



Order, Order!

The Newsletter of the Association of Former Members of Parliament

Summer 2013

PACTS & COALITIONS



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Executive Committee Member

Dick Tracey writes:

FILLING OUR "RETIREMENT"



"What's it like working with Boris running London?" ask my former Commons colleagues.

This all stems from 2008, when in my "retirement" I stood successfully for the London Assembly. It coincided with Boris

Johnson standing, also successfully, for Mayor of London, and since then I have been part of Boris's "Team" downriver at City Hall. It has been a most interesting time, drawing on much experience I had, especially on Select Committees and as a Minister, now scrutinising London's Transport network and chairing the capital's waste and recycling board, following two years helping plan policing the Olympics. I feel I am usefully deploying my Parliamentary experience.

A few years ago in 2007, following the General Elections from 1997 to 2005, the Association of Former MPs commissioned a report from a Leeds University team on Life after losing or leaving Parliament. It can still be read on the Publications section of the Association's website.

One of the views expressed was:

"Losing a seat at a general election has been likened to being sacked in public, on television, in front of the cheering supporters of the person who has replaced you, and this can be an upsetting, traumatic and humiliating experience, all the more so if unexpected.

There has been anecdotal evidence of ex-Members who have suffered nervous breakdown, divorce, heart disease, alcoholism, depression, serious debt and even suicide".

It was a graphic, and indeed very frightening, scenario, but the facts which came out of the report, and the evidence following a further General Election in 2010, do not bear out this grim prospect at all.

Some former MPs move seamlessly down the corridor to the Lords where their work and contacts (apart from constituents) are much the same as before. Others such as



lawyers and accountants or those in family businesses can take up where they left off and gain satisfaction and income from it. Many have picked up consultancies in the City or elsewhere, and the success of that depends on what expertise you have to offer or how you can adapt. Some write articles or memoirs – or go dancing on television!

In my own case, after 14 years in the House, preceded by about the same time in broadcasting, I found some interesting PR and media jobs plus doing Sport England representation in south London, and then spending 4 years as Community Relations consultant at the Battersea Power Station site by the River Thames. They were different times from now, with the new American Embassy, plus other embassies, and many offices and homes being built apace in that whole former rundown area, but it convinced me that I still got a lot out of working directly with the public, hence my decision to stand for office again.

I encourage others of my colleagues to do the same and re-use that valuable Parliamentary experience. I find many colleagues are doing so. MEPs who were MPs have been in office for some years. We have a growing numbers of County and District councillors, and of course the national Assemblies and the Scottish Parliament have seen transfers. Recently several former MPs were successful in becoming the new county Police and Crime Commissioners.

There is valuable work to do in our "retirement". We should go for it.

Richard Tracey was MP for Surbiton from 1983 to 1997. He has been London Assembly Member for Wandsworth and Merton since 2008.

IN BRIEF

NORTHERN GET TOGETHER

Elizabeth Peacock and **Geoff Lawler** are hoping to organise a social event for members at the Civic Hall, Leeds, on the evening of Thursday the 19th September at which partners will be very welcome. Full details will be going out in due course by e-mail, so if you have not supplied an address, then please do so to: grocotts@parliament.uk

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Summer edition of *Order Order* is published earlier this year because our All Member Meeting and our Annual Reception take place on the **25 June** and not in July as in previous years.

There are three editions of *Order Order* each year – Spring, Summer and Winter. The gap between

Summer and Winter is always the longest because of the difficulties presented by the long Recess. We hope our next edition will go out at the end of October.

But remember you can read this and past editions of *Order Order* on our website which is run by E-Politix. Just enter "Former Members" in Google!

THE LOSS OF POLITICAL OFFICE



Dame Jane Roberts writes:

As parliamentarians, you're likely to be avid readers of political memoirs – former prime ministers might well head your list but many former and some current front-benchers have penned their thoughts. Inevitably, most dwell at some length on the controversial issues of their day, perhaps seeking to justify or put their side of the story. Some deal with the decision to stand down or the pain of defeat but rarely does this aspect feature in any depth. And understandably so – at least from the perspective of the author.

But neither is there much in the academic literature on the transition from elected political office. MPs will be familiar with Kevin Theakston's survey of former MPs after the 2005 general election, commissioned by the Association of Former MPs. Professor Theakston, with colleagues, has since authored distinguished works examining life after office of British Prime Ministers, and more widely, of leaders in modern democracies. But there is not a great deal more, at least with regard to parliamentarians who did not attain high office, and nothing at all looking at former council leaders. Local government, as ever, falls below the radar. Professor John Keane has thus argued, "the subject of ex-office holders is under-theorized, under-researched, under-appreciated".

I've become very curious about the area, and how little it is openly discussed. As a Senior Academic Fellow at Warwick University, I have been undertaking a research project over the last year to investigate more systematically the experience of the loss of office at an individual level, looking at both the practical and psychological consequences for the individual as well as possible ripples within the family. I have therefore interviewed former MPs and former council leaders who had either been defeated electorally or who had chosen to stand down. The former office holders interviewed have covered different parties, different political seniority, and a wide range of geographical constituencies. I have probed the experience of office (albeit in retrospect) in order to understand better

the nature of its loss. You know better than anyone, that MPs undertake their role very differently depending on constituency, personal inclination, ambition, length of time elected and experience of higher office, and much else and experiences, of course, will be highly personal but some themes are, nevertheless, beginning to emerge, and will, I hope, be published in due course.

I will be considering what, if any, wider implications there may be for our democratic system. As part of these reflections, I want to understand more about the perceptions of long standing elected political office holders about how they hope, looking forward, to shape their political careers. These interviews are shortly to take place.

Whilst this research is informed by a number of different theoretical frameworks, from attachment and family systems thinking in the psychological domain through to political science, let me focus on one or two preliminary questions here regarding MPs specifically.

Simply by virtue of being an MP in 2013, you are more likely to be a "career politician" (King, 81) than ever before, that is, elected probably at an earlier age than parliamentarians a century ago, working far harder than ever before on parliamentary and constituency duties (quite aside from any ministerial responsibilities) with much less time or opportunity to keep up skills gained in previous roles - unless, of course, you had been a special adviser/ researcher, as you are more likely now to have been than years ago. How long will you want to remain elected as an MP? How will you decide? What then?

Dame Jane Roberts FRCPsych, DBE, Senior Associate Fellow at Warwick Business School, Warwick University. Jane has a background in medicine, health management and local government, and is a former council leader.



Lord Judd



Joe Ashton OBE



Lord Shaw of Northstead



Rt Hon Lord Rodgers of Quarry Bank

AN ORAL HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT

Dr Paul Seaward writes:



Since last autumn, The History of Parliament Trust has been working with the British Library and with the generous support of Dods on an exciting project to record the reminiscences of former Members of Parliament. The project will create a sound archive of people involved in politics at national and constituency

level, and will provide a unique record of post-2nd World War British political history.

We plan to interview as many former Members of the House of Commons as we can. We are just as interested in backbenchers, or in those who were in the House for a short time, as in those who were in the cabinet – in some ways even more interested in those who are not familiar faces or voices from radio or television.

Our special focus is on how people came to be Members, and how they worked within the constituency and in parliament

for their constituency and for the particular causes in which they were interested, and what were their impressions of parliament and political life. But the interviews cover the whole of our subjects' lives, not just particular incidents or themes. Our interviewers are volunteers, many of them historians of contemporary British politics, all of them trained by the British Library in the techniques of oral history interviewing.

We have now interviewed almost 50 former Members. They include some of the most prominent of their day, like Geoffrey Howe or Denis Healey. But there are also many more who spent most of their time on the backbenches, like Laurance Reed (Bolton East, 1970-74), Fred Silvester (Walthamstow West, 1966-74; Manchester Withington, 1974-87), Alice Mahon (Halifax, 1987-2005) or Eric Moonman (Billericay, 1966-70, Basildon, 1974-79).

One theme that emerges is the sheer struggle of being in parliament at a time when MPs were paid completely



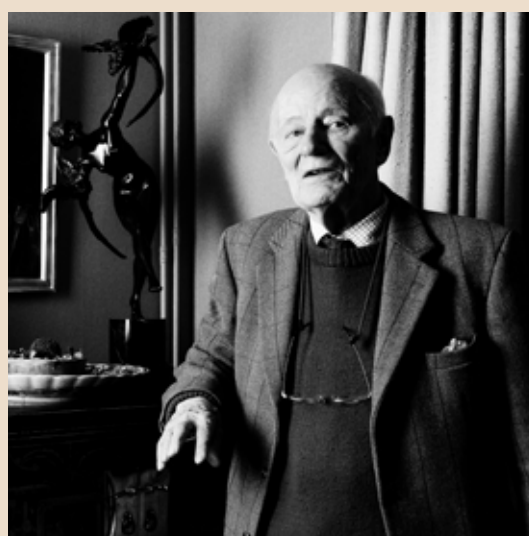
John Lee



Michael English



Peter Jackson



Sir Robin Chichester-Clark

inadequately. Even those who were successful lawyers, like Geoffrey Howe, had to juggle their obligations in the House and their obligations to their clients. What also stands out is their early commitment to politics and their determination to get into the House. Sir Richard Body (Billericay, 1955-59; Holland and Boston/Boston and Skegness, 1966-2001) describes playing truant from school in order to speak in Hyde Park for the society of individualists. Roy Roebuck (Harrow East, 1966-70) had read all of Hansard for the nineteenth century by the age of 18.

Central to the project is to ensure that the interviews are archived securely and for ever. The first batch of 29 interviews have now been catalogued by the British Library and can be accessed there, and more will be deposited soon. Meanwhile we are planning more interviews. Our priorities so far have been those first elected before 1979 – although our aim is to secure interviews from everyone who has sat in the House of Commons, and not simply a sample. Sadly, some we have missed - Jack Ashley, Sir Stuart Bell, Alf Morris - all on our list, and others have died over the last year. Their passing underlines the fact that we need to work faster.

We are enormously grateful to our interviewees, whose memories and stories are always fascinating. If you haven't yet heard from us, we haven't forgotten you! There are (fortunately) about 900 former members around and we very much hope to contact all of them, but it is going to take us a while! In the meantime, please do look at our website for more information about the project and some of the early results of the interviews: www.historyofparliamentonline.org/research/oral-history.

The photographic portraits above were commissioned by Dods for the History of Parliament project and taken by Michael Waller-Bridge. The portraits, all of Members who entered the House before 1970, and taken in their own homes, were exhibited in the Atrium of Portcullis House.

Dr Paul Seaward is the Director of the History of Parliament Trust. If you would like more information about the History of Parliament's Oral History Project, or would like to be involved in any way, please contact Paul Seaward at the History of Parliament, 18 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2NS, pseaward@histparl.ac.uk



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Ivor Caplin

MP for Hove & Portslade 1997-2005



A familiar question posed to me after my retirement from the Commons in 2005 was "How is the Arms Trade going?" and maybe not surprising as I had been a Defence Minister.

In politics they always say that the perception is sometimes more important than reality. However I answered that question those asking it had made their mind up that this was the reason for my retirement.

In fact and just to put the record straight I have not been dealing in the arms trade. It is however an important business for the UK but my interests in giving political and commercial advice to businesses was much wider than that. I have now been doing that advisory role for 8 years with a couple of years off when I was the Chief Executive of a small London based equity company. In 2008 I actually forecast the hung parliament to my clients who were astonished that 2 years later and having taken that advice and worked on all possible outcomes that this was indeed true!

Whenever you leave a prominent role there is always unfinished business and for me there was one project which had been all dominating throughout my time at Westminster. Many of those reading this will be familiar with the plight from the mid 90s onwards of my beloved football team Brighton & Hove Albion.

At that time the Club did not have planning consent for its new stadium and I recall supporters being worried that as they saw it one of the key political supporters was leaving the stage. Of course behind the scenes I was still working away to get this resolved and it was a great relief not only when we got the consent but also that the stadium has now been built and operational for 2 fantastic seasons. It was worth all the hard work by all those concerned over the 15 years.

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My time in the Ministry of Defence was indeed a very busy time. Of course dominated by the military operation in Iraq as well as the important Veterans events such as the 60th Anniversary of DDay in 2004. That was one of my personal highlights. Getting the support of the Lottery to provide funding and to see those 8000 fantastic Veterans on Arramanches beach on that day was one of the most fulfilling and significant days of my time at Westminster.

One other legacy was the creation of the Veterans badge. I know nearly 10 years on how welcome this has been and I often bump into people wearing their badge. I awarded the first ever one of these to Lord Healey just before the Monte Cassino anniversary where he had served with distinction.

When I retired my successor at MOD (Don Touhig) suggested we meet up for a handover meeting in the House. So just a few days after the election I went to the meeting. Of course I had to enter as a visitor and the staff were visibly embarrassed at having to take me through security. After this I wrote to the then Speaker recalling this incident and supporting the need for a pass. I am delighted that the Association has been able to ensure that this is now in place for former members.

Winning two elections in a seat that had never been Labour was a significant achievement. Like any of us it was not just down to me but the hard work of many. Now I have many friends on all sides of the House. All in all I very much enjoyed my time.

Final thoughts on the excellent play *THIS HOUSE* at the National Theatre about the Labour Government of 1974-1979

The "Parliamentary Storm" of 27 May 1976



Lord (Tom) Pendry was a central figure in some of the events dramatised in the play and writes:

"I found myself at the centre of this drama, acting as a senior whip during 1974-1977. In May 1976 I became an accidental figure in one of the most memorable moments of political theatre, accused of cheating and the apparent sources of enough conflict to see Parliament disbanded for the night after Members of Parliament came to blows.

Labour governed with a wafer-thin majority in a time of real economic strife. The country was still licking its wounds from the three day week imposed by Prime Minister Heath as a reaction to dwindling electricity supplies, and economic stagnation pushed many to breaking point. There was a much changed political environment with all three parties led by new incumbents.

Thatcher had surprised many senior figures in her own party by winning the Leadership ballot following Heath's departure in 1975. Wilson, having fought two elections in 1974 had recently stepped down, passing power to his Chancellor, James Callaghan. The Liberals were also looking for a new Leader following the resignation of Jeremy Thorpe under less than usual circumstances.

I and my fellow whips had to shepherd through a programme of government which included pledges to create a new Charter for Women, action on the European Common Market and co-ordinated policies on transport and the environment to react to the energy crisis of 1973. It also included a commitment to nationalize the economically troubled aircraft and shipbuilding industries.

I was to be the Government Whip on this Bill which had 58 sittings. It sat for 140 hours and the curious thing was that throughout that time, no opposition member ever raised the issue which was to cause the parliamentary storm of the 27 May 1976.

On the 25 May a Tory MP raised with Speaker Thomas that the Bill in question was in fact a 'Hybrid' Bill (a public bill affecting particular private interests). The Speaker after much deliberation held that the Bill was prima facie 'Hybrid' and the

motion proposed by the Government to proceed therefore began its passage for debate against that background. Realising the Government's vulnerability, the Leader of the Opposition urged her whips to maximise their vote, and their vigour was matched by the Government whips.

When the division bells rang at 10.00pm that night I confidently approached the Aye Lobby to vote for the Government motion, only to be told by the Government pairing whip to stay out of the Lobby as we were going to win: he had sorted out the arithmetic with his counter-number in the Opposition Whips Office. Angry as I was, I

When the count was announced, there was pandemonium: shouts of "cheat", the mace was dislodged and fisticuffs broke out.

stayed out, only to find my colleague's arithmetic was faulty – the vote was 303 to 303 and the Speaker, adhering to a precedent set in 1862 voted with the Government. However, when a second vote was to take place, he would by the same token be required to vote for the Opposition's amendment and the Government's vote would be nullified.

Hearing that, and shrugging off many on my side who were urging me to vote, I decided with the help of the whips manager to investigate what had gone wrong. With only a few minutes left before the next and vital vote took place, I discovered that one of our Ministers, who had been counted as eligible to vote that morning, had, believing he was paired, gone to a meeting abroad on Ministerial business. Armed with that news, I made the Government Lobby just in time and voted – the result being 304 to 303: a Government majority of one.

When the count was announced, there was pandemonium: shouts of "cheat", the mace was dislodged and fisticuffs broke out. Typical of the following morning's newspaper headlines: "MPs Scuffle in Commons", "Grave Disorder in the House", "Declaration of War", "All Pairing to be Scrapped". An inquiry was demanded by Mrs Thatcher.

Following that inquiry, it took over a month to decide that I had not cheated, but speculation about the vote has continued ever since.

Tom Pendry, MP for Stalybridge and Hyde 1970 -2001



PACTS & COALITIONS

We are now three years into the current example of that rare British political phenomenon – a coalition government. It took the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War to produce the previous two examples. And, as Sir Alec Douglas-Home said about the National Government of the 30s:

“Coalitions, however promising their start, have no stamina and should not be prolonged beyond the duration of the crisis which they are designed to meet”.

But we do have the example of a nearly coalition – the Lib/Lab pact of the 1970s. By 1977 the Labour government, elected in 1974 with an overall majority of just three, had found itself in a minority following by-election defeats. An agreement between Jim Callaghan and David Steel was reached in March 1977 which ensured that the thirteen Liberal MPs would vote with the government against any motion of no confidence. In return arrangements were put in place to ensure that government ministers consulted their Liberal counterparts on a range of policy issues. Mrs Thatcher responded by tabling a motion of no confidence which the government duly won by 20 votes.

The Lib/Lab pact was a coalition “lite” agreement - there was no sharing of ministerial posts. In the 1970s of course the Liberal Party in parliament was very much smaller than the Lib Dems are today. The pact lasted until October 1978. Then in 1979 came a further motion of no confidence and with the pact at an end, we all know the result – defeat for the government by 1 vote.



Peter Snape, who saw it all, reminisces.

“Coalition Governments? What’s New About Them??

The old saying that ‘there’s nothing new in the world of politics’ applies just as much to coalition governments as it does to anything else. After all, as the country went through the nineteen thirties with a notionally ‘National’ government and through much of the second world war with a proper coalition, we should not perhaps be too surprised that the last election turned out the way it did.

However, before the memories disappear into the mists of time (and whilst some of the survivors are still around) we should recollect that we had a coalition in the 1970s when Prime Minister Jim Callaghan and the then new Liberal leader David Steel met in March 1977 to agree a Lib-Lab pact, a coalition of sorts, which lasted until the Autumn of the following year.

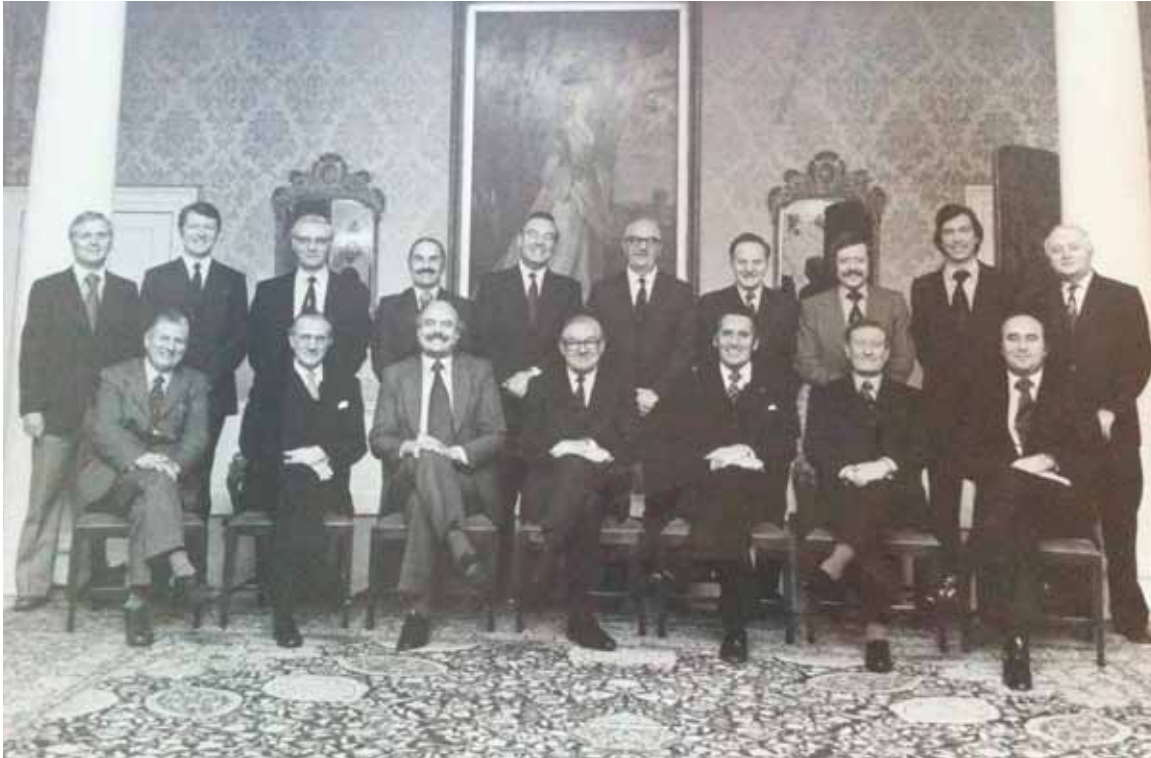
It was not of course the formal arrangement we have today. There were no Liberal ministers and what we had was a sort of ad hoc consultative arrangement within which the Labour ministers ‘co-operated’ with their Liberal counterparts and the Labour Whips office acted as a conduit between the two parties. Surprisingly it worked rather well for eighteen months or so.



The accepted view of the situation thirty odd years on is that the Liberal Party for some reason ‘came to the rescue’ of a tottering Labour government, still reeling from the shame of the so called ‘cap in hand’ loan from the IMF a year or so earlier. That is, with respect a re-writing of history which ignores one or two other political events of that era.

Whilst the Labour Party was at that time what we may charitably say ‘at the shallow end of the opinion poll baths’, the Liberals were, continuing the simile, ankle deep. The previous year Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe had been involved in a complicated fracas involving a male model, Dartmoor, and a dog (deceased) called Rinka. His trial on an attempted murder charge was thought to be imminent and the Liberals just as much as the Labour Party were not exactly anxious to rush to the polls. Political survival as well as war, electoral indecision and economic turmoil plays its part in coalition government as we discovered at the time.

For the Labour whips office this was just another consideration in the daily survival battle. Chief Whip the (usually) imperturbable Michael Cox gave us simple instructions about our relationship with our new allies. ‘Your job’ he said ‘is to get out there and smooth their ruffled feathers’. Easier said than done in the case of some of my



Labour Whips in 1976

I do not sully that great man's memory by saying that when it came to feathers Walter was more of a plucker than a smoother.

colleagues. Getting the Deputy Chief Whip Walter Harrison to 'smooth' anybody's feathers was a big ask indeed. I do not sully that great man's memory by saying that when it came to feathers Walter was more of a plucker than a smoother. But he, like the rest of us, adapted quickly to coalition reality.

In my own case it was a surprisingly pleasant early few months. My first two Standing Committees included the splendid duo of David Penhaligon and Stephen Ross. Both of them were friendly and co-operative, possessing that blessed Westminster talent of a sense of humour along with an appreciation of the difficulties of a minority government. We headed for the Summer Recess in better humour without ordering our election material!

Of course it wasn't just the Liberals who were consulted as part of our version of 'coalition' politics. The three Plaid Cymru members were certainly no fans of Mrs Thatcher. Some of the Ulster

Unionists were a little more kindly disposed toward the Labour Party now that they had seen what the administration had achieved in Northern Ireland. Indeed two of them, Harold McCusker and John Carson regularly suffered the wrath of the Reverend Ian Paisley by being spotted 'consuming the devil's buttermilk' with me and other Labour whips in the Strangers Bar!

The SNP were the other major group to receive the attention of Whips and Ministers in and out of the Commons chamber in our daily attempt to keep the Government in power and electoral Armageddon at bay. Deep pockets and an iron constitution being necessary qualifications for socialising with some of them given their justifiable reputation for conviviality. Once again Walter Harrison's talents proved to be an essential factor. His ability to sink 'a thick un' (his term for a large scotch) proving essential during late night 'negotiations'.

We could normally rely on the support of the SDLP's Gerry Fitt and eccentric independent Frank McGuire although the latter was an infrequent attender and was considered to be the responsibility of London whip Jock Stallard once within the Palace of Westminster.

Keeping tracks on Frank was no easy task and not one any of us sought or envied. His habit of vanishing around ten o'clock kept Jock on his toes. Incidentally it was Jock's task the week before any crucial vote to ring Frank's pub in Fermanagh to ascertain his availability for the following week. Negotiations about his attendance were conducted through his formidable wife Philomena who regularly forced us to change the proposed dates of contentious legislation on the grounds of Frank's presence being essential back home on the pub's darts night. I'll bet the Cameron/Clegg coalition has never had to take account of the fixtures in the Fermanagh & District Darts league like Jim Callaghan's did.

The Liberals formally ended the arrangement in the Autumn of 1978, the Thorpe trial having been put off to the following year. As a coalition although it lacked the formal arrangements of the current one it was probably a lot more enjoyable for those of us around at then. Given the opinion polls at the time it ended it was perhaps a lot more popular with the voters too.

Lord (Peter) Snape, MP for West Bromwich East, February 1974–2001



At the LBC studios about a year ago I met Andy Slaughter MP for, as far as I am aware, the first time and introduced myself. 'Ah yes, the elections man', he replied.

While sitting in St Paul's for Lady Thatcher's funeral both current and former MPs asked for my assessment of poll trends with a view to predicting 2015. There is no escape. I have a reputation as a polling specialist. When asked about it I normally tell people that my hobby is only train spotting without the anorak, the difference however being that people with power and influence don't normally ask train spotters about their hobby whereas they do ask psephologists.

Opinion polling, boundary reviews and election result analysis have always been a hobby, canvassing though came first. I have always thoroughly enjoyed it but only on a doorstep. I like to see the whites of voters' eyes (and their body language). The modern development of telephone canvassing leaves me cold. It is an impersonal necessity but provides no opportunity to assess the commitment/style and honesty of the person to whom you are speaking.

Talking of honesty!, I first achieved recognition for my polling of opinions not at a national election but within the Parliamentary Tory Party during the

POLLS APART

Rob Hayward, a psephologist and political analyst, reflects on the hazards and challenges facing pollsters

leadership election of 1989 and the first ballot of 1990 a year later. In Edward Pearce's book on the rise of John Major and Mrs T's downfall I'm quoted as saying that I based my predictions on what my colleagues 'had said over 7 years not 7 days'. Brian (now Lord) Mawhinney asked me if it was correct that I recall comments over years. I said it was, to which he replied jokingly 'in which case I will never speak to you again.'

Almost a year later in mid 1991 I did an analysis for John Major which showed that polls persistently under-estimated the Tory vote. In 1992 that was proved to be the case and the *Sunday Times* wrote that 'throughout the General Election campaign the Tory party had clung to [Rob Hayward's] analysis'. It was also after that election that David Hughes of the *Mail* told me that journalists would never believe polls again. Yeah right!! The irony was of course that during the 1992 election one poll was so regularly an outlier that it stopped being conducted. By chance it was accurate because it was polling those other polls missed. They were broadly the people whom I went on to identify as 'motorway man' in the 2010 General.

In the early 1990s, with the exception of General Election periods, there were about 3 polls a month, now it is not rare for 3 to be published in a day. In those early days not only were there fewer polls but they also asked relatively few supplementary probing questions. The data available was therefore fairly raw. Today not only are there more polls asking more detailed questions but there are also focus groups. Information is therefore available not

When asked about it I normally tell people that my hobby is only train spotting without the anorak

only of what people think but why. The analysis also identifies, in much greater detail, variations between demographic groups. This plethora of information results in a party adjusting messaging for mail shots, telephone calls and party leader messaging. However, while the process may appear the same there will always be one party which is slightly ahead in its use of these techniques. Is it yours?

What too few people (including journalists) understand is the extent to which the manner of polling and the order of questions generates a marked difference in the results. For example the current rise of UKIP appears very different depending on whether polls are conducted by telephone and internet. This month UKIP is polling 14% on internet polls and only 12% by phone. This represents a massive variation.

While I'm happy to discuss polls in detail at any time I recognise that politicians are addicted to them, but if the conversation is going to be brief I revert to the Clintonesque view 'it's the economy stupid'. Yes immigration, Europe, planning or education may be factors in voting, and therefore polling, trends but they are to me the 'and another thing' issues which anyone who has stood on a doorstep canvassing will recognise. Get the economy right and you could even (almost) dispense with polls!!

Robert Hayward OBE was MP for Kingswood 1983 – 1992

OUR ASSOCIATION'S OLDEST MEMBER

Sir Albert McQuarrie, born 1 January 1918 MP for East Aberdeenshire 1979 – 1983 and for Banff and Buchan 1983 – 1987

Recently I was looking over the list of the 880 former Members of Parliament still living – many in their 70s, some in their 80s and a few in their 90s.

I checked on the over 90s to see where I would appear on the list. It was not a difficult task as sadly there are not too many of us. I found there are only three former Members older than me. Readers of Order Order may be interested in these three.

The eldest is the Rt Hon John Freeman MBE, PC – Labour Member for Watford from 1946 to 1955. He was a distinguished Diplomat serving as British High Commissioner in India from 1962 to 1968 and British Ambassador in Washington from 1969 to 1971. He was born on 19th February 1915 and is now 98 years of age.

Next in line is Mr Ronald Henry Atkins – Labour Member of Parliament for Preston North from 1966 to 1970 and 1974 to 1979. He was born on 13th June 1916 and will be 97 years of age on his birthday in June.

Third is the Rt Hon Baron Healey of Riddlesden CH, MBE, PC, MA, BA, FRSL (Denis Healey). As a Labour Member for one of the Leeds Constituencies from 1952 to 1992 he served as Secretary of State for Defence and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was born on the 30th August 1917 and will celebrate his 96th birthday then.



Sir Albert and Lady McQuarrie

Photo: Terry Moore

I follow these three Labour former Members and am the eldest of Conservative and Unionist former Members of Parliament. Born on 1st January 1918, I celebrated my 95th Birthday on New Year's day 2013. I was elected to the United Kingdom Parliament in May 1979 for the East Aberdeenshire Constituency, serving until 1983 when the Constituency was renamed Banff and Buchan which I represented until 1987. In the Dissolution Honours I received a Knighthood from Her Majesty The Queen which was a great honour.

Of a comparable age is the Hon Major Sir Clive Bossom FRSA, FRGS who was Conservative Member of Parliament for Leominster from 1959 to 1974. During his time in Parliament he was Parliamentary Private Secretary to three Secretaries of State. He was born a month later than me, on the 4th February 1918 and shares the same age of 95.

Since I lost my Seat I have been active in politics and have served as an Office Bearer in local party associations. I also resumed my consultancy business on Planning and Business Development, and am still taking on a number of Commissions – never too old to earn a copper or two!

As the three former Members of Parliament who are my elders are not members of the Former Members of Parliament Association, it is with some pride that I find myself the oldest Member of our Association.



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OUR NEXT MEETING TUESDAY 25 JUNE, 4.00pm, COMMITTEE ROOM 10

We are delighted that Sir Robert Rogers KCB, Clerk of the House, is our speaker at our next All Member Meeting.

This year marks the 650th Anniversary of the Clerkship of the House of Commons. The first person to hold the post was Robert de Melton who was first recorded attending meetings of the House of Commons in 1363.

Our current Clerk, Sir Robert, is the principal adviser to the House on its procedure and business, and on

constitutional issues. As Corporate Officer he is the legal owner of the House's property, and of the Commons part of the Parliamentary Estate. He is also Chief Executive of the House of Commons Service of some 2,000 people.

A display of original documents from the Parliamentary Archives, marking the 650th Anniversary of the post is being displayed in the Royal Gallery, House of Lords, until the 31st July.

Do come along to what will be an extremely interesting and entertaining session. Partners are very welcome.



EXOTIC & REMOTE PARLIAMENTS



Jacques Arnold, MP for Gravesham 1987 – 1997 writes:

Those of us who served on the IPU and CPA will have varied memories of visits to faraway parliaments. A combination of nostalgia and curiosity has taken me to some quite exotic ones in recent years, during my travels giving lectures aboard cruise ships. The common denominator has been a warm welcome, and a desire to compare notes on procedures, electoral systems, and the work of local representatives.

French Polynesia

One tour across the Pacific took me many days sailing across the vast expanse of French Polynesia, with its scattered archipelagos. In the capital, Papeete, I found the Assembly of French Polynesia in a modern but simple low building open to the cooling pacific winds, set in a tropical garden. To the assembly come members from constituencies made up of archipelagos – the Marquesas, the Windwards, the Leewards, the Tuamoto-Gambier, and the Australes. Each is different, and many hundreds of miles apart. They administer a largely devolved government, with Metropolitan France retaining powers over Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice and Higher Education. Parties campaign for and against independence, the islands only having been colonised in the 1880s. During the 2nd World War, the islands were amongst the first to rally to De Gaulle. The islands send two representatives to the French National Assembly. In the last Presidential election, the independence faction recommended François Hollande, those opposed backed Nicolas Sarkozy. The latter won!!



The Chamber of the Assembly of French Polynesia, Papeete

Chile

Given recent history, Chile has a peculiar set up. Congress was established in 1811, and a classical building in the capital, Santiago, was built in the nineteenth century. Pinochet sent them packing to Valparaiso, a port city 120 kms. away, into a rather brutalist modern building, where their sessions remain to this day. The old Congress building became the Foreign Ministry for many years (until the latter was transferred into the old Carrera Hotel, opposite the Moneda Presidential Palace, in 2006). Both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies have reclaimed their offices in the Santiago building, but the parliamentary focus remains in Valparaiso. Nevertheless, as parliamentarians do, they have settled in Valparaiso, and their Chambers and building are impressively representative of Chilean heritage



The National Congress Building, Valparaiso, Chile



The Former National Congress Building, Santiago

Netherlands Antilles

Another tour, through the Caribbean, took me to Curaçao, one of the six Dutch islands in the Caribbean. Like Britain in the 1950s, the Netherlands tried to marshal their island territories into a self-governing federation. The British West Indies federation fell apart rapidly, whilst the Dutch one has taken longer to fragment, finally succumbing in 2010. Once again a parliament of Curaçao was created, following on that of the Netherlands Antilles, and its island predecessor. The government of the island



The Estates of Curaçao building, Willemstad

occupies the historic Fort Amsterdam, and within it, the historic compact building of the Estates of Curaçao, which dates back into the mists of the colonial period. The island now elects 21 members, who appoint a government and prime minister, who exercise similar devolved powers to French Polynesia.



The Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Islands, Port Stanley

Falklands Islands

Quite a number of us over the years have visited the Falklands, and its tiny Legislative Assembly. No political parties – five members for Stanley, and three for the “Camp”, the rest of the islands - an electorate of nearly 1,600; and they meet in Gilbert House on the waterfront, not much larger than a village hall or scout hut!

BOOK REVIEWS

A HISTORY OF BRITAIN'S PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES



Jacques Arnold originally compiled this publication as an enthusiast in the years immediately following the 1974 election. As it developed, he began to market it to public and academic libraries, candidates and journalists, he has kept it up to date over the years.

The latest edition includes the results of the last general election, has been further expanded and now provides a thumbnail summary on each constituency.

Jacques is offering Association members copies of volumes of their own constituency/county/city/borough at a 50% discount.

The books are published by Patricia Arnold, 243 London Road, West Malling, Kent, ME19 5AD. Telephone: 01732 848388

Enquiries by e-mail: constituencyhistory@uwclub.net

website: www.theroyalhousesofeurope.co.uk.

EDITOR'S RECOMMENDATION

For all of us interested in the Palace of Westminster, its history and buildings, The Palace of Westminster Official Guide is a joy.

In paperback and costing just £7.50, it is a beautifully illustrated guide with a highly readable account of one of the country's most iconic buildings.

Produced by the House of Commons and the House of Lords it has over 170 stunning images with a wealth of facts about the Palace's history, heritage and significance.

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A FORGOTTEN PARLIAMENTARIAN

George Croydon Marks

Baron Marks of Woolwich
1858-1938

By **John Austin**

Whilst browsing in a bookshop closing down in Victoria, I was surprised to come across a biography of *Baron Marks of Woolwich* by Michael J Lane - surprised because although I had been the MP for Woolwich and a local councillor for 24 years previously, including service as Leader and Mayor, I had never heard of Marks. Having retired from Parliament, I have had some time to enquire further, but found that other local figures were as ignorant as me.

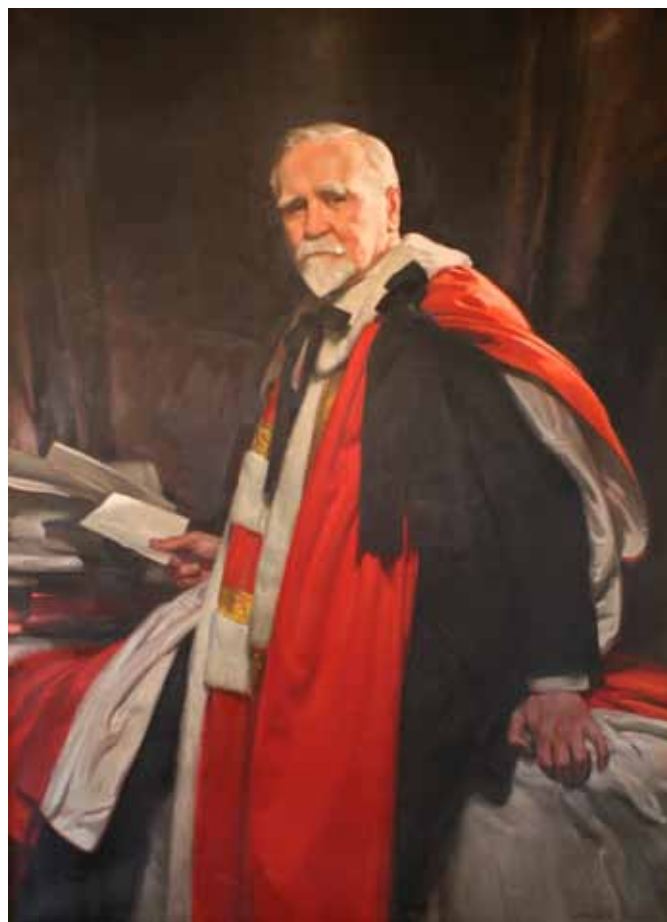
George Croydon Marks was, however, a remarkable engineer, entrepreneur, patent agent, social activist and politician in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although he was born in the borough of Greenwich and worked in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich there is little information about him in the borough's archives apart from a copy of Lane's biography. He served for 18 years as a Liberal MP and later as a Labour Peer, but neither the Liberal Party nor Labour Party archives contain records of his career.

Marks' father, William, was a farm worker from Somerset who had come to London seeking work in 1855. William obtained a post in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich where he worked for the next 43 years. George was born in Eltham in 1858 and attended primary school there. He followed his father into the Royal Arsenal as an apprentice and won a Whitworth scholarship to King's College, becoming a Mechanical Engineer. He returned to the Arsenal before moving on to many other engineering appointments in England, Ireland and central Europe.

Among Marks' achievements are the design of the Lynmouth & Lynton, Bridgnorth, Bristol Spa and Aberystwyth cliff railways and the Matlock steep incline tramway. He worked with Dugald Clerk, pioneer of the 2-stroke engine, with whom he filed various patents on behalf of the Parson brothers of Easton & Anderson in Erith before forming a company of patent agents, Marks & Clerk, which recently celebrated its 125th anniversary as one of the largest international legal firms dealing with intellectual property rights.

Marks was a personal friend of Thomas Edison and was the first Chairman of the Edison Phonograph Company and subsequently Columbia, HMV and then Director of EMI.

He was involved in several engineering works in the West Country, at Bude, Torquay and Padstow Harbour. He was elected as Liberal MP for Launceston in 1906 and following boundary changes, for North Cornwall, holding the seat until 1924.



In 1915 Lloyd George appointed him Commissioner for Dilution of Labour in the Ministry of Munitions. As an engineer he favoured decimalisation and In 1918 was appointed to the Royal Commission on Decimal Coinage.

In 1929 he surprised many by supporting Ramsay MacDonald's minority Labour government and was rewarded with a peerage – becoming one of the first two Labour Peers to be created.

At the State Opening of Parliament in 1930, Marks seconded the motion on the Address and called for community benefit from added land values; spoke in favour of urban town planning and rural protection; on the need for improved health protection for workers in factories and controls on expenditure by candidates seeking election to Parliament.

Outside of politics and business, he was actively involved with his church. He was a Sunday School teacher at Eltham and later in Birmingham where he established a "ragged school" for the City's poor. He became Treasurer, then President of the Sunday School Union, President of the London Sunday Schools Choir and of the Girls Life Brigade.

He died in 1938 without any heirs and the title Lord Woolwich died with him.

There are plans to place a commemorative plaque in The Royal Arsenal this year, to coincide with the 75th Anniversary of the death of this forgotten parliamentarian.

John was Labour MP for Woolwich 1992-1997, Erith & Thamesmead 1997-2010

TRIBUTES Association member Jack Aspinwall remembers his friend Tony Speller.



ANTONY KIRBY SPELLER

12 June 1929 – 15 February 2013

Conservative MP for North Devon 1979 – 1992

I knew Tony Speller as a colleague and trusted friend. He was generous and

kind and would always be ready to help. His work in parliament reflected the care that he had for his constituents and friends. I shared an office with Tony for about ten years so I had the privilege of being close to a person who was genuine and clever. We had shared interests in cricket and football. Outside parliament we kept in touch and it was so sad to see the deterioration in his health in the latter years.

Tony was born in 1929 in Exeter and he was a true Devonian. His father was the late Captain John Henry Speller, Director of Posts and Telegraph, India, and later Exeter hotelier. Tony studied at Exeter School, University of Exeter, and was a Major in the Devonshire Regiment. He then worked in Africa, mainly in Nigeria, in the marketing and export industry for the UK government. Tony met his wife Maureen there and they

married in Nigeria in 1960. They moved back to Exeter and helped run the family hotel, The Bystock.

Tony was a true entrepreneur. He set up his own business, Copyshops, which offered office services, and soon there were a number of his shops across the region. But he also gave a great amount of time and effort to public duties. He was an Exeter City Councillor from 1963-1974 and was Chairman of the LEA 1972-1974. He fought the North Devon parliamentary seat in 1974 but was defeated by the Liberal Leader Jeremy Thorpe. He spent the next five years campaigning and was elected MP for North Devon in 1979. To his credit he never mentioned Jeremy Thorpe's problems and difficulties. The seat returned to the Liberals at the 1992 election.

Tony was a superb MP with intense loyalty to and consideration for his Devon county and constituency. He advocated the curtailing of regulations and legislation which would make the task of the small business sector harder to succeed. He had many strong

views and his local government background helped him enormously in his parliamentary work. He successfully introduced the Transport (Amendment) Act which resulted in the re-opening of sixteen railway lines and sixty six stations. He helped the farming community in many ways and his interests included a wide variety of subjects – railway lines innovation, rural garages, transport links in Devon, flood defence provisions, and the use of alternative energy. He advocated better training for caterers through his previous hotel interests. He worked hard to encourage strong links between Barnstaple and the sister town of Barnstable in the USA. Boundless energy was the order of the day. He worked long days and he was a great supporter of Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative cause.

He spent his last days in a specialist nursing home in Devon, dying from Alzheimers Disease. Maureen, his wife, took outstanding care of him over a long period. She survives him with their five children and twelve grandchildren.



SIR FERGUS MONTGOMERY

27 November 1927 – 19 March 2013

Conservative MP for Newcastle Upon Tyne East 1959 -1964,

Brierley Hill 1967 – Feb 1974 and Altrincham and Sale, Oct 1974 – 1997

A "re-tread" twice, Fergus Montgomery was first

elected to parliament in 1959, the only Conservative to have represented Newcastle East, with a majority of just 98. Rather predictably he lost in 1964 but was re-elected in a by-election in Brierley Hill in 1967. Boundary changes abolished the constituency and he stood for the new Dudley West seat, losing to Labour's Colin Phipps. But luck was with him when Anthony Barber was made a life peer, and Fergus was selected for the safe seat of Altrincham and Sale, which he won in October 1974, remaining there until his retirement in 1997, having served a total of 35 years in parliament.

William Fergus Montgomery was born in 1927 in Hebburn where his father was a shopkeeper and his mother a nurse, both with Irish ancestry. He went to the local Methodist school and on to Jarrow Grammar. He gained his teacher's training certificate at Bede College, and after

national service in the navy he taught in the east end of Newcastle from 1950 to 1959.

In 1950 he was elected to Hebburn Council, the youngest ever councillor and its only Conservative. Having been elected national vice-chairman of the Young Conservatives in 1954 he went on to become its chairman from 1957-58, succeeded by the young Peter Walker. In 1955 he fought and lost the safe Labour seat of Consett but went on to fight and win Newcastle Upon Tyne East against the odds, at the age of 31.

He was Margaret Thatcher's PPS for a few months when she was Minister of Education and then joint PPS to her when she became Leader of the Opposition. Fergus had been a keen supporter of her leadership team. But surprisingly he resigned from the post in January 1976 saying he wanted to take a more active part in education debates. He was never offered ministerial office but he continued to be a strong and loyal supporter of Margaret Thatcher. He was regarded as right wing on most issues, giving strong support to the handling of the miners' strike and to Eddy Shah in his fight with

the print unions. But he was prominent in the campaign for homosexual equality and was one of only seven Conservative MPs to vote against the government to try to prevent plainclothes policemen entrapping homosexuals. His friendship with and support for Margaret Thatcher led to his award of a knighthood in 1985.

Fergus spent his time in parliament serving on a number of select and party committees and as a public relations adviser to a number of companies. He was chairman of the House of Commons Committee of Selection from 1992 -1997 and sat on the executive committee of the British American Parliamentary Group. He was very sociable and a well known supporter of the theatre with many good friends among the acting profession including Betty Driver, Barbara Windsor and Shirley Bassey. He was sometimes affectionately called the "Member for the West End".

Fergus married Joyce Riddle in 1971, a former accomplished cricketer and a former High Sheriff of Greater Manchester. She survives him.

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Executive Committee Member **Geoff Lawler** reports on:

PROGRESS WITH GOOD GOVERNANCE WORK

Having collected the names of **47 members of the Association who are keen to participate in good governance projects**, the first stage is completed as we now

have a body of expertise that can be offered to agencies involved in this work. We will be coming back to all those who are listed for some more information, and we are still keen to recruit more potential participants (please email John Austin at: johnaustin1944@gmail.com for a form).

The next stage is to approach organisations and agencies which operate election monitoring missions, consultancy and training, to make them aware of the contribution our members can make and their availability. We now have a comprehensive list of these and are starting to approach them.

Already we have had positive responses from DFID, Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS), the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union and IPU International based in Geneva.

A meeting has been held with ERIS, whose Chairman is former MP Keith Best. Both DFID and IPU would like to have a discussion about how our members may be used and meetings are being arranged.

Through our contacts, a request was received for a specific project requiring experts with parliamentary experience in a certain field where we were able to put forward the names of two people on our list.

Hopefully this is an early indication of the interest that the resource we are offering will generate.



REMEMBER

ALL MEMBER MEETING – **TUESDAY 25 JUNE, 4.00PM**
COMMITTEE ROOM 10

Speaker: Sir Robert Rogers, Clerk of the House