I didn't put in place a strong enough policy unit. Now I've sorted that out and it means I get a lot of good advice and can challenge – not always challenge, but help implement – the way things are implemented."

He didn't quite say it, but the PM was hinting that some of the other early problems of his No.10 tenure stemmed from the lack of a strong centre. That lack of 'challenge' had meant his eye was off the ball on several departments and it was time for change.

The need for a greater grip on the government machine is an age-old problem faced by Prime Ministers. But for a leader who made his name in Opposition as someone who wanted to roll back the state, this was always going to be a conundrum.

From the ill-fated Lansley health changes to the transparency culture, from planning reform to revolutionising the welfare state, no one can say that the Coalition government is not interested in policy. Yet after two years of hard knocks, David Cameron is finding out the hard way that delivering real change on the ground requires an alchemy of both political nous and civil service expertise.

The Prime Minister knows better than most that his government's performance may ultimately rest with the people who work behind the scenes in the most prestigious yet mysterious arm of the Cameron Downing Street: the Number 10 Policy (and Implementation) Unit.

When Cameron took office in 2010, he arrived with two key procedural ambitions: to end the Blair– and Brown-style micromanagement of Whitehall and to keep his opposition pledge to cut the number of special advisers. It's also fair to say that his mind was not overly focused on policy because the need to tackle the deficit and identify spending cuts was the overriding, all-consuming priority.

Within days of the election, Cameron disbanded the PM's Delivery Unit and the

Different leader, different styles... determined to cut down the tally of special advisers, David Cameron staffed his Policy Unit mainly with civil servants rather than the political appointees favoured by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown

PM's Strategy Unit. But he didn't install enough 'strong' staff. After a series of policy controversies and reverses, in February 2011 he decided that he needed a new approach. The shock departure of communications chief Andy Coulson acted as a catalyst for the new setup.

Despite his belief in localism and delegated responsibility, Cameron realised what each of his predecessors over the past 40 years has realised: that Downing Street needs strong central clout to craft and deliver policy change. He decided to create a combined 'Policy and Implementation Unit', a Brains Trust and personal management consultancy rolled into one.

However, mindful of his pledge on special advisers, he staffed it mainly with civil servants rather than political appointees: the exact opposite of Blair and Brown's habit of getting politicos to run the policy machine. Civil servants are said to have whispered gently that having too many Tory and Lib Dem policy unit people could lead to conflict or confusion.

Since the 1960s, the Downing Street Policy Unit has carried a certain cachet. It was seen as the think tanker's think tank. But these days there seems to be less politics and more policy.

In terms of 'beefing up' the team under Cameron, the key shift in gear came with the appointment of Paul Kirby in March 2011 as Head of Policy Development.

An iconoclast, he shares with the PM's senior policy adviser Steve Hilton a passionate belief in payment by results. Like Hilton, Kirby's background is far from the playing fields of Eton. A Liverpudlian, his father was one of those who were handed redundancy notices as Derek Hatton's infamous taxis scuttled around the city

> **"The shock departure of communications chief Andy Coulson acted as a catalyst for the new setup"**

delivering P45s in the 1980s.

Kirby works hand-in-glove with Kris Murrin, the Head of Implementation, to ensure that policy translates into action.

Murrin now liaises directly with Ian Watmore, the Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary and former Accenture management expert. Watmore and Murrin have recently tried to knit together the 'implementation' functions of the Cabinet Office (for which Francis ›

Photo: Jenn Warren/Save the Children

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Ian Watmore (left), the Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary, works closely with Kris Murrin, the Head of Implementation, to try to knit together the 'implementation' functions of the Cabinet with Number 10's own implementation tasks

Maude is responsible) with Number 10's own implementation tasks.

The Policy and Implementation Unit itself is staffed by officials of various ages, some of whom have links to the Conservatives, some of whom are traditionally neutral career civil servants. Many have worked both in and out of government. There is a nine-strong team of 'man markers' (see next page), who have to make sure that Whitehall departments are on track.

So far, the Unit has been successful in helping David Cameron in cleaning up after previous U-turns and in avoiding repetition of past mistakes. It is viewed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats as a shared resource, and Lib Dem policy chief Julian Astle works with it as closely as the Tories. Even though Steve Hilton has gone on sabbatical, his deputy Rohan Silva has regular liaison with the Unit team.

But despite the political input, perhaps what is most interesting about the Cameron Downing Street is the importance of civil servants. While Kirby and Murrin are in overall charge of the unit, they report directly to Sir Jeremy Heywood, the Cabinet Secretary. It is claimed that Sir Jeremy was the key figure who persuaded Cameron to go for a civil service-dominated policy unit. A veteran of the Blair and Brown reigns in Number 10, Heywood was the first and only Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office before his elevation to his current post at the start of this year.

As if to underline the diminution of the special adviser cadre, the Prime Minister took the unusual step of not replacing James O'Shaughnessy, who resigned as Policy Director last year. His role, once seen as the vital link with the Conservative Party, was absorbed by Hilton's team. While Hilton was seen by insiders as providing the Prime Minister with 'emotional intelligence', O'Shaughnessy provided the 'rational intelligence' – the yin to Hilton's yang. With Hilton's departure, neither is there.

Some Conservatives grumble that there isn't enough of a political counterweight to the civil service. But there are 'political' people in Downing Street with a policy role. Major era veteran Patrick Rock is a key part of the team, working alongside Silva. They don't 'man mark' individual departments and instead supervise cross-government plans. Andrew Dunlop is another 'political' staffer who takes care of Scotland policy.

> "Most interesting about the Cameron Downing Street is the importance of civil servants"

Former Number 10 insiders believe that although Cameron has learned that he needs a firm central grip on his departments, he stored up further trouble by watering down the status of his political advisers. Under Blair and Brown, Policy Unit staff sat in on all key departmental meetings and were seen as the PM's 'man in the room'. They weren't more powerful than Cabinet ministers, but often they had more clout than ministers of state and stood up to civil servants as a result.

HEAD OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Paul Kirby

A former Audit Commission director, he hit it off with George Osborne in opposition while on secondment from KPMG. Kirby is in charge of making sure all Whitehall departments do what they promise.

HEAD OF IMPLEMENTATION

Kris Murrin

Australian-born Murrin has an unorthodox background, with stints as a former TV psychologist and work in Blair's own Delivery Unit. She briefed the Tories in opposition on how Whitehall works – and briefed Whitehall on what the Tories wanted.

THE 9 'MAN MARKERS' IN THE UNIT

Susan Acland-Hood – Education and Children

Formerly responsible for Home Affairs in the Unit, Acland-Hood was recently appointed. Experienced civil servant who worked under Gordon Brown. Replaces Chris Brown, a former Private Secretary to the Treasury Chief Secretary who was recently made deputy ambassador in Zimbabwe.

Paul Bate – Health and social care

The man who took the health bill by the scruff of its neck and gutted it after the 'pause'. Known as a classic ex-McKinsey type, he's unafraid of telling it how it is. Ironically, he was the 'targets man' in Blair and Brown's PMDU, with responsibility for sticking to the 18 week waiting target. Replaces Sean Worth, who was parachuted into Lansley's office to get a grip on the bill too.

Michael Lynas - Cabinet office, Culture, Media & Sport

The former Bain&Co management consultant is in charge of getting fortnightly progress reports from departments. Worked with Francis Maude in Opposition to prepare the Tories for Government.

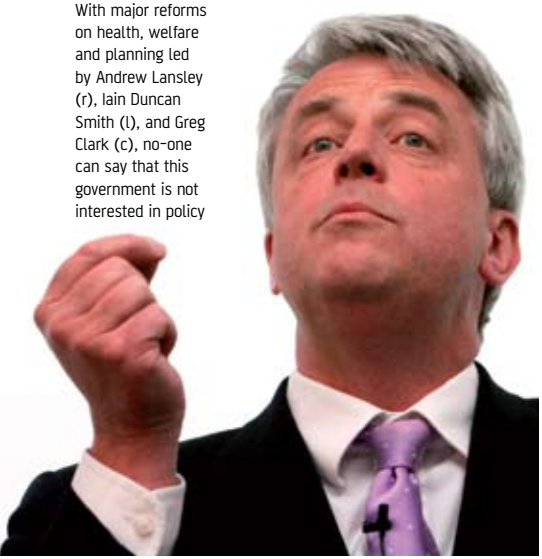
Richard Freer - Defence

Dr Freer is a Ministry of Defence insider who has worked extensively with Nato and on the UK's nuclear programme. A former private secretary for

Things have changed significantly. There was even a claim recently, unconfirmed and doubted by some in Downing Street, that special advisers were now even banned from some meetings of the Policy Unit. More generally, some believe that the PM's embrace of the civil service came after he panicked and overreacted at the backlash at his 'enemies of enterprise' speech.

Warnings from former Labour staffers over a lack of political input have been amplified a hundredfold since the post-Budget 'omnishambles'. From the pasty tax and granny tax, to the Abu Qatada confusion, the claim is that the civil service is to blame. Insiders hit back that many of these problems should have been spotted by the politicians, not least the Chancellor and the Home Secretary, let alone SpAds.

But it's not just Tory MPs like Douglas Carswell who now complain loudly about the way 'Sir Humphrey' has taken over Number 10. Jill Rutter, a former Treasury civil servant now at the Institute of Government, said recently that Cameron made a mistake in pledging fewer political operatives in Whitehall, which was supposed to end the New Labour era of political



With major reforms on health, welfare and planning led by Andrew Lansley (r), Iain Duncan Smith (l), and Greg Clark (c), no-one can say that this government is not interested in policy

control. "I think we are now reaping some of the impact of making that [the Policy Unit] a non-political operation."

Still, the final word must go to the PM himself. As he told *The House*: "I've been very impressed by the general professionalism, impartiality and general decency of the civil service. I think that if you have a plan, if you have clear policies, they are extremely effective at putting them in place. Like all Prime Ministers, you always want things done yesterday, you are always dissatisfied that the thing you announced yesterday doesn't happen the day after tomorrow, it takes a bit longer. That's part of my job, to be someone who having helped pull the policies together then makes sure they are properly implemented."

The Policy Implementation Unit's success or failure will be a key test not just of the Prime Minister's own political judgement, but also for his faith in the power of the civil service to deliver real change.

Paul Waugh is Dods Parliamentary Editor-in-Chief

defence issues since 2009, under Labour.

Miles Gibson – Communities and Local Government, Planning and Transport
Gibson has worked on the technicalities of the twin policy initiatives of overhauling the UK's planning system and of boosting housebuilding and switching council tenancies. A former Deputy Director for Economic and Social Policy at the CLG under Labour, he represents a link with the last administration's planning policies.

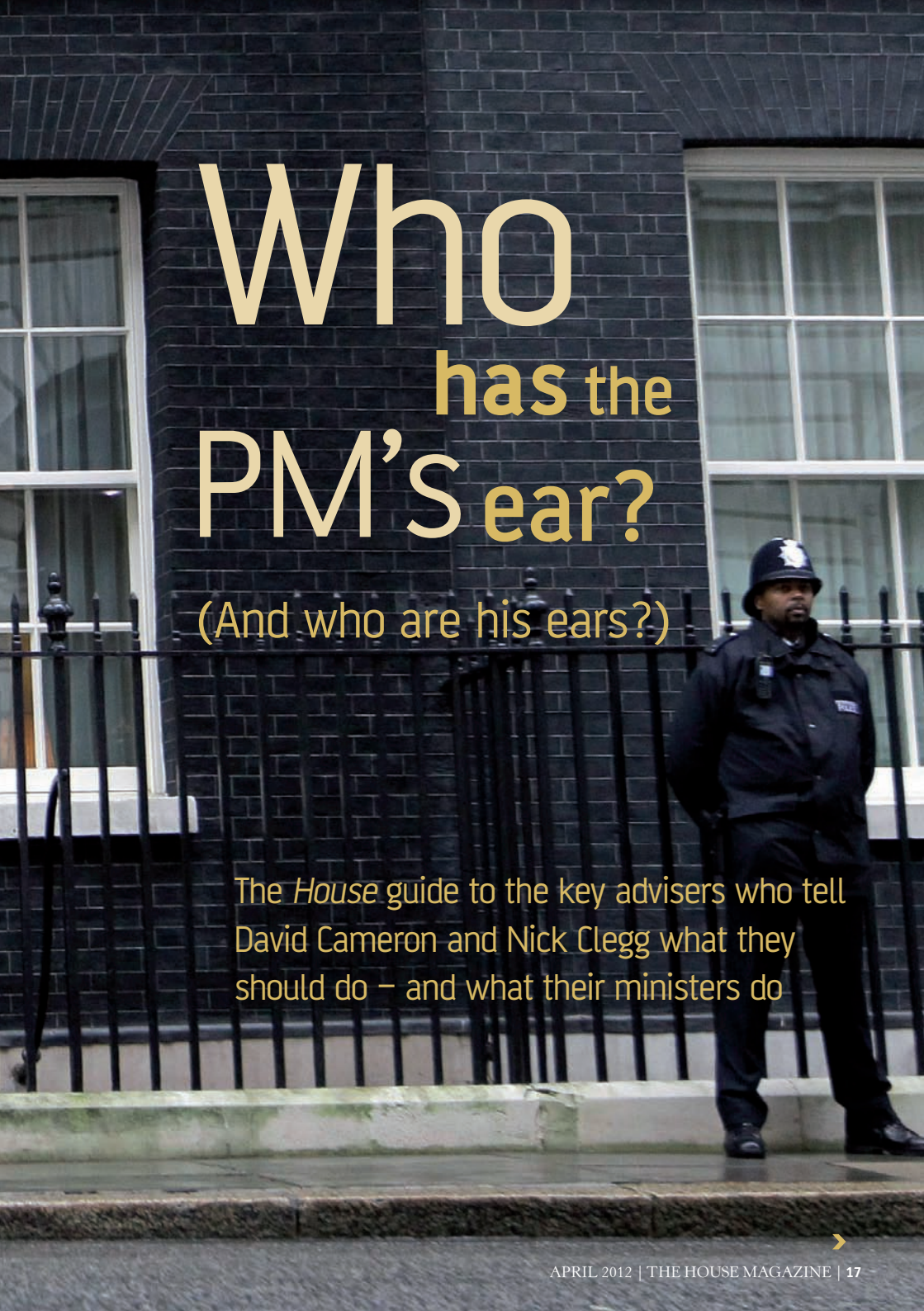
Hugh Harris – Work and Pensions, Welfare
A well-respected expert on the hugely complex welfare system, working with the DWP on the Universal Credit to ensure it is fit for purpose before being launched later this Parliament.

Ben Moxham – Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Just 32, Moxham is a former BP executive who helped create the Alternative Energy unit that was central to the firm's "Beyond Petroleum" marketing strategy. He also worked for private equity firm Riverstone, run by his former BP boss Lord Browne. Moxham has warned the PM of the dangers of green policy increasing utility bills.

Tim Luke – Business
Has key task of ensuring that the growth strategy is coordinated between BIS and the Treasury. Commands respect of Cable and his senior civil servants. Oversees attempts to turn rhetoric over red-tape cutting into reality.

Simon King – Home Office and MoJ
This is a huge brief for the newly appointed King,. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill and TPIMs are out of the way, but there is still a tricky Coaliton balance to strike between civil liberties and security. The Qatada row laid bare a remaining tension between No.10 and the Home Office. King, however, has expertise: he was private secretary for Home Affairs within Downing Street.

"Nominally, some of Nick Clegg's advisers are deputies of their Prime Ministerial counterparts"



Who has the PM's ear?

(And who are his ears?)

The *House* guide to the key advisers who tell David Cameron and Nick Clegg what they should do – and what their ministers do

Meet the special advisers, the power behind the ministerial throne...

Of all the Number 10 advisers, departing **Steve Hilton** is probably the best known. Generally acknowledged as a key influence on the PM, he's worked closely with Cameron for many years. Hilton has a background in marketing, having worked for M&C Saatchi on Tory election ads in 1992 and 1997.

He is the champion and originator of the Big Society agenda, which some feel will wither in his absence. Hilton will be in California for the next few years on sabbatical, but has pledged to return in time for the next election.

Another long-term Cameron friend and colleague is chief-of-staff **Ed Llewellyn** – an old Etonian, Oxford graduate and alumni of the Conservative Research Department (CRD), where the PM worked for five years. Even before Llewellyn took up his role as chief of Cameron's cross-party office he had good links with the Lib Dems – he worked for Paddy Ashdown in Bosnia. He also has strong international links from his time working in Brussels and for Chris Patten in Hong Kong.

Deputy chief of staff **Kate Fall**, another friend of Cameron's from Oxford, and a fellow CRD alumni, is Cameron's gatekeeper. She manages his time and works with Samantha Cameron's personal assistant **Isabel Spearman** to ensure the PM's diary dovetails with his wife's.

Julian Glover was appointed as David Cameron's chief speechwriter last October, taking **Ameet Gill**'s old job. Gill is now head of strategic communications at Number 10.

Glover comes to Number 10 from the *Guardian*, where his praise for the coalition – rare in those parts – is said to have impressed the Downing Street team. His partner is The *Times's* Matthew Parris.

Patrick Rock is a Tory veteran, credited in the 1970s with coining the phrase "cows moo, dogs bark, Labour puts up taxes". He provides an experienced eye with which to steer the Number 10 ship.

A new addition to the official ranks of Cameron's special advisers is **Shaun Bailey**. He joined the team after shutting down his My Generation charity, previously paraded as an example of the Big Society by the PM.

He makes frequent media appearances and has been one of the more outspoken

proponents of the reforming Cameroon vision – perhaps an heir to Steve?

Andrew Dunlop joins Number 10 via lobbying firm Politics International. But his roots are in the Conservative Party central office, where he was assistant director of research and head of briefing until the 2010 general election.

Another key member of the policy team is **Rohan Silva**, a former civil servant who left the Treasury in 2006 to work for George Osborne. A close ally of Hilton, he's a proponent of "new technology in government, transparency and environmentalism", according to a 2010 *Evening Standard* article.

Scots Tory **Ramsay Jones** was suspended from his spin doctor post in the Scottish

"The Deputy Prime Minister his own team of departmental advisers to give the Liberal Democrats more clout in Conservative-dominated departments"

party late last year, after allegations about his close relationship with the winning candidate.

In January 2012 he took up the position of government special adviser to the Scotland Office. His Liberal Democrat opposite number is **Christine Jardine**, who advises the deputy prime minister on Scottish issues.

Gabby Bertin, the PM's spokeswoman, is a trusted aide of Cameron, having been with him his since his campaign for the Tory leadership, is David Cameron's spokeswoman. She is assisted by **Alan Sendorek**, who has worked with many key Conservative MPs, including Michael Gove; he left Gove's team to bolster Cameron's press operation ahead of the general election. Deputy director of communications **Olly Grender** and deputy head of press **Sean Kemp**, formerly head of press at the Lib Dems, provide the Lib Dem contingent. Kemp worked for several years on the *Basildon Echo*, as Andy Coulson had done before him, and is said to have a hard-hitting, questioning style which helped Nick Clegg prepare for leadership debates.

The press team is completed by another long-term Cameron aide, former Sky Television employee **Liz Sugg** – who runs events for the team – and **Michael Salter**, head of broadcast.

Another new addition to Number 10 is **Laura Trott**, whose job is to deal with the Prime Minister's perceived "woman troubles".

She comes to the position as special adviser on women from Francis Maude's office where she is working as chief of staff in the Commons until she makes the jump to Number 10. **Alex Dawson** is another special adviser with a history in the Conservative Party, having worked in the party's research department.

> Harris is one of a number of departmental advisers who represent the Liberal Democrats and their leader across government departments where the Liberal Democrats don't have a lead cabinet minister.

Sean Worth has also had longstanding links with the Conservative Party: he has held two jobs at its HQ, spending the intervening time as an adviser on financial inclusion and social policy for the Association of British Insurers. He now advises on health policy and oversees Number 10's communications with the health department.

Another policy adviser is **Tim Colborne**, who worked for the Lib Dems as home affairs adviser for four years, leaving in 2006 to work in public policy roles for a number of organisations with Italian connections before being recruited as a spad after the election.

Two fairly recent Number 10 appointments are **Andrew Cooper**, director of strategy, and **Craig Oliver**, director of communications. Cooper has a background in social market research and was director

of the CRD, later becoming the party's chief strategist before leaving in 2003 to found polling company Populus. He is described by Tory blogger Tim Montgomerie as an "über-über moderniser".

Oliver, apparently approached personally for the job by his predecessor Andy Coulson, was formerly head of global news at the BBC. He oversaw coverage of the 2010 election for the BBC, and of the 2005 election for ITV.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's chief of staff, **Jonny Oates,** has worked on and off for the Liberal Democrats over the past few years –

The prime minister on the road, as Steve Hilton (right) watches on

interspersed with spells as a lobbyist.

Oates told industry magazine *PR Week* that he was politicised at age 15 after seeing a report on the Ethiopian famine. He boarded a plane to Africa with only £10 in his pocket in order to help out, but had to be rescued and sent home by missionaries.

His first formal position with the Liberal Democrats came in 1994, when he won a seat on the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Council. He became deputy leader of the council, and in 1997 served as an election agent for prominent Liberal Democrat and current business minister Edward Davey.

Oates has worked for public affairs companies Bolland & Associates and BPPA, leaving the latter in 2007 to become the Liberal Democrats' director of policy and communications. He returned to BPPA in 2008 before rejoining the Lib Dems in the run-up to the general election.

Liberal Democrat **Neil Sherlock** is Nick Clegg's director of government relations. He was a partner at accounting firm KPMG and is a keen donor to the Deputy Prime Minister's party, at one time funding Nick Clegg's office directly.

Nick Clegg's deputy chief of staff **Joanne Foster** comes to the DPM's office from the Welsh Liberal Democrats, where she was chief executive until September 2011. She deals with the interface between Downing Street and peers, MPs, and the wider party.

> "Another new addition to Number 10 is Laura Trott, whose job is to deal with the Prime Minister's perceived 'woman troubles'."

The DPM's special adviser charged with helping Clegg think through longer-term policy development is **Richard Reeves**, the former head of think-tank Demos. Reeves is credited with developing Clegg's attempt to woo 'alarm clock Britain' – an approach apparently modelled on Nicholas Sarkozy's successful 'early-rising France' election campaign.

At Demos, Reeves worked to change the think-tank's image from that of a New Labour organisation into one that sought to encourage liberal ideas in the Conservative party. He has also worked as a journalist for the *Guardian* and the *Observer*.

In an interview with Civil Service World published in the run-up to the general election (p12, 10 March 2010), he expressed

concerns that the aim of deficit reduction might conflict with the devolution of spending power to local bodies. Calls for large areas of spending responsibility to be devolved, he said, were likely to be greeted by a Treasury response of: "Not on your nelly – bring it back and squeeze it!" Like Hilton, Reeves has announced that he will shortly be leaving the government team to relocate to the US. **Julian Astle** is a former director of liberal think tank CentreForum, and a former political adviser to Paddy Ashdown.

The experienced Liberal Democrat has replaced **Polly MacKenzie** as deputy chief of strategy at Number 10. MacKenzie is on maternity leave. She is a former journalist and Cambridge graduate who was Nick Clegg's chief speechwriter and policy adviser before she was recruited into Number 10 to provide the Lib Dem perspective on policy.

Olly Grender has replaced **Lena Pietsch** as deputy director of communications while Pietsch is on maternity leave. Grender was press secretary to Lib Dem leader Paddy Ashdown, during the 1997 general election, during which time Jane Bonham-Carter was the party's director of communications, She is assisted by **James McGrory**, who handles press and communications for the DPM. A former party researcher, McGrory has climbed the ranks to become one of the most trusted members of team Clegg.

Bridget Harris is the deputy prime minister's agent in the House of Lords. She is one of a number of departmental advisers who represent the Lib Dems and their leader across government departments where the Liberal Democrats don't have a lead cabinet minister.

These advisers were appointed to give the Lib Dems more clout in areas of policy they don't have a direct control over at ministerial level. **Veena Hudson**, formerly Clegg's researcher during his time as an MEP, covers. DCLG, the Department for Transport and DEFRA. **Monica Allen**, formerly a researcher to defence minister Nick Harvey, watches the defence, FCO and DfID briefs, **Matt Sanders** covers education and DCMS, while Verity Hardy deals with the MoJ and the Home Office. Also in the team is **John Foster**, formerly of Tim Farron's office **and now** making sure the deputy prime minister is adequately represented at the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions, while **Verity Harding**, formerly a senior policy adviser at Lib Dem central office, is Mr Clegg's special adviser in charge of the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice.

Ed Llewellyn, chief of staff to David Cameron, and Liz Sugg listen as David Cameron (right) talks to journalists during a press conference on a to Israel in 2007

Civil Service WORLD

A version of this article originally appeared in *Civil Service World*. It was written by **Joshua Chambers, Suzannah Brecknell, and Matt Ross. Additional research by Jon Stone**

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ORGANOGRAM

How the **Prime Minister's** team works

Stephen Gilbert
Political Secretary

Steve Hilton
Senior policy adviser
(on sabbatical)

Rohan Silva
Senior policy advisor

David Cameron
Prime minister

Ed Llewellyn
Chief-of-staff

Jeremy Heywood
Cabinet Secretary

Kate Fall
Deputy Chief-of-Staff

Desmond Swayne
PPS

Steve Field
Prime Minister's spokesman

Craig Oliver
Director of communications

Gabby Bertin
Press secretary

Alan Sendorek
Political Head of Press

Michael Salter
Head of Broadcasting

Liz Sugg
Head of Events

Kris Murrin
Head of Implementation

Paul Kirby
Head of Policy development

Andrew Cooper
Director of strategy

ORGANOGRAM

How the Deputy Prime Minister's team works

James Sorene
Head of Communications

Olly Grender*
Deputy Director of Communications

Sean Kemp
Deputy Head of Press

James McGrory
Press secretary

Jonny Oates
Chief-of-Staff

Jo Swinson
PPS

Richard Reeves
Director of Strategy
(departs this summer)

Julian Astle[†]
Deputy Director of Strategy

Neil Sherlock
Director of Government Relations

Special Advisors
Bridget Harris
John Foster
Veena Hudson
Matt Sanders
Verity Harding
Monica Allen
Christine Jardine

Joanne Foster
Deputy Chief-of-Staff

[*]Maternity cover for Lena Pietsch
[†]Maternity cover for Polly Mackenzie

Four alumni of Number 10 recall the highs and lows of their time in Downing Street

Sheila Gunn, personal press secretary to John Major between 1995 and 1997, reflects on her time working at the heart of British politics

In line with Sheila Gunn's advice, Larry the cat has joined the Number 10 Downing Street team

How did you come to work in Number 10?

I was appointed political press secretary to John Major in the autumn of 1995 and split my time between No 10, Conservative Central Office and the Commons.

What was the most satisfying aspect of the role?

Working for a Prime Minister with a great team who were doing their very best for UK plc in spite of all the madness which surrounded us.

> "A few arrogant and pompous people within our own party... seemed to be working to help Tony Blair"

What was the least satisfying?

It could be quite a long list, but mainly daily crises, and dealing with a few arrogant and pompous people within our own party who seemed to be working to help Tony Blair take over.

Why did you leave?

We lost the 1997 general election rather badly.

What would be your advice to people working there now?

Keep a diary, especially recording the odd, surreal and funny incidents which won't necessarily make it into the history books. Really appreciate all of those working there, especially the doorkeepers and messengers. And be wary of going through doors if you don't know what's behind them. I did that once and found myself in the men's loo.

Can you suggest how it should be improved?

No. It is very much a British institution. And it should always have a good, working cat on the staff.

Viscount Monckton recounts his experience of being employed in Number 10 during Margaret Thatcher's premiership

How did you come to work in Number 10?

Sir John Hoskyns, the first Head of Margaret Thatcher's Policy Unit, asked me to join in 1980. Nervousness at letting loose a Catholic in No. 10 delayed my appointment for two years. I ended up praying weekly at Downing Street with the evangelical Protestants who had wanted me excluded. Our common enemy was the drab, atheistic humanism of a classe politique that today cheerlessly petitions our unelected masters in the European tyranny-by-clerk for the power to ban the wearing of crucifixes at work. I wear one daily.

> "The Downing Street wonk has one real power: to stop costly nonsense before it happens"

What was the most satisfying aspect of the role?

It was a delight to work for a Prime Minister who was fascinated by ideas and – quite contrary to her carefully-nurtured reputation for steely inflexibility – was always willing to change even a long-held political opinion when confronted with hard evidence that it was untenable. The Downing Street wonk has one real power: to stop costly nonsense before it happens. If I had still been there at the time of the Maastricht Treaty, I should have tried to prevent the handover of our law-making from elected hands here to unelected hands elsewhere. I was born in a democracy; I do not live in one; but I intend to die in one.

What was the least satisfying?

I was saddened by the myopic disloyalty of those of the Prime Minister's colleagues who eventually cast down one of modern history's greatest leaders because the towering generosity of her global vision of universal liberty overshadowed their Pooterish little-Europeanism. Events have shown that she was right on all counts: but there is nothing more fatal to a political career than to be right when everyone else is wrong.

> "There is nothing more fatal to a political career than to be right when everyone else is wrong"

Why did you leave?

The normal stint at No. 10 was two years. I enjoyed four. I wish it had been eight.

What would be your advice to people working there now?

The Dalai Lama once wrote: "In love, as in cooking, be bold." Likewise for policymaking: you cannot do the unthinkable unless you think it first. But remember Canute's warning: if even the divinely-anointed King could not stop sea-level rise, still less can you. You are the people's servant, not they yours. It is the people's money, not yours, so count the beans, for nobody else will. Fashion, in politics as in dress, is as costly as it is pointless. Be merry: policymaking should be accompanied by the popping of champagne-corks. Above all, let every policy be formed and informed by the precept of precepts from the King of Kings: Love is all you need.

Can you suggest how it should be improved?

Bring back Margaret Thatcher.

Sir Michael Barber led the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) from 2001 to 2005. He is now Pearson's Chief Education Advisor

How did you come to work there?

After the 2001 election Tony Blair invited me to set up and lead a new Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU), to focus exclusively in ensuring the implementation of the PM's domestic policy priorities. He had seen the progress we had made on education in the previous Parliament and wanted the discipline of delivery we had shown there to be brought to bear across his priorities.

What was most satisfying?

The PMDU was an innovation not just in British government but globally and it worked! During that Parliament crime fell, health outcomes improved, health waiting times fell, school performance improved and even the trains became more reliable!

I also loved being part of a great team dedicated to the PM, all pulling together during some tough times, especially before, during and after 9/11 and the Iraq War.

> **"The police officer test works; ask those at the front door about the atmosphere and you can tell whether there is a cohesive team in there"**

What was least satisfying?

Seeing genuine achievement across the public services trashed by the media who preferred to listen to the voices of a handful of cynics was frustrating but that's the way of the world; in fact I loved every minute of being there.

Why did you leave?

By the time of the 2005 election, I had spent eight years working in and around Whitehall and saw the potential of what I had learnt to influence other governments around the world to improve government and the public sector.

What advice would have for those who are there now?

Humility – remember every day what a privilege it is to serve the country by walking through that famous front door.

How could it be improved?

In the end, the Prime Minister sets the tone and the key is for him (or her) to build a great and collaborative team with a clear mission. Then no matter what happens – and a lot always does! – it will be a marvellous place to be! The police officer test (above) works; ask those at the front door about the atmosphere and you can tell whether there is a cohesive team in there!

Dan Corry joined NPC (New Philanthropy Capital) as Chief Executive in October 2011. He was Head of the Number 10 Policy Unit and Senior Adviser to the Prime Minister on the Economy from 2007 to 2010.

How did you come to work in Number 10?

I had been Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers at Treasury and became head of the Policy Unit and Senior Economic Adviser at No 10 when Gordon Brown became PM. I am an economist by profession, worked as a civil servant in Employment and Treasury in the 1980s, at ippr in the 1990s and for various Labour Ministers for much of 1997-2010 as well as being head of local government think tank NLGN 2002-5.

What was the most satisfying part of the role?

Being in a position to be able to try to make a difference to the social and economic well-being of the country especially to those who are most in need. I think the steps we took to minimise the effects of the world financial melt down on families and businesses was a job well done given the circumstances. I also enjoyed working with a terrific set of people in the Policy Unit and wider No 10, civil servants and political appointees alike.

What was the least satisfying?

Seeing much less of the PM than I had of Secretaries of State when I was a special adviser at DTI, DTLR, Education etc. This made it harder always to know the PM's mind and to move agendas on. I also have regrets that it is impossible to achieve as much as one wants – and that the constant 24/7 feel of the agenda makes time for thinking very rare. Work-life balance left something to be desired too.

Why did you leave?

Labour lost the election in 2010. After a period at FTI Consulting I am now Chief Executive of charity think tank and consultancy NPC, trying to use my knowledge and experience to help make the social sector more effective in helping beneficiaries.

What is your advice to people there now?

Keep focused or you will drown. Pay attention to detail but you must keep an eye on the overall narrative of the government – if No 10 is not worrying about this nobody else will. And enjoy working in the place – it is an honour and wont last forever.

Can you suggest how it should be improved?

Probably more support in terms of civil servants. Cabinet Office can be very helpful but compared to working in a department as a special adviser, support is pretty thin in Downing Street. The rooms (and bathrooms) upstairs where the Policy Unit worked could also do with a bit of modernisation!

Right: In need of support? The Public Administration committee says the government needs a long-term strategy

A unit of value

Nick Pearce explores how policy has historically been formed at the centre of government, and says David Cameron has much to learn

Since the 1970s, 10 Downing Street and the adjacent Cabinet Office have, in different ways at different times, hosted units performing two core functions: the provision of political policy advice to the Prime Minister and that of strategic, cross-cutting policy development.

The first of these has been embodied in the No10 Policy Unit since Harold Wilson's 1974 - 1976 government took office. The second was undertaken by the Central Policy Review Staff in the 1970s and early 1980s, and then again by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit between 2001 and 2010. David Cameron is the first Prime Minister since Harold Wilson to govern without a Policy Unit employing politically-appointed policy experts or any kind of civil service staff whose task is to think strategically for Whitehall. Unsurprisingly, he has been criticised both for lacking strong political direction by Conservative MPs and activists, and more damningly, for leading a government without a strategy by the Public Administration Committee.

Both claims can be exaggerated but each contains a kernel of truth. It is curious, to say the least, that the Prime Minister should not have had a cadre of political policy advisers to take into No10. The unit is made up of career civil servants. They are all highly capable individuals, but they are constitutionally prohibited from offering partisan advice or assisting the Prime Minister with party business.

The unit has not always been influential, of course. It thrived under its first head, Bernard Donoughue, when it consisted of such luminaries as Gavyn Davies, David Lipsey, David Piachaud and Andrew Graham, but became less influential during the Callaghan government. It was at its best in the Thatcher era under the leadership of John Redwood,


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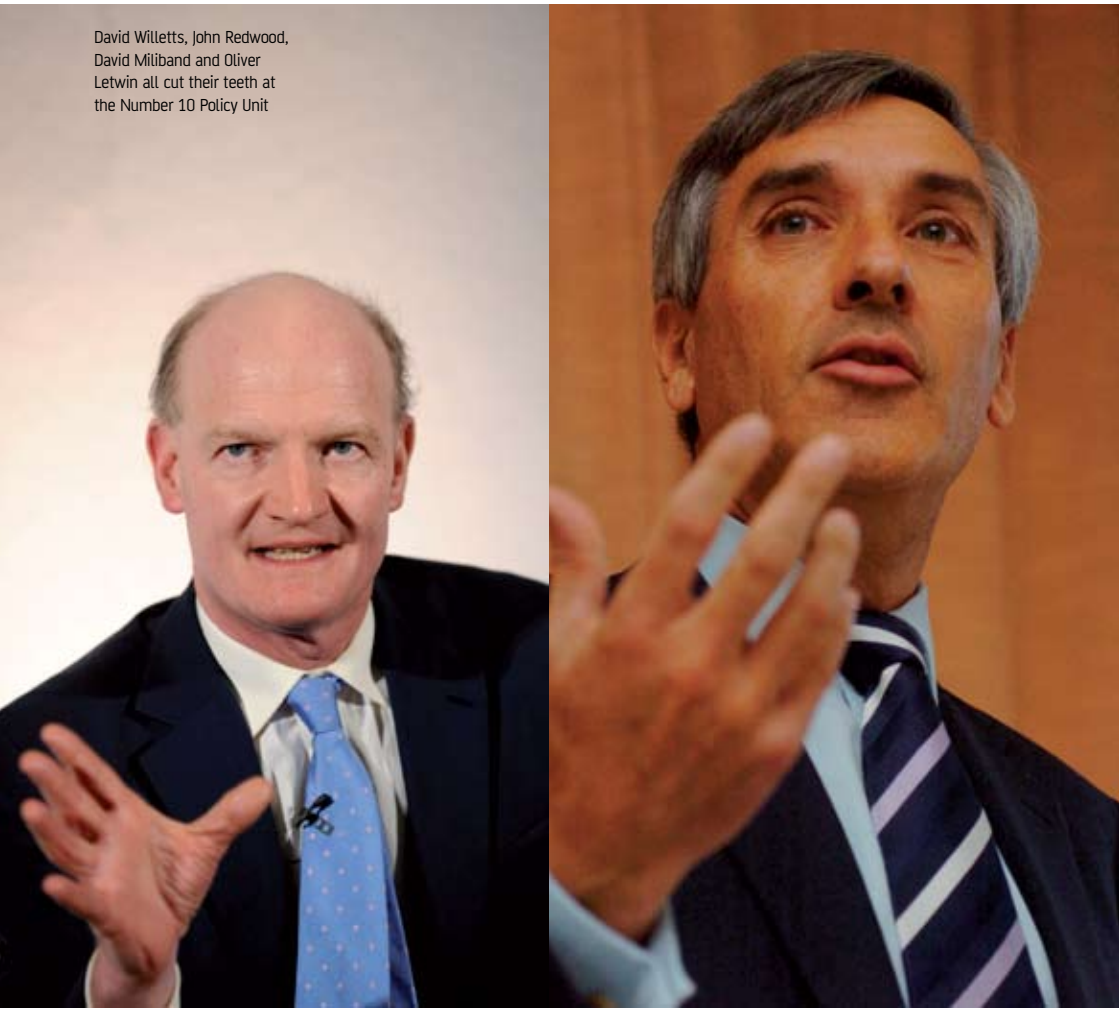


David Willetts, John Redwood, David Miliband and Oliver Letwin all cut their teeth at the Number 10 Policy Unit

when David Willetts and Oliver Letwin earned their spurs in it, but waned in her final five years. Sarah Hogg was a highly influential head of the unit for John Major, while it reached the height of its powers under David Miliband and Andrew Adonis in the New Labour years. A combination of historical circumstances and the proximity or otherwise of the unit's head to the Prime Minister explain how it waxes and wanes. In each era, however, it has always had political appointees in it – until now.

In contrast, the strategic function in the centre of Whitehall has not been consistently embodied in a single unit. A Central Policy Review Staff was created during Edward Heath's government but it had a chequered history and was undermined by damaging leaks about its work. It was eventually abolished by Margaret Thatcher.

Its successor, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit was created in Tony Blair's second term from the embryo of the Performance and Innovation Unit, the brainchild of

Geoff Mulgan, who became its first head. Its remit was to conduct long-term, cross-cutting thinking on policy issues of strategic importance to the UK. It was essentially the strategic brain of Whitehall. It was staffed with a mix of high-flying civil servants and outsiders recruited into the civil service, sometimes on a project-by-project basis. It tended to work with departments, rather than against them, without allowing itself to be captured by the prevailing wisdom or interests of particular ministries. Its power rested on the twin pillars of its proximity

> “It is curious, to say the least, that the Prime Minister should not have had a cadre of political policy advisers to take into No10”

to the Prime Minister and the strength of its research and policymaking. Unlike its forerunner, it survived some embarrassing leaks of its work and became widely admired by other Anglo-sphere governments. It survived the transition from Blair to Brown well, and was locked into the No10 structure through a board that commissioned its projects chaired by the No10 Permanent Secretary, Jeremy Heywood.

As the 2010 General Election approached, however, the No10 operation focused increasingly on political decisions and policy development for the Labour Manifesto, so the Strategy Unit's role in supporting the Prime Minister correspondingly diminished. After the Coalition government was formed it was abolished. Many of its civil servants left Whitehall. Others were scattered around No10 and the Cabinet Office.

> **"You might argue that a Conservative leader cut from the cloth of Baldwin and Heath, rather than Peel and Thatcher, is in more need, not less, of strategic support"**

This was a mistake. Successful government requires strategic thinking at the centre, even during periods of crisis management. The Treasury contains some of that capability, particularly when the Chancellor is strong and carries authority in Whitehall. But the Prime Minister needs it too. It cannot be left to departments, as some recent Cabinet Secretaries

David Cameron would do well to study the creation of the Policy Unit and the Central Policy Review Staff by the Heath (left) and Wilson governments

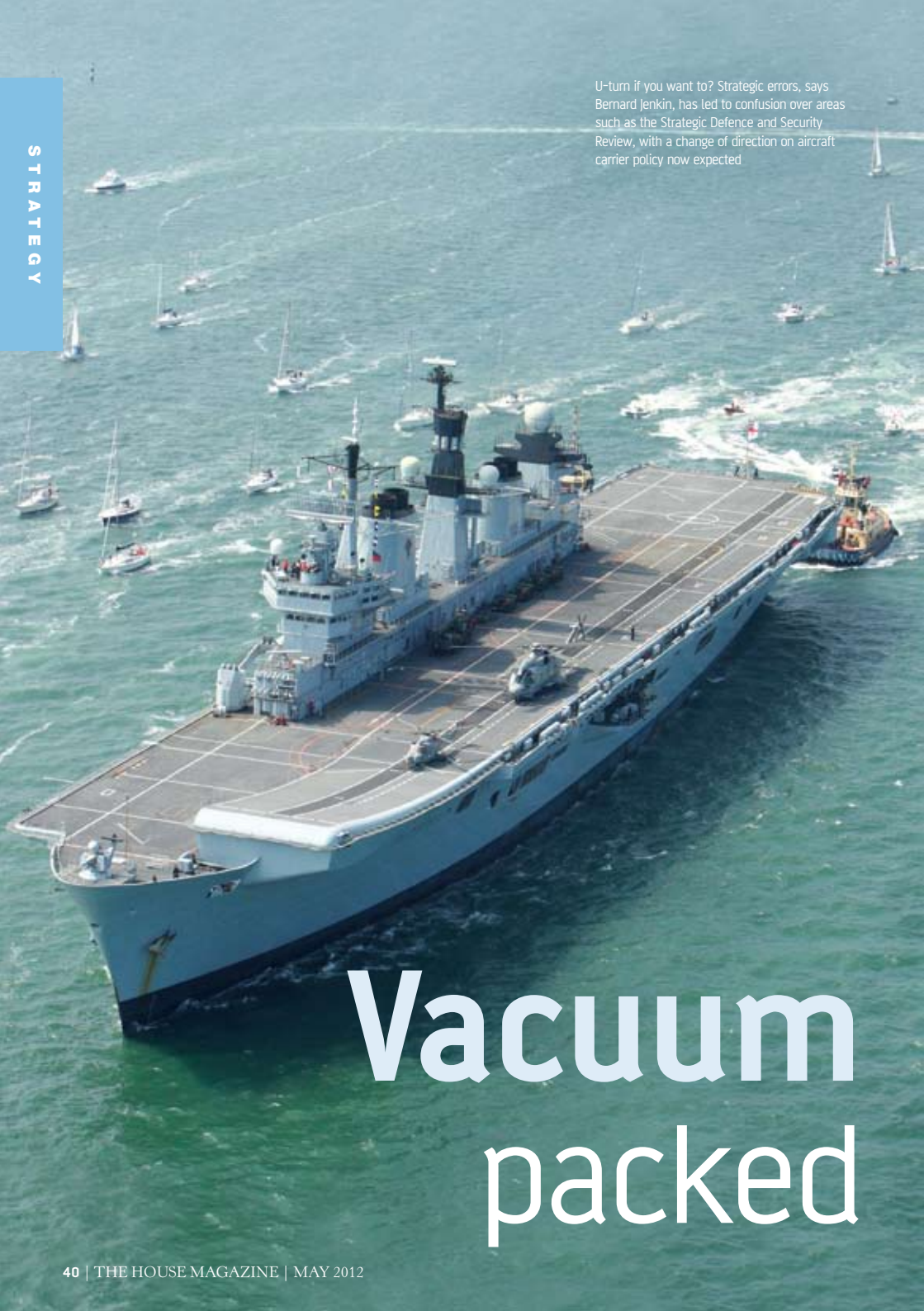
have believed, because the strategic direction of a government can only be set by a Prime Minister. Conviction and purpose endow a Prime Minister with direction and drive, but the capacity to apply these to specific fields of policy requires support from dedicated officials. This is what the Strategy Unit provided to David Cameron's predecessors, and by abolishing it he denuded himself of something important. Indeed, you might argue that a Conservative leader cut from the cloth of Baldwin and Heath,

> **"Successful government requires strategic thinking at the centre, even during periods of crisis management"**

rather than Peel and Thatcher, is in more need, not less, of strategic support.

The configuration of the No10 operation, and its effectiveness, change with each Prime Minister. The civil service provides continuity, particularly in the Private Office, to ensure that transitions between Prime Ministers are handled smoothly, but the balance of power within No10, and how well it relates to Parliament and Whitehall, vary as individuals come and go. This makes the argument for institutional stability on the core functions of strategic policymaking and political policy advice more convincing. Although the 1970s are often considered a dysfunctional decade in the recent history of British government, the creation of the Policy Unit and the Central Policy Review Staff by the Wilson and Heath governments represented institutional innovation whose worth endured. It is a history lesson David Cameron would do well to learn.

Nick Pearce is director of ippr. He was head of the Downing Street Policy Unit from 2008 to 2010



U-turn if you want to? Strategic errors, says Bernard Jenkin, has led to confusion over areas such as the Strategic Defence and Security Review, with a change of direction on aircraft carrier policy now expected

Vacuum packed

How is strategy formed in government? Badly, says **Bernard Jenkin**, who explains the problem and sets out the remedy

There seems to be a strategic vacuum at the centre of Government. This is not unique to the Coalition, but a recurring problem.

In 2010, PASC (the Public Administration Select Committee) published a report into 'Who does UK National Strategy?'. Our conclusion was that the answer to this question was 'no one'. We recently published a second report on the topic, 'Strategic thinking in government: without National Strategy, can viable government strategy emerge?'. We found that government policies are not informed by a clear, coherent strategic approach, and that poor strategic thinking also undermines clarity of presentation to the public. This was evident in the aftermath of the Budget and in response to the possibility of industrial action by fuel tanker drivers.

Policy decisions are often made for short-term reasons, little reflecting the longer-term interests of the nation. We put it to the government during the course of our inquiry that a number of very major decisions they have taken in recent months seemed just to have come out of the blue. They did not seem to be part of a coherent strategy.

The government did provide our inquiry with six aims which had been set out in the Coalition Agreement. We concluded that these may be well-meaning but are so general as to be too meaningless to serve any useful purpose, because they provide no indication of what policies the government might pursue as a consequence. They do not define how the UK's national character, assets, capabilities, interests and values are distinctive in any way whatsoever, or define the particular risks and challenges we face. Nor do they define what sort of country we aspire to be beyond the most general terms.

This has led to mistakes which are becoming evident in areas like the Strategic Defence and Security Review (with a u-turn expected soon on our aircraft carrier policy), energy and climate change (with confusion over the promotion of different forms of power), child poverty targets (which may not be achieved), deficit reduction targets (which the government will struggle to achieve) and economic policy (with economic contraction rather than growth).

There is no doubt that today's government is presented with very severe economic and political challenges, not least with the damaging news that UK is now back in recession. This makes coherent National

David Cameron, Nick Clegg, George Osborne, and Danny Alexander make up the government's 'quad' – but is it wise to form government economic policy without wider consultation?

Strategy all the more vital in order that there is clear process by which policy, and the tax and spending decisions that underpin it, should be aligned with the nation's long-term interests, public values and identity.

Instead, too often the Budget appears to determine strategic priorities rather than the other way round. This does not necessarily lead to coherent National Strategy. The latest Budget has raised questions about the weakness of deciding and announcing taxing measures through the "quad" at the heart of the Coalition without wider consultation within government. Rather than being the result of coalition bargaining, tax and spending decisions should be the consequence of a more visible National Strategy, aligning spending

and tax decisions with the national strategic aims of government. One good example of this is Canada, where the Fall Statement sets out a framework for departments to make spending decisions in line with political priorities and long-term considerations, as defined by the Cabinet and informed by independent fiscal forecasting. Specific departmental proposals are then subject to a public consultation on how spending should be allocated.

It is clear at the moment that the Government's strategic priority should be economic growth. Yet the Government has continued to increase regulatory burdens on businesses and many tax rates. And now the centrepiece of this year's Queen's Speech is to be a bill on House of Lords reform, something which is bound to be a protracted, divisive and inward-looking process and a distraction from the real challenges facing this country. National Strategy for the UK is still sorely lacking.

How can we change this?

PASC recommends the government should publish an annual 'Statement of National Strategy' in Parliament which reflects the interests of all parts of the UK. This would be a snapshot of how National Strategy has developed, providing an opportunity for reassessment and debate about how tax and spending decisions should support the government's national strategic aims. If published in late spring or early summer, this could mark the start of each new spending round and budget process. This budget process should provide clearer links between long-term objectives and specific budgetary measures. Our report also highlights the importance of a public discussion about how public spending is divided between entitlement and investment priorities.

The government also should take note of the conclusions of the report by the Joint Committee on National Security, which advocated an 'overarching strategy'. We recommend that the National Security Council and its secretariat should take a wider view than just the security issues facing this country and should oversee National Strategy: the UK's long-term security is dependent on far more than simply military and terror issues.

> **"Government policies are not informed by a clear, coherent strategic approach, and that poor strategic thinking also undermines clarity of presentation to the public"**

PASC recommends a focus on working strategically across departmental silos, driven by a stronger centre of government. We therefore urge, once again, that the Cabinet Office to be given the means and influence to act as an effective headquarters of Government, on behalf of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as a whole. This would provide the government with the capacity to deal with current issues as well as strengthen resilience and the ability to respond to the unexpected. We also believe that this stronger centre of government is the only way to promote coherent National Strategy which is supported across all departments. It is clear from recent weeks that this is sorely needed.

Bernard Jenkin is a Conservative MP and chairman of the Public Administration Select Committee

Spin you're when winning?

Craig Oliver, the government's Director of Communications, watches closely

Sam Macrory looks at the Tory and Lib Dem spinners fighting one battle against the press – and sometimes a cold war against each other

In these unpredictable days of post-Budget meltdown, an ongoing government 'omnishambles', and the noise of coalition partners shouting over each other to be heard, even the most casual observer of the news might think that the government's media team was experiencing a few local difficulties.

Step back a few years to that Downing Street Rose Garden press conference shared by David Cameron and Nick Clegg, however, and all was, well, rosy – no more so, it was reported, than in a pain-free merging of the two parties' press teams.

Just days after having descended to the depths of election campaign skullduggery, Tory and Lib Dem spinners had moved into shared offices and were working alongside each like old friends which, to outside observers, they soon appeared to be. The merger was helmed by Andy Coulson, the government's new Director of Communications, and Jonny Oates, briefly his deputy and now Clegg's chief of staff, and was considered to be one of the most impressive achievements of the new government.

Wary of the worst excesses of New Labour, all government special advisers were issued

with a one-strike-and-out warning if caught negatively briefing against a fellow government minister and, for a while, harmony ruled.

Recalling those early months, one member of the team says the two sets of spinners were "perhaps a little reluctant to make phonecalls in front of each other", but by and large got on well, with Lena Pietsch, Oates' Lib Dem replacement as deputy director of communications, singled out by one Tory as being "superb" at her job. The 24-hour new channels were switched off across Downing Street in all but the press office, a slick civil service press machine – largely created by an impatient Alastair Campbell in the wake of New Labour's 1997 election victory – was inherited, and the two press teams toured Parliament and the broadcast studios with the smiles of post-election euphoria and the first taste of power.

By May 2011, however, following the post-referendum souring of the mood and the decision by the Liberal Democrats to adopt a 'differentiation' strategy, members of both press teams admit to an increase in bickering. That said, by and large the coalition's press operation remains cooperative and convivial and today, with the post-election unpopularity of the Lib Dems now being shared by the Conservatives, one senior Lib Dem talks of the need to adopt a "pro-alition" message for the foreseeable future.

The key players

Following the well-publicised departure of Andy Coulson, David Cameron caused a surprise by poaching Craig Oliver from the BBC where, as its Head of Global News, he was credited with revamping the channel's 6pm and 10pm news bulletins. A relative unknown in political circles, Oliver was described by George Osborne as the best broadcast journalist of his generation, with his appointment widely interpreted as prime ministerial confirmation that television images, not printed words, were the way to influence the electorate.

However, the unrelentingly bad headlines which followed last month's Budget have led some senior government figures to suggest that Oliver must take part of the blame for "overseeing the omnishambles", with the PM accused of forgetting that "print is what sets the agenda." Indeed, some papers have reported that Cameron is actively looking to beef up his press team with an experienced former print journalist, but for now Oliver remains in sole control.

By and large, he hides behind the scenes, avoiding lobby tours and – bar that infamous Dre-headphone wearing first day photo – the spotlight. Heavily involved with the PM on all aspects of strategic planning, Oliver

> "Some senior government figures suggest that Craig Oliver must take part of the blame for over-seeing the 'omnishambles'"

is described by one senior Tory figure as "masterminding the whole show", with his eye for a photo-shoot continually praised

However, another member of the government press team is less convinced that Oliver is deserving of the plaudits, suggesting instead that considerable credit should go to Liz Sugg, who runs the PM's events diary and is said to have fixed up such hits as Cameron's table tennis showdown with Barack Obama. That said, Oliver is undoubtedly well connected – it has been rumoured that the BBC's political editor Nick Robinson recommended him to succeed Coulson – and, despite recent grumbles, trusted by the prime minister.

Oliver's senior status sees him enjoy an office of his own at Number 10, while next door six of his colleagues share the same room. In here you'll find the Tory trio of Gabby Bertin, Alan Sendorek, and Michael Salter, ›

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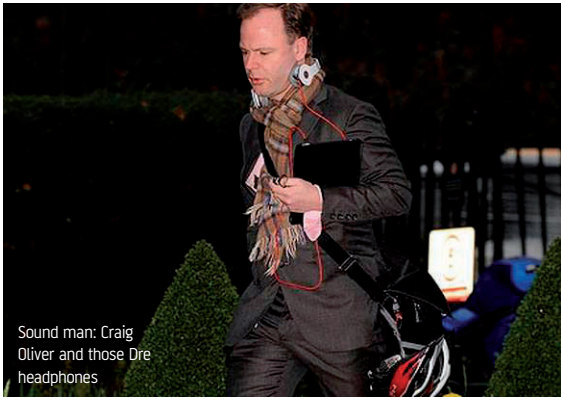
two Lib Dems in Olly Grender and Sean Kemp, and the experienced civil servant Steve Field.

Bertin is the prime minister's political spokeswoman, and has been at David Cameron's side since his campaign to become leader of the Conservative Party. The two work closely, with Bertin invariably accompanying the PM on foreign trips – she even made it on the seating plan at the state dinner during the recent visit to Washington – and most meetings. The go-to point for Cameron's thoughts and the voice of the PM following every statement in the Commons, Bertin is trusted by the political press and admired by her Liberal Democrat colleagues.

Her *de facto* deputy is Alan Sendorek, who arrived at Number 10 following a reshuffle which saw the experienced ex-lobby hack Henry Macrory relocate from Downing Street to CCHQ. Described as energetic and ambitious, Sendorek takes the less glamorous excursions from London, tours the lobby, deals with press calls, and stands in whenever Bertin is absent.

Michael Salter is head of broadcasting for the Conservative Party, the first point of call for producers of *Newsnight* or *Question Time* in search of a Tory spokesman at a late hour. Another long-server, Salter has been with the Tory Party since 2001, having started out working for former Defence Secretary Liam Fox. His job is more-or-less desk based but his clout is not be doubted – a recent *Independent* poll of the Britain's most influential gay people saw Salter climb from number nine in the chart to the dizzy heights of second place.

Last but by no means least is Steve Field, who makes up the final member of the office. As the Prime Minister's spokesman, Field gives the twice-daily lobby briefings, where his relaxed style has earned admirers throughout the lobby. As an alumnus of the Treasury, Field's grasp of economics has frequently come in handy, with his invariably



Sound man: Craig Oliver and those Dre headphones

sure-footed displays matched by Head of News Vickie Sheriff.

The Tory contingent at Number 10 liaise frequently with the party's press team at CCHQ, many of whom were colleagues during the latter opposition years. While the CCHQ

> **"Gabby Bertin is the go-to point for Cameron's thoughts and the voice of the PM"**

operation is largely party-orientated, issues such as the recent donor scandal saw the two teams working closely together. Also working at CCHQ is Oliver Dowden, low of profile but of vital importance to the Tory machine as the link man between Number 10 and Millbank Tower and a key player in ensuring Tory ›

MPs are on message and well-briefed.

Back at Number 10, the Downing Street Conservative media team meet daily with their Lib Dem counterparts at 8:15am and then again at 5:30pm, with senior civil servants also present.

Leading the Liberal Democrat representation, during Lena Pietsch's maternity leave, is the veteran spinner Olly Grender. Part of the Lib Dem media outfit during the era of Paddy Ashdown, Grender has brought experience to an otherwise youthful team, and is described by one Lib Dem as "very different to Lena…much more hands on… with a less *laissez faire* attitude to government departments." Grender is described as "very good at batting for ministers and being proactive and a staunch defender of Lib Dem territory" with her years of scrapping for scarce Lib Dem airtime in opposition ensuring that she keeps the thoughts of the core base at the heart of the party's media message.

She works closely with Sean Kemp, who graduated from the Lib Dem press office after the election to join the Number 10 team. Kemp is a regular presence around the lobby, gives briefings after Clegg's Commons appearances, keeps the political press well fed with Lib Dem messages on a day-today basis, and has earned praise for his ability to turn less-than-straightforward Lib Dem policies

into simple arguments.

After their morning Downing Street debrief, Grender and Kemp briefly relocate to the Cabinet Office where they meet with Nick Clegg's large team of special advisors. A key figure here is James McGrory, the deputy PM's press secretary. After graduating through the party ranks, McGrory was quickly switched from the Number 10 policy unit to Clegg's team in a post-election personnel reshuffle. Calm, self-confident, and described by one colleague as able to "cut through the crap", McGrory is in regular contact with the Deputy Prime Minister.

Other advisors to Clegg include Christine Jardine, a former journalist in Scotland who

> **"Senior lobby figures complain that they are denied access to 'someone who was in the room' and are instead fed lines by well-briefed mouth pieces"**

PM unspun: Lobby journalists relish the chance to ask the Prime Minister questions directly

David Cameron makes his way to the Institute of Civil Engineers in London with members of his team including Gabby Bertin (wearing the green coat)

has been brought in to monitor the situation north of the border as Scotland moves towards a referendum, Veena Hudson, once Clegg's researcher and now advising on the DCLG, Transport, and Defra briefs, and the affable figure of John Foster, formerly of Tim Farron's office and latterly an aide to health minister Paul Burstow. He has the challenge of keeping the DPM up to speed with the latest tricky developments at the Departments of Health and Work and Pensions.

Clegg also has his own civil service spokesman, with James Sorene brought in to lift some of the burden from McGrory and allow him to focus his attentions on more overtly political stories. Back at Lib Dem HQ, a four man press team is led by the highly able duo of James Holt and Phil Reilly, with the latter recently running the media operation behind Brian Paddick's mayoral campaign.

Conclusion

There have been ugly moments across the government, and some spats amongst the Downing Street press team itself since the Lib Dem and Tory teams merged.

There are complaints too: bloggers say they are ignored by the top spinners, while senior lobby figures complain that they are denied access to "someone who was in the room" and are instead fed lines by well-briefed mouth pieces. Whether a post-omnishambles reshuffle addresses these issues remains to be seen, and how a joint press team continues to remain cohesive as a general election approaches is utterly unpredictable.

However, two years since that Rose Garden moment, the press teams remain merged and, given the many spats and feuds which have played since 2010, remarkably functional.

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JEREMY HEYWOOD

The ministers' man

Jeremy Heywood: no fan of the limelight

Matt Ross decodes Jeremy Heywood, the man the Prime Minister knows he can count on when he's in a tight spot

To many people, cabinet secretary Jeremy Heywood remains – to use the phrase Churchill coined for the Soviet Union – "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma". He's risen to the highest civil service job in the land without ever straying further onto the national stage than the very fringes of the limelight. This used to be the norm, but is these days quite a trick: the civil service has been becoming a much more open organisation for some years now – not least because when Heywood's predecessor Gus (now Lord) O'Donnell took the post in 2005 he set about raising the job's profile, both within and outside Whitehall.

In part, Heywood's near-invisibility reflects the culture of the departments where he's spent most of his career: in the Treasury and Number 10, civil servants tend to remain carefully in the shadow of their political masters.

It's also based on a calculation about how best to achieve his aims: "Jeremy believes his job will be easier if he stays out of the limelight," says one permanent secretary. Above all, though, it's rooted in the roles he's had, and his greatest strengths as a civil servant: Jeremy Heywood has succeeded in Whitehall by making himself invaluable to a succession of key ministers.

Most top civil servants have taken a corporate route up through the ranks, demonstrating their effectiveness in running Whitehall departments and building promotion opportunities around their reputations within the senior civil service. But Heywood is a master of the private office, and of the subtle back-channels of power that spread across Whitehall. Eschewing staff management responsibilities and delivery jobs, he's spent nearly 30 years single-mindedly helping his latest political master to achieve their political and organisational objectives. Whilst many permanent secretaries are viewed by their secretaries of state as rather compromised by their loyalty to their own departments' favoured policies, world views and processes, Heywood's bosses have always known that – while he always uses the system rather than subverting it – he keeps his focus on realising their aims.

It was in 1986 that Heywood became private secretary to Norman Lamont, then Treasury financial secretary. He soon departed for a secondment at the World Bank, but on his return Lamont – then chancellor – grabbed him as his principal private secretary. There ›

photo: Paul Heartfield

Heywood is sometimes wrongly seen as a defender of institutions

he worked with a young David Cameron, then Lamont's special adviser, and when both Lamont and Cameron left the Treasury after Black Wednesday, new chancellor Ken Clarke kept Heywood on; he was already demonstrating his remarkable ability to catch the eye of key ministers.

Aware of his reputation, the newly-elected Tony Blair made him his private secretary, and he played a key role in managing Number 10's tempestuous relationship with Gordon Brown's Treasury. So much so, indeed, that when Brown became PM he brought Heywood back from a sojourn in banking to become his head of domestic policy and strategy, based in the Cabinet Office. A year later, he moved next door to Number 10 as permanent secretary; the position gave him still more leverage in coordinating policy across Whitehall, and he used it to play a crucial role in coordinating the government's response to the credit crunch.

Some civil servants think Heywood something of a yes-man, too ready to do his master's bidding; but those who've worked

with him recognise his readiness to test and challenge politicians' dafter ideas. "The ministers and PMs I've worked with value independent advice, impartial advice, fearless advice," Heywood told *Civil Service World* in a 2011 interview – the only solo interview he's ever given. "If you're seen as someone who gives that kind of advice and can be trusted, you end up as a close adviser."

> "Heywood is a master of the private office, and of the subtle back-channels of power that spread across Whitehall"

Other critics see him as a blocker of change and a defender of institutions, yet this too is a mistake: Heywood always avoids kicking up a public stink, but he's artful in using careful negotiation, judiciously-applied pressure and a little horse-trading to achieve outcomes that ministers recognise as the best available. These skills were worth their weight in gold when a coalition government came to power, and Heywood executed another flawless hairpin turn to help his former Treasury colleague David Cameron manage decision-making in a brand new, inexperienced and two-party government.

"Announcements have to go through a process of being cleared by all the departments with an interest, and both sides of the coalition," Heywood told *CSW* last year. "The central point of working in Number 10 has always been that you've got to get the agreement of different groups, different departments. There's always a process of winning support or arbitrating disputes; [coalition government] just moves us along the spectrum of complexity."

Heywood and Cameron quickly re-established a good working relationship as the civil servant helped another new political master to navigate the complexities, pitfalls and obstacles of Whitehall. "When a new PM comes in, if they're unfamiliar with parts of the job – or all of the job – and the team in place does a good job in the first few weeks and months, they're in a good position to win the trust of that person," Heywood told *CSW*. "The prime minister doesn't like woolly advice, fence-sitting; he likes to get from civil servants – no matter how senior or junior – clear, robust advice. And he doesn't mind advice that he doesn't like, as it were; he likes to be challenged."

Despite his readiness to challenge ministers, however, Heywood's success lies in his fundamental commitment to serving them; and not all of the new PM's approaches to governance proved wise. Cameron initially allowed secretaries of state a large degree of autonomy on policy development – but his new ministers had armfuls of untested policies and little experience, whilst many civil servants

were terrified of being labelled as Labour sympathisers or the 'opposition in residence'. The result was a series of policy disasters – most obviously over forestry sales and NHS reform – and in March 2011 the PM asked his permanent secretary to build a new Policy and Implementation Unit in Number 10 to ensure, as Heywood told *CSW* at the time, that "Number 10 and the deputy prime minister are better informed at an earlier stage of the policy development and delivery performance of individual departments."

> "Number 10's influence – and, with it, Heywood's power across Whitehall – was significantly expanded"

The unit would "make sure that the prime minister and deputy prime minister get advice early on in the process of policy development, and give them an opportunity to think through their ideas so they can feed them back to departments," he added. "It might also help departments to understand more fully which of the ideas they're working on are likely to find favour here [in Number 10] and with the deputy prime minister, rather than waiting till the end of the process and then finding that either the prime minister and the deputy prime minister, or one or the other, isn't particularly attracted by what they're doing." In other words, Number 10's influence – and, with it, Heywood's power across Whitehall – was significantly expanded.

When Gus O'Donnell retired, Cameron was keen to retain Heywood as his right-hand man in the civil service. But the head of the civil service role – which O'Donnell combined with the cabinet secretary's job and the post of permanent secretary of the Cabinet Office – is not one that would appeal to this archetypal behind-the-scenes operator. So while the Cabinet Office has given a number of public explanations for the splitting of O'Donnell's job three ways, for Cameron this solution had one crucial advantage: Heywood could continue his back-channels work to marry up policy and pursue Number 10's ambitions across government, while Sir Bob Kerslake – a man with a strong track record in delivering organisational and process change across large workforces – could take on O'Donnell's mantle as the public face of the civil service.

Recently, in a long *Spectator* article, Quentin Letts painted Heywood as an institutional figure; a blocker of change who's inveigled his way into David Cameron's trust. But this both underestimates Cameron's fast-growing grasp of government, and misunderstands Heywood's long-standing success. Heywood is a reformer, but a reformer who knows how to work the Whitehall machine in his master's interests. While radical, pushy reformers like Steve Hilton end up swimming against currents of which they are – either innocently or willfully – oblivious, the more switched-on radicals (Gove and IDS spring to mind) engage their civil servants with workable change programmes. Heywood is a master of coordinating such engagement across government; he's a man who both applies himself to pulling the levers his political masters' aims require, and knows which levers to pull.

Sometimes, certainly, Heywood will defend a process or compromise an aim in ways that leave more overt radicals frustrated; but when he does so, his eye is normally on the longer-term reform goal – and his ministers know this. "Problems arise if a policy is badly-designed to start with," he told *CSW* in another interview early this year. "The essence of the issue is to ensure that you take full account of the practicalities of how you're going to deliver it. So the civil service's job is to help ministers think about those sorts

photo: Paul Heartfield

of issues, and strike the right balance between the ambitious, pacey preference to get things done as quickly as possible, versus the need to put in place the capacity to get things done on the ground; to make sure people are trained; to make sure you're not setting an over-ambitious agenda which is going to lead to concerns that you're under-achieving or things are going too slowly."

Having taken the cabinet secretary's job, Heywood will inevitably be drawn further into the limelight; but that won't be his favourite part of the role – nor the part at which he excels. That, of course, is the management and coordination of policy across Whitehall. It would be a mistake to see him as a kind of uber-SpAd, operating without a care for the formal processes of government and the civil service's traditions and ethos: "I want to maintain the British civil service as one of the most respected and effective civil services around the world, which continues to have the trust of politicians from right across the political spectrum," he told *CSW* on taking the job. Yet within that standpoint, he's determined to focus on his strengths; to do the job he's best at in the interests of the democratically-elected government of the day.

Churchill continued his thoughts on the Soviet Union's closed nature and hidden motivations with another phrase – one far less well-known than his first comment. "Perhaps there is a key," he said. "That key is Russian national interest." And while Jeremy Heywood may, from outside Whitehall, appear just as enigmatic and implacable, he too has a key: his motivating force, as he'd see it, is probably best expressed as "the interests of his minister, expressed through the best traditions of British governance."

Matt Ross is editor of *Civil Service Word*

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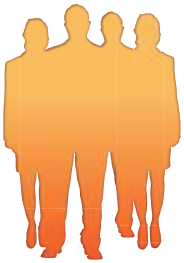

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PublicAffairs NEWS

Mr blue sky

Mark Flanagan cuts through tales of socks and cloud bursting to reveal the real man behind the Big Society

Apparently, Steve Hilton recently burst into a No10 diary meeting, announced "Everything we are doing today is complete crap!" and then walked out again. That sounds like Steve to me.

Lover of detail, absurdly broad brush; analytical yet irrational; sometimes rude but often funny. Steve Hilton could be all these things, often within the same hour.

I worked for Steve in the first six months of the Coalition and, back then, he fizzed with ideas – an unstoppable man on a mission to change Britain for good.

In Whitehall, where the loosening of a tie can be seen as a revolutionary act, Hilton's shaven-haired, shoe-less and casual appearance caused many in the civil service to mark him down as a problem to be contained.

And in policy-terms, Steve does think long-term, transformational and in loud, primary colours. In contrast, the best policy officials tend to focus more on incremental and deliverable change while the worst hide behind the deadening language of ministerial submissions.

Substance alarmed them as much as style. Stories that he advocated cloud bursting technology to give Britain more sunshine are apocryphal. But his proposals to boost growth

by scrapping maternity leave and suspending consumer rights were real and offended the established consensus in Whitehall.

With a few notable exceptions, mostly in the Cabinet Office, officials mocked and spurned Hilton's Big Society. In part, this is because he never managed to explain it in ways that policy makers (or the media) could understand, but it was also because the idea didn't fit neatly into one single department. Cross-government ideas often die without the ownership of a big hitting cabinet minister and the backing of a departmental machine.

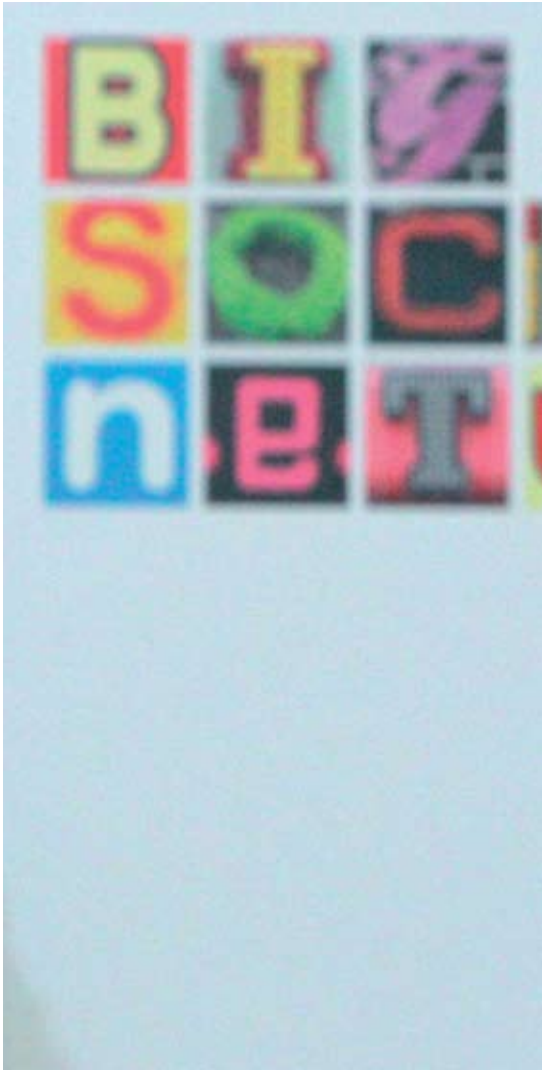
The core principle, however, behind the Big Society – a shift of power away from

> **"Hilton's shaven-haired, shoe-less and casual appearance caused many in the civil service to mark him down as a problem to be contained"**

the centre – will live on, even if the brand name is quietly dropped. But Conservative modernisers must worry more that the radical and disruptive approach to public service reform, regulation and technology, so exemplified by Steve, will now fizzle out.

The future of Hilton projects such as the Well-being Index and the Nudge Unit must be in doubt. In the case of the latter, this attempt to apply behavioural economics to policy issues was gaining traction in some corners of Whitehall. The danger now is that it may wither without a champion in No10.

As a tech enthusiast, I think this government deserves enormous credit for its emphasis on open data, transparency and reform of public sector IT. We are becoming world leaders in using technology to drive social and economic innovation. I know that



Above: The Big Society is mocked by the press and civil servants, but David Cameron looks set to stick with Steve Hilton's big idea

Rohan Silva will still be pushing this agenda, as will ministers such as Jeremy Hunt, Ed Vaizey and, to an extent, George Osborne.

There's a cartoon-like impression of Steve as the California-speaking image man. The real Steve has multiple dimensions and operates on a spectrum that goes from TV shots of huskies through to the finer points of early years education policy. He was vital in repositioning the "nasty party" as green, socially liberal and silicon savvy. But, he was also a senior political adviser who didn't read newspapers, which helped explain why he was considered an accident waiting to happen by the No10 press office.

Steve Hilton is refreshing in that he doesn't judge every policy through the prism of the next day's headlines. There are plenty of other people to do that. Indeed, the changes he introduced to make government more ›

transparent will help shine a spotlight upon its failings. This is all worthwhile, in his view, if it makes public officials more accountable and responsive.

The Prime Minister became visibly energised in his old friend's presence and was content to take forward many, but by no means all, of Steve's great schemes. Cameron adopted a Chinese menu approach – taking some blue skies transformation from here and a bit of hard headed political pragmatism from over there.

> **"The departure of this hyperactive iconoclast will make the world a duller, rather plain vanilla kind of place"**

Personally, Dave and Steve have always been close. During my time at No10, they would regularly come together for brief moments of gossip and mild plotting.

So why has he gone? While the personal reasons are genuine, there is also an underlying frustration that, ultimately, David Cameron is not up for wholesale radical change. Interestingly, it was only a few weeks ago that Andrew Cooper, Cameron's pollster and strategy adviser, was telling Tory MPs that, in the run up to the next election, the emphasis must be on "grip and competence", not "frightening talk of transformation". (I wonder how that "grip and competence" strategy is coming along?)

I've no doubt the Hiltonater will return – more likely, perhaps, to focus on the party manifesto for 2015 rather on a Downing Street role. Until then, the departure of this hyperactive iconoclast will make the world a duller, rather plain vanilla kind of place.

Mark Flanagan was Head of Strategic & Digital Communications in Downing Street from 2008-10 and is now a Partner at Portland
www.portland-communications.com

Close allies....but did Steve Hilton eventually tire of Cameron's instinctive small 'c' conservatism?

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