

Order! Order!

The Official Journal of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



SUMMER 2022

ALSO IN THIS EDITION...



3 BILL BROWDER
The corrupt Russian oligarchs' Enemy Number One to be guest speaker at the Association AGM



4 HARRY BARNES
Me and Manny Shinwell



11 PAUL FARRELLY
Uncovering a dark side of the web

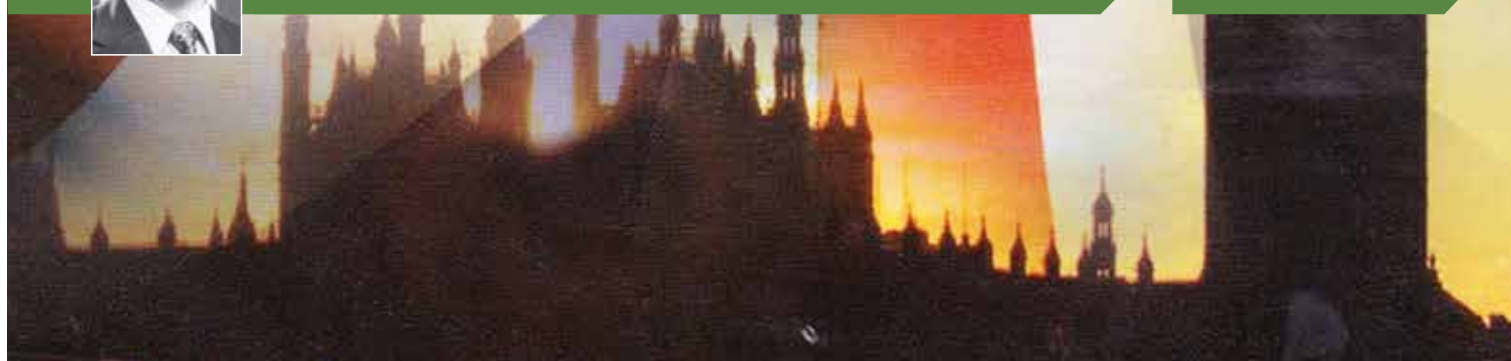


15 VICTORIA BORWICK
How IPSA nearly destroyed vital data about Grenfell Tower

From WAR to WESTMINSTER



Stefan Terlezki's journey to Westminster from a tiny Ukrainian village. p 7-9



INTRODUCING OUR NEW ADMINISTRATOR



Following Sally Grocott's decision to retire from the post of Administrator to the Association after twenty very happy years, we are delighted that Laura Blake has agreed to accept the appointment as her successor. Sally and Laura are working together until Laura takes up the role officially from the 1st July.

Sally commented "having been working with Laura for three or four weeks now I have absolutely no doubt that she is an excellent choice and that she will ensure the Association continues to go from strength to strength."

Laura writes below about her previous work experience:

Dear Association Members

I have been asked to introduce myself and tell you a little about my background. I have held roles as office manager/events organiser/administrator for over 30 years.

I started my professional career in marketing in an investment bank, organising staff events and corporate hospitality. On one occasion the bank hosted around 200 guests for lunch, dinner, bed and breakfast and sometimes all three in a house at the British Open. It was quite a challenge keeping track of all the comings and goings.

On leaving the City after 20 years I worked in the Not for Profit sector for three years as a fundraiser.

My introduction to politics was in 2002 when I joined a centre right think tank as the Office Manager. Everyone in the

office was either a politico or academic, so as the Office Manager the practical matters were left to me. I organised speaker events, book launches, managed the data base, did the bookkeeping, kept the office clean, hired furniture, and of course provided ample supplies of coffee.

In 2008 I moved to City Hall to work in the Mayor's Office as Office Manager at what was of course a time of extreme change. It was a challenging and fascinating time. I was actively involved in organising the London end of the Tour de France and also the 10th anniversary of the 7/7 terrorist attack. This was arranged with the utmost sensitivity as we worked closely with the survivors and bereaved families.

For the last five years I have been working for a Peer in the House of Lords, which has been a great introduction

to the workings of Parliament. In my role as his assistant I kept the Register of Interests up to date, arranged a large number of political dinners and receptions in the House including one for 250 people. I was also responsible for arranging a speaker for a weekly meeting of some 350 peers. During lockdown this meeting was held virtually, which put me on a steep learning curve not only on how to use the IT, but also how to train others to use it.

I am thrilled to have been chosen as your new Administrator. Sally is a hard act to follow, but I will endeavour to try and keep to her high professional standards. Everyone I have met so far in has been so very welcoming and I look forward to meeting more members at the AGM and Summer Party in the months ahead.



NEWS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OUTREACH TRUST

An update from the Chair, John Austin



AFTER A VERY SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMME EARLIER IN MARCH and April, requests from universities tend to drop off at this time of year in the run-up to examinations but several colleges have confirmed that they will be wanting speakers in the autumn term.

We are pleased to have continued our co-operation with the social enterprise, I Have a Voice. In April they organised a free training programme for 17 young people, living in low-income households in London. At the end of the programme a number of public affairs agencies offered them paid internships. We received a request to provide a speaker for the final session on the work of a constituency MP and why and how they became involved in the political process. Jim Fitzpatrick was an ideal choice, sharing his experience and we have had very positive feedback from the students and the organisers.

Our partnership with Speakers for Schools continues and a number of our members volunteer their services. Speakers for

Schools, founded by ITV's Political Editor, Robert Peston, has dedicated itself to levelling up by inspiring young people from less privileged backgrounds to raise their career aspirations and providing them with unique experiences of the world of work.

Young people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and as the UK rebuilds after COVID-19, the charity's work has never been more important. In July the Trust will be joining with them to celebrate their 12th anniversary and commitment to continue raising young people's aspirations. Their goal is to improve social mobility in the UK for the younger generations by providing meaningful support to one million young people annually by the end of the academic year 2022/23.

We wish them well and are proud to be a small partner in this huge enterprise.

The Trust is preparing for its 2022 Annual General Meeting which will be held at 3.30pm on Thursday 7 July, Committee Room 1, House of Lords. All members of the Association of Former MPs are invited.

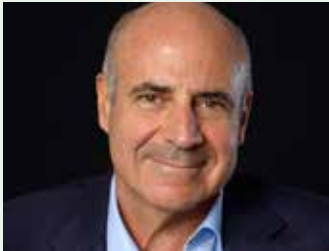
ASSOCIATION NEWS

FOR YOUR DIARY

WE ARE SO PLEASED that we are able to resume our programme of events at Westminster.

We are holding an all-members' meeting on **Thursday 7th July at 4pm** in House of Lords Committee Room 1. Members and partners are welcome.

This will be followed by our annual summer reception in Speaker's House at 6.00pm.



Our guest speaker at the all-member meeting is **Bill Browder**, an American born British financier and political activist. He is one of the world's greatest campaigners against corruption and civil rights abuses. He was the driving force behind the 'Magnitsky' legislation which has been used here, in the USA and across the EU to freeze the assets of and impose travel bans on Russian oligarchs and other notorious individuals protected by corrupt governments.

His recent book *Freezing Order* went to No 1 in the non-fiction charts here and in the US. It describes the many attempts by the Russians to get their hands on Bill, having sentenced him in his absence to a very long term in the Gulag because of the threat he posed to the wealth and lifestyle of the Russian elite.

His most dangerous moment was in July 2018 when Donald Trump had a one-to-one meeting with Putin in Helsinki. The latter suggested that the

Russians might hand over 12 of their intelligence officers wanted by the US if they could have Bill Browder in return – Trump called it an "incredible offer"! But although born in the USA Bill is a British citizen based in London. He was arrested in Spain in May 2018 on a warrant issued by Russia but he was released within hours following hundreds of protests, including from the highest levels of the British government.

We hope that many of our members will take the opportunity to attend this fascinating and topical talk.

ANNUAL SUMMER RECEPTION



WE ARE DELIGHTED that our Patron, **Mr Speaker**, has kindly agreed that we can hold our annual summer reception in the State Apartments on **Thursday 7th July 6–8pm**

Partners are welcome, but no guests. If you wish to attend please complete and return the slip below with your payment. Alternatively, if you prefer you can pay online giving your name and reference "Summer Reception" to: Sort Code: 20-47-39, Acc no: 50281506, Acc name: The Association of Former MPs

Once payments have been received, a formal invitation will be sent out by e-mail to assist with entrance.

grocotts@parliament.uk

A NOTE FROM THE SCOTTISH BRANCH

Gordon Banks, Chair of the Scottish branch



WE ARE TRYING to get the Scottish branch active again after all the problems and restrictions that Covid and lockdowns have

placed on everyone.

With this in mind we have arranged a branch meeting to take place on 30th June in The Cabinet Room, The Scotland Office, Queen Elizabeth House, 1 Sibbald Walk, Edinburgh EH8 8FT – please note the change of venue from our normal location in 1 Melville Crescent.

It is extremely helpful of course that the Secretary of State for Scotland and his staff are very willing to support us in our ventures. The meeting is planned to commence at 4pm and we are trying to secure a speaker to address the meeting from 5 to 6pm, thereafter we would plan to have some light refreshments.

Obviously, we would be looking for a good turnout to get things moving again whilst understanding that some members may still have reservations about attending gatherings.

All branch members will be formally notified with an agenda once agreement with a speaker has been finalised and hopefully everyone will look forward to seeing former colleagues again and mapping a way ahead for the branch.

John Corrie, Vice Chair and I feel this will be an important step in trying to return to some kind of normality and your support by attending the meeting would be much appreciated...look out for the notification in your email box.

Gordon.banks@cartmore.com

I would like to attend the Annual Summer Reception on Thursday 7th July 2022 6–8pm

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

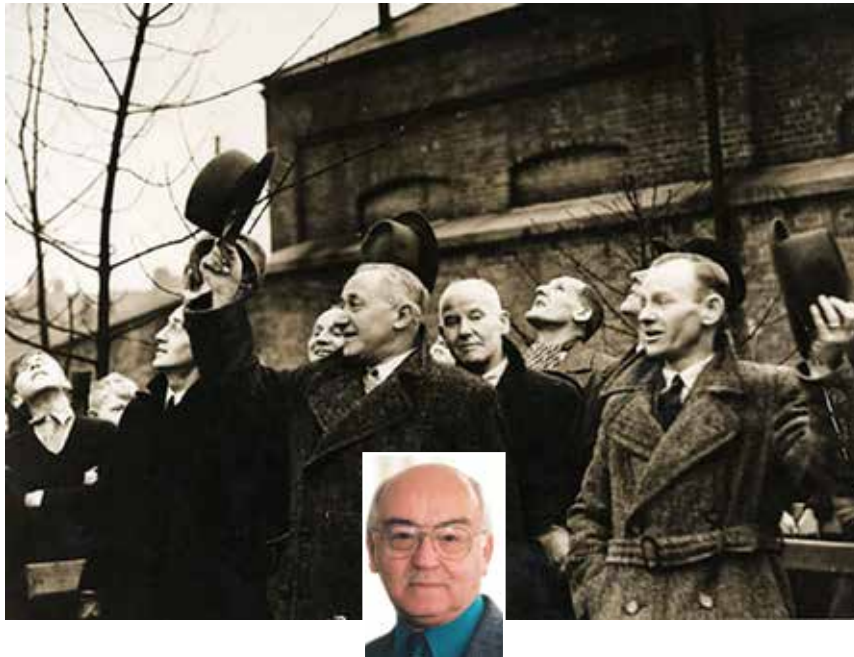
E-MAIL (Essential) _____

I would like to bring my partner (NAME) _____

I enclose a cheque for one/two places – £40 per head – made payable to the Association of Former MPs

Please return to Sally Grocott:

Association of Former MPs, House of Commons, Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, LONDON, SW1A 2NE



MANNY SHINWELL, RUSKIN COLLEGE, & ME

Harry Barnes

I first became aware of aspects of parliamentary politics at the age of eight. It was at the time of the 1945 General Election. As I walked home from the Junior School at Easington Colliery in County Durham I came across posters saying "Vote for Shinwell", which were fly posted on numbers of lamp posts. Then a larger poster had been placed on someone's railings which made claims against Winston Churchill and other Conservatives. I was surprised, as the war against Germany had only recently ended and Churchill had been presented in the media as the person who had led us to victory.

Slightly later, when I again returned from school, I found that our council housing estate had Manny Shinwell's election address placed in almost everyone's front window, including our own. So I turned to our newspapers, the *Daily Herald* and *Reynold's News* to learn the pro-Labour arguments. Shinwell won with a huge majority of 32,257, and I never came across schoolmates whose parents ever admitted to being Conservative voters. Representing a solid mining area, Shinwell became the Minister of Fuel and Power after the Labour victory in 1945. The following year, he introduced the nationalisation of the Coal Mines.

By 1947, I had started to attend a local Methodist chapel, whose local

preachers included a number of Labour Councillors, prominent among whom was Councillor George Walker, President of the local Miners' Lodge. He was closely connected to Shinwell. 1951 saw the trauma of a local pit disaster which killed 81 workers and two of the rescue team. It also added to our social bond. My father escaped because at the time he was working elsewhere in the pit.

However, it was my experiences during National Service, between the ages of 18 to 20, which shaped my deeper interest in politics. Having been a railway clerk for the previous two years, I was sent to Basra, in Iraq, to work with an RAF Movements Unit. I worked closely with Iraqi State Railways on the transshipment of goods and personnel to and from a major RAF camp near Baghdad. We received and dispatched goods by ships which travelled via the Red Sea.

The harsh conditions in which I saw Iraqi dock labourers working particularly shocked me. Then each week I went to an English bookshop in Basra and ordered the *New Statesman's* airmail edition, which was published on rice paper. I had to wait much longer for the *Observer* and *Reynold's News* to arrive by sea. But when I attempted to order a copy of Karl Marx's *Das Capital*, the bookseller told me that the local Chief of Police had blocked it.

I was demobbed at the time of the Suez Crisis and the Russian invasion

each week I went to an English bookshop in Basra and ordered the New Statesman's airmail edition, which was published on rice paper

of Hungary. The first political meeting I ever attended was at Newcastle. The speaker was John Gollan, secretary of the Communist Party. I cheered him when he criticised our Government's support for the invasion of Suez, and booed when he defended Russia's role in Hungary.

For a while my political activity was centred upon writing letters to local newspapers, including a dispute with the Chairman of Dorman and Long when I advocated the nationalisation of the Steel Industry. But then Shinwell ran an essay competition for local Labour Party members on nationalisation issues generally. So I joined the Labour Party in order to submit my essay. I attended my first constituency meeting to collect the second prize, of three pounds.

That drew me into Easington Colliery local Labour Party branch meetings, and I was soon secretary, and got them to agree that we would end each alternative meeting with a speaker and a discussion.

Next, a Fabian Society was founded at nearby Peterlee and I became their Secretary. Our first speaker was the national Secretary of the Fabian Society, Bill Rodgers who later defected from



Manny Shinwell in 1951, visiting Easington Colliery, where 81 miners and two rescue workers died

Labour as one of the Gang of Four. Other speakers included Sam Watson, secretary of the Durham miners and, of course, Shinwell.

This led on to my attending a Fabian Summer School at Ruskin College, Oxford. It was only when at the week's school that someone pointed out to me that Ruskin was for people like me, people without formal qualifications who could still study for an Oxford University Diploma in topics such as Politics and Economics. So I then applied, with a reference from Shinwell, and obtained a place and later acquired the Diploma. Around about this time Shinwell gave me a copy of his autobiography, *Conflict Without Malice*.

After Ruskin, I obtained a place at Hull University, where I gained a degree in Politics and Philosophy, which qualified me to become a lecturer in the Extramural Department at Sheffield University, mainly teaching industrial relations and politics to workers on day-release classes from the coal, steel and railway industries. What I taught and encouraged was far from political indoctrination. For I believed in John Stuart Mill's claim that the person who knew only their own side of the case understood little of that.

At Sheffield I also worked alongside a fellow student from my time at Ruskin called Karl Hedderwick. We became so close that he was best man at my marriage to Ann, when she and I were still based in County Durham. As a fellow tutor Karl came to live at Dronfield in North Derbyshire, and he got me to join the Contact Club, which facilitated Labour Party activities. When the Club moved to newly built premises, he immediately got me to join.

Unfortunately, while I was away teaching at a Summer School at the adult education college at Coleg Harlech

...someone pointed out to me that Ruskin was for people like me

in Wales, I missed the formal opening of the Club's new premises, at which Shinwell, officiated, but after I moved to Dronfield, and eventually became the local MP, it was the scene of numerous Labour activities, including Branch and discussion meetings. When, finally, I retired from parliament in 2005, I became secretary of their Discussion Meetings, until I passed the role over recently. Yet with Covid (but sticking within the rules) numbers of such meetings have recently been held in our garden or house, depending on the weather conditions. For I am still keenly into the dialectics of political debate.

In my period in parliament, three of my former mining day release students were my colleagues as Labour MPs. Another colleague was a Yorkshire Miner, with whom I had studied at Ruskin College. One of my ex-students also became a Labour Euro MP. Yet none of the teaching I came across and was involved with at Sheffield was dogmatic and any students given to such an approach invariably came to be challenged by their tutors and other fellow students. Politics can be deep without being dogmatic.

Politics and its students need people with questioning attitudes and communal values. Our classes normally lasted for 24 weekly day-time meetings per year – over a three-year period. The third year often including a visit and tour of the Commons, aided by local MPs. So I shared many valuable links before I went there myself from 1987 to 2005.

Harry Barnes was MP for North East Derbyshire, 1987–2005

THE CANDID CANDIDATE

Hugo Summerson



Political Incident No. 1

I WAS CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE for Barking in the 1983 General Election. Our election addresses, with the usual bit about the candidate ("Hugo is a chartered surveyor and his hobbies are music and fishing"), had been delivered. The emphasis now was on canvassing. Friends came to help, among them David, very enthusiastic, a successful businessman, but the sort who doesn't like being told what to do.

So I gave him a severe briefing and decided to keep him with me. We went off to canvass an estate where the houses were built in pairs, and rang the first two doorbells simultaneously. My door was not answered, David's was, and I listened with some misgiving.

"Good evening, Madam" he said.

So far, so good.

"Sorry to bother you. I'm canvassing for the Conservative candidate in the General Election."

OK.

"I see you have his election address on your hall table."

Steady, David – this is veering from the script.

"You look like a sensible woman to me ..."

Oh no!

"... and I feel sure you have read it."

This is not an interview!

"Now you are very fortunate, as the candidate himself is out with us this evening – in fact he is just next door. So come and take a look at him, and tell me if you think he looks like the sort of person you can trust."

A head, hair in curlers, cigarette on lip, popped itself round the porch and two twinkling eyes surveyed me, while I tried to stitch a trustworthy look across my face. Then the head disappeared, and she said:

"I have read his leaflet, and it says he likes music and fishing. Well, everyone knows that the two biggest liars are anglers and politicians!"

Bang! The door slammed. The interview was over.

Hugo Summerson was MP for Walthamstow, 1987–1992. Between 1982 and 1994, he stood three times as a Council candidate, and three times as a Parliamentary candidate.

HIGH NOON OF THE GKN IMPERIUM

John Cockcroft



In 1960 GKN at its zenith, the eighth largest UK company, resembled Antonine Rome, straddling the world in its international dominance.

It had once been a powerhouse of Victorian Britain, including having the largest fasteners factory in the world. In the mid-twentieth century it was still a microcosm of the former British empire with subsidiaries in India, Pakistan, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand inter alia.

At the epicentre of this post-Empire structure, at the height of his powers, Sir Kenneth Peacock, Chairman of GKN, sat on the boards of 95 subsidiaries. With his elephantine memory he knew broadly who was doing what in each, usually with a 'hot line' of communication to someone there. Epitomising the 'imperium', GKN Rovers continuously brought papers to and from Smethwick and his Gloucestershire manor house to be rapidly dealt with. Four secretaries were dictated to simultaneously.

GKN is so interesting because it is the oldest and certainly one of the largest engineering companies in Britain. GKN has a lot of history, starting in the valleys of South Wales where there was coal, steel and iron. These valleys were one of the GKN 'holy places', as I call them. In the latter years of Sir Kenneth Peacock's twelve-year chairmanship, it expanded enormously, mainly by acquisitions; companies were queuing up to be taken over by GKN because it had a good record of working relations and a pension fund for workers at a time when that sort of thing was not very common.

Sir Kenneth was a legendary figure. Overall his chairmanship was a great success. He didn't have a degree as he believed in just getting on with it, so he went to GKN, where he was very popular. He could walk around a factory and say

"Hello Mildred, how are you? How's your father, he had a nasty coronary a year ago, I hope he's making good progress." This could go on with hundreds of people.

One of my favourite stories about Sir Kenneth is when the finance director, Bill Fee, who I knew quite well, would go to see him and say "Ken, we've got a really good deal today, x, y and z, nuts and bolts company will sell out to us for a million pounds." And Sir Kenneth would say that it's outrageous, Bill would say "I think it's a rather good deal, what's wrong with it?" Ken would say "it's not enough money, let's offer them £1.5 million and they'll be our friends for life, the workers and the managers." And that was his style.

I remember that when he moved into the new office at 22 Kingsway, Sir Kenneth was offered some furniture. He said the office was too big and could he have a smaller one – there was nothing pompous about him. But another thing he said was "this furniture is fake!" He turned the desk upside down and said: "the sofa, all this stuff is fake. Send it to the managing director, Ray Brooks, he doesn't know the difference."

Eventually, GKN became very unwieldy when there were 75 different companies reporting directly to the group chairman. That was tidied up by the success of Sir Raymond Brooks, who put the different subsidiaries into sub-groups, such as nuts and bolts and screws and steel and so on.

Sir Raymond Brooks was very easy to talk to. I asked his PR people if I could see him after he became chairman and they told me it was very difficult, that it would take days, weeks, or even up to six months. I said that was ridiculous, as when I would go to Washington for the

GKN is so interesting because it is the oldest and certainly one of the largest engineering companies in Britain

Telegraph, I could get in to see a senator in a day or two. So, in the end I gave up going through all the acolytes, I walked into his office and he said "Oh John! Come and sit down, nice to see you, we've not spoken for a while!"

I said "Well, is it inconvenient? You didn't know I was coming."

He said: "Well, Wednesday is my day for thinking and my desk is empty and I'm just looking into space. So, instead of doing that, you can talk to me." So, we talked about the history of GKN all day, lunch was pushed in, then tea and then a sherry and I finally left about seven o'clock.

One of the first times I met Raymond Brooks was in The Grand in Calcutta; There had been an amusing incident at the Grand Hotel, where there had been a reception at the marquee, by the swimming pool. Sir Raymond Brooks said, "I wish to have supper tonight with John Edwards."

An Indian acolyte said "We do not have a John Edwards here, but if you wish to speak to and have supper with a John Edwards, we will go and find one in the streets of Calcutta."

Then he said, "Well then, I think I've got the name wrong, it's not John Edwards, it's John Cockcroft." So, we did indeed have supper, it was very interesting as you would expect.

John Cockcroft was Conservative MP for Nantwich 1974–1979



A UKRAINIAN IN PARLIAMENT

Andy McSmith



Years before the first free elections in Ukraine, a refugee from that country stood for a seat in the UK Parliament, and – unexpectedly – he won. He was a Conservative in a constituency that has never been won by any party but Labour, before or since.

He was no middle of the road Conservative either. The Cold War was thawing out, with Mikhail Gorbachev as the last President of the USSR, but Stefan Terlezki insisted that NATO should not drop its guard or reduce its fighting strength. When he won a place on the ballot for a Private Member's Bill, he used to propose that the May Day holiday be abolished and

replaced with a bank holiday a week or so later, on VE Day, to be called Winston Churchill National Day.

He also created a stir by suggesting that the way to deal with soccer hooligans was to bring back the birch.

If his views were harsh, so was his experience of life. He had lived under three dictatorships during a childhood and adolescence torn apart by war. He last saw his mother when he was 14 years old.

He was brought up in a tiny village in a part of west Ukraine called Halychyna, or Galicia, in a one-room home with whitewashed mud walls and a thatched roof, without gas, electricity or plumbing. Halychyna spent the first half of the 20th century being bounced from one country to another. Before 1918, it was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Then it was briefly an independent republic. When Stefan Terlezki was

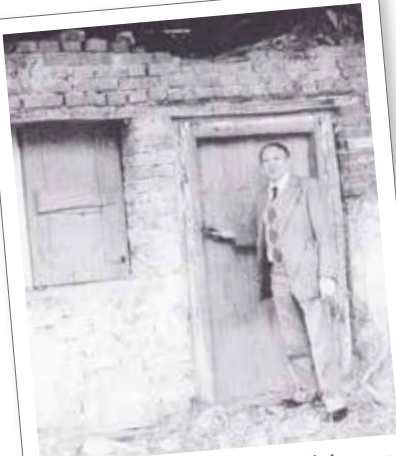
He had lived under three dictatorships during a childhood and adolescence torn apart by war

born, in 1927, it was in Poland. As a child, he would hear the adults complain about how badly the Poles treated their Ukrainian minority, but would soon learn that there were worse regimes than Poland's military dictatorship.

Keeping up with news from outside the village was not a simple matter. If the young Stefan Terlezki wanted to listen to a bulletin, he would have to walk to a nearby village where there was a shopkeeper he knew as 'Uncle Maksym', who had an electricity generator, and a radio. Uncle Maksym doubled as a dentist, though he was untrained. And he sold alcohol, but his wife kept the supply locked in a cupboard, to stop him



With his mother and cousins before the war



At the ruins of his old home in Antoniówka

constantly sampling it. It was rumoured that he used his dentist's drill to make a hole in the cupboard through which he could slip a straw to get at the stock.

War in Europe

In September 1939, word reached the village that the Germans had invaded Poland. The first reaction of the Ukrainians was that being ruled by Germans should be an improvement. "Our people had been second class citizens," Stefan confessed, in his memoirs. "We did not view the coming of the Germans with horror. How wrong we were!"

However, when the first batch of tanks rumbled into the village, they came, mysteriously, not from the west, but the east, accompanied by soldiers who spoke a language that sounded strange, but not completely unintelligible. Some even spoke Ukrainian. Under the secret agreement between Hitler and Stalin, Halychyna, was no longer in Poland, but in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Stefan and his neighbours were meeting Russians for the first time. They seemed friendly, at first. Hopes were so high that Stefan's father gave up his job

as a manager in the local brickworks to take on a full-time role as chairman of the village council, liaising with the new rulers. Then the arrests began. Stefan's uncle was one of the first to disappear. The peasants were driven onto collective farms. Stefan's father tried to intervene in this and other cases, but finding his position untenable, he resigned, handing the chairmanship to a more willing collaborator.

Suddenly, one day in June 1941, the sky was full of German bombers. The Russians fled whence they came and the village was taken over by soldiers in German and Hungarian uniforms. One of Stefan's schoolboy friends was a Jew, named Schwarz, whose family was rounded up and made to watch as their father was beaten by a soldier, who was so short that he had to stand on a stool to punch Schwarz senior full in the face. Stefan and some friends also saw a group of Jews being thrown off a bridge over the Dniester River, one by one, by German soldiers, who watched them drown.

Deported

In May 1942, now 14 years old, Stefan was bundled onto a train with other school children, most of whom were a year or two older than he was, and he left the village, which he would never see again, not knowing if he would ever see his family again. The young deportees spent four weeks in Lviv, sleeping on wooden planks, 40 or 50 to a room, guarded by Ukrainian collaborators they called the Black Brutes, before they were bundled into cattle trucks and taken to a labour camp in the Austrian Alps. They arrived filthy and riddled with lice. Their German guards shaved all the hair from their heads, took away their clothes to be burned, and sent them all to be showered. Afterwards, they were made to wait naked, boys and girls crowded together, until a lorry load of new clothes arrived.

Stefan was luckier than some other deportees, being assigned to work on an Austrian farm, six days a week, in Voitsberg, near Graz, in south east Austria. The farming family treated him comparatively well, even helping him to sneak into town one day, when he was 15, so that he could see a film for the first time in his life. He was also allowed to write to his father, and thus learnt that his mother had died, her spirit broken by suffering.

But in spring 1944, unaware that the war was entering its final year, he ran



Stefan with his wife Mary and daughters Caryl and Helena

In May 1942, ... Stefan was bundled onto a train with other school children ... and he left the village, which he would never see again

foul of the Gestapo. He had discovered that British, French and Italian prisoners in the area were being forced to work in the mines, on light rations, and suggested to the authorities that they should be given the same rations as others doing heavy duty work, for which he spent several days in solitary confinement not knowing what would happen next. When, eventually, he was released and returned to the farm, he was shocked that the family suddenly did not want to know him. "No one cared what became of me," he wrote. "They did not even provide the usual supper that night and I went to my attic without a kind word or a bite to eat, all but annihilated by their indifference."

He was transferred to another farm, and moved again in the autumn, to a small town in south east Austria, not far from Graz. He and his new friends cheered when they heard that Hitler was dead and Germany had surrendered, but they were not yet out of danger. Soviet troops rolled in, got drunk, and looted every shop in town. There was a moment when Stefan had a confrontation with Soviet officers who accused him of lying about weapons hidden in the farm where he had worked. It could have ended badly, except that his brief experience of Soviet rule meant that he knew the right things to say to avoid being seized or killed. That included lying that he had been a member of the Young Communist League.

Stefan became the spokesman for hundreds of teenage forced labourers, who hoped to be allowed to return to



Stefan (right) in Voitsberg in 1945. His fellow slave labourer was murdered on his return to the Ukraine.



Victory as the candidate for Cardiff West at the 1983 General Election



With Margaret Thatcher



Receiving the CBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace

Three times, they came close to being caught. On the third occasion, they escaped by hurling hand grenades at their pursuers.

their homelands. They were all put on cattle trucks, taken to Budapest, then taken off the train and marched back to Austria, where to be conscripted into the Red Army. Stefan was appointed a lieutenant, though he was still only 17 years old. This was not what any of them wanted. The shock was made all the worse by news that the USSR had belatedly entered the war against Japan. A rumour went around the camp that they were to be transported 5,000 miles to the Far East.

Escape

Stefan and another youth, named Ivan, decided to desert and try to escape to the zone occupied by the American and British troops. During a long journey on

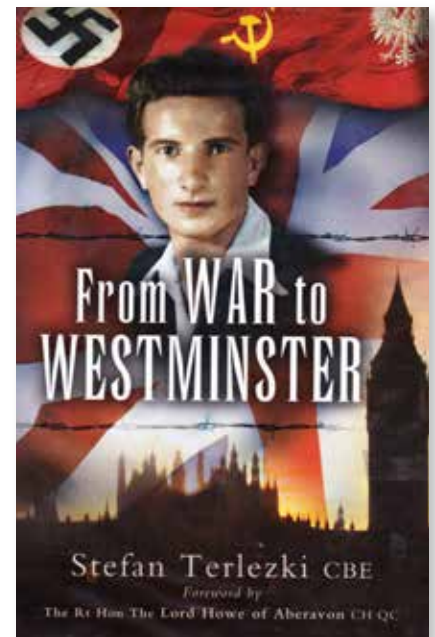
foot, they had to avoid towns, bridges and anywhere else where there might be patrols. Three times, they came close to being caught. On the third occasion, they escaped by hurling hand grenades at their pursuers.

At last, they reached Voitsberg, but found to their dismay that the border between the Soviet and British zones was so heavily guarded that there seemed no way across. They were saved by a dispute between the British and the Soviets over whose zone it was. The Red Army withdrew, the British moved in. Desperate to be near other Ukrainians, Stefan voluntarily entered a refugee camp run by the United Nations, but discovered that its occupants were expected to hang around waiting for something to happen. Impatient to work, he turned up early in 1946 at the British-run El Alamein camp, and persuaded the officers there to hire him as a cook. Having proved himself as a reliable worker, learnt English, and was given permission in 1948 to settle in Great Britain. After a few years, he borrowed the money to buy a hotel in Aberystwyth, and made such a success of it that he accumulated enough money to buy another, in Cardiff.

Elected to Parliament

His election to Parliament was a fluke. He was selected as Conservative candidate for Cardiff West, a seat that has existed since 1950 with only minor boundary changes, and has been a safe Labour seat for almost that entire time. But in 1983, the Labour vote split between Labour and the short-lived SDP, allowing Stefan Terlezi to slip past them both. He lost to Rhodri Morgan in 1987.

His time in Parliament included one moment of high drama. For many years, he did not know whether his father, Oleksa, was dead or alive. After years of inquiries, he learnt that the old man had been deported to Irkutsk province in Siberia. As an army deserter, Stefan did not venture into the Soviet Union, even as an MP, but he pleaded with the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, to intercede. Howe raised the case during a visit to Moscow, and in October 1984, the old man was granted a 28-day exit visa. He arrived in a wheelchair, to an emotional reunion with the son he had not seen for 42 years. He died in Siberia in 1986.



Stefan Terlezki's memoir, *From War to Westminster*, was published by Pen and Sword Books, in 2005, a year before his death, aged 78.



Reunited with his father after 42 years

A GOOD READ



PAGES OF POISON

Jerry Hayes

First Lady:

Intrigue at the Court of Carrie and Boris Johnson

By Michael Ashcroft

Published by Biteback

THIS TAWDRY EXCUSE FOR A BIOGRAPHY is unputdownable only in the sense that you want to hurl it out of the nearest window and pray that it doesn't land on consecrated ground. This is not a character assassination, it is a political murder on the Orient Express where a long line of those with grudges against Carrie Johnson spit their poison and wield their stilettos under the cowardly cloak of anonymity.

I am not one of the 'friends of Carrie' nor am I a Boris supporter. Quite the opposite. I will find it almost impossible to vote Conservative with this man at Number 10 – but this is not the point. I just find it reprehensible that Ashcroft chooses to attack a politician through smearing his wife. And I would be very surprised if anyone who has sought election to political office for any party would feel any differently.

Ashcroft slithers around this moral minefield by writing that his intention 'is not to destabilise Boris....the evidence I have gathered suggests that his wife's behaviour is preventing him from leading Britain effectively as the voters deserve'. However, this 'evidence' is overwhelmingly gossip. Yet not always. Paul Dacre, the godfather of evidence based reporting, puts his cloven hoof into the mix by this compassionate offering: "So the party of the family values has chosen as a leader a man who to say has the morals of an alley cat would be a libel to the feline species...I make no comment about the thirty one year old minx who is the current Boris Johnson bedwarmer.....as for the minx there will be tears before bedtime."

If anything in this book is to be believed (discuss) Carrie Johnson is a misogynist fantasy Lady Macbeth and nurse Ratched with a love of animals.

Carrie shares a dysfunctional family background with her husband. She is the illegitimate daughter of one of the founders of The Independent, Matthew Symonds, who according to Mark Lawson is, "very clever in a smart arse and slightly heartless way....he had this air of fast cars, girls and he was a bit rakish and also a bit insecure." Apparently he was not a hands on father, although he provided her with a private education.

According to Oliver Hastie, her first boyfriend, "(she) was able to shed tears on cue.....the relationship was tumultuous....she lost her temper plenty of times...there were slamming of doors."

And then the rest of the book is a tsunami of venom from people she worked with at Conservative HQ, and as a SPAD. At DCMS, she "did little work....fake and untrustworthy." "Nobody at Downing Street wanted her there."

According to Ashcroft's anonymous sources she was a networker who collected patrons like Sajid Javid, John Whittingdale and in particular Zac Goldsmith. She lived a glamorous life on instagram and spent too much time holidaying.

When she was on the Goldsmith campaign train a source says, "(she was) utterly, utterly useless. She got in the way, swanned around and she essentially made a nuisance of herself...stuck to Zac like a limpet...whispering crap in his ear the entire time." She was also "asking about Boris's marriage....was he available."

Another source, another kicking, "it's all about getting her own way...wanting to settle scores...she's callous as to the impact on other people's lives.' Well-wishers go further, 'a culture of fear around touching everything Carrie didn't like.....she doesn't like people who are more intelligent or attractive than her."

And then we come to her relationship with Boris. "For Boris it was just a fling..." It is even suggested that Lynton Crosby urged him to have a vasectomy. Another hobnail boot strikes its target, "watch Carrie go to work on him...I give it six months before we are out of a job." Then pity her poor hen-pecked husband, who is alleged to have whined, "don't do anything that is going to make her torture me when I get home...you've just got to help me. My home life's miserable. You've got to find a way to make this bearable for me." Angels weep!

I suspect that I may have detected a demonic influence with the narrative as we are told, 'I can tell you categorically that Dominic Cummings was not the person who thought up this name (Princess Nut Nut)'. Well, that's a relief.

If anything in this book is to be believed (discuss) Carrie Johnson is a misogynist fantasy Lady Macbeth and nurse Ratched with a love of animals. But a word of warning, First Lady is a slow burner. When I chucked it onto the fire it took a very long time to burn.

Jerry Hayes was MP for Harlow, 1983–1997

THE DARK SIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Paul Farrelly

Digital Gangsters

By Ian Lucas

Published by Byline Books

IAN LUCAS AND HIS WIFE NORAH were the last people I said goodbye to, as we cleared our offices at Westminster on stepping down at the 2019 election.

We had both arrived in 2001, represented similar post-industrial constituencies, with dwindling Labour majorities, just forty miles apart, each of which voted roughly 60/40 for that leap into the unknown called 'Brexit'.

And the year before the referendum, Ian had joined us on the DCMS Select Committee and threw himself wholeheartedly into the most important inquiry we had conducted since our seven-year pursuit of phone-hacking at News International.

From his new perch at Horseshoe Pass near Llangollen, just a stone's throw from Wrexham, Ian has used his retirement to excellent effect. *Digital Gangsters* is a clearly written account of our unfolding, follow-the-evidence investigation into disinformation, Fake News and the role of Facebook, in particular.

Part political memoir and part examination of the role of Select Committees, the book charts the explosive impact of social media on political campaigning, the failure of regulators to keep pace and the implications for liberal democracies the world over.

It is a timely reminder, too, with a general election not far away, of still unfinished business. The Government's new Online Safety Bill omits political campaigning entirely, and legislation to fill the digital void is nowhere to be seen. So let *Digital Gangsters* be a wake-up call, too, to Her Majesty's various oppositions in pursuing the lessons of our long inquiry.

Like Ian, not until after the referendum did I realise the role social media had played, here and in the 2016 election of Donald Trump. To say it crept up on us by stealth would be an understatement. How naïve, like most pre-digital politicians, we were.

I remember Vote Leave's misleading 'Turkey is joining the EU campaign' only too vividly, and UKIP's Breaking Point rallying cry – images which Ian usefully includes in his book. But I remember them as posters on old-fashioned billboards in towns, like my Newcastle-under-Lyme, up and down the land, not as so-called 'dark ads' served up on Facebook, in varying guises, micro-targeted to users' profiled prejudices, as – like Ian – I would never have seen them.

In *Digital Gangsters*, he meticulously reminds us of the antics of the likes of Cambridge Analytica, with its very own Bond villain Alexander Nix, and the lack of co-operation by Facebook over the invasion of its users' privacy.

And such people have not gone away. As Ian also describes, our investigations led us to another shadowy outfit, Mainstream Network, running ads well after the referendum, pushing the hardest of Brexits. Anonymous, they shut down after our exposé. But the trail eventually led to accounts



Not until after the referendum did I realise the role social media had played, here and in the 2016 election of Donald Trump.

overseen by staff at lobbying firm CTF Partners, which now gives political advice to the Prime Minister and the Conservative Party.

Ian rightly praises the whistleblowers, including Cambridge Analytica's Christopher Wylie and Brittany Kaiser; the fearless journalists, notably *The Observer's* Carol Cadwalladr (still being sued to this day); and the Committee staff, including our Clerk, Chloe Challender, specialist Jo Willows, and special adviser Charles Kriel.

It should go without saying that Select Committees can only be effective when both members and staff pull in the same direction. Sadly, however – unlike in this inquiry – this is not always the case, especially when senior officials seek to stymie the use of what few powers a committee has. And again, in Chapter 13 – 'The Stand-Off' – Ian has usefully recorded an example of what we sometimes found ourselves up against.

He also justly credits the Chair, Damian Collins, for his tenacity. Always far-sighted, Damian paid a price for our pursuit of Vote Leave's law-breaking over campaign donations, as Ian points out, losing his Committee role after the 2019 election. Thankfully, however, he has since come back as Chair of the joint Online Safety Committee.

And if there's one small quibble of fact, it is to do with Damian. He is most certainly not an Old Etonian, as Ian would have it. He went to school in Hereford. And I only mention this, given the central role two real Old Etonians played in the Brexit referendum at the heart of this book, lest it hampers his further 'rehabilitation'.

As for the title, which Ian generously credits to me, I just felt we needed a headline. And we had learned that, during its phenomenal rise, Facebook had sometimes snapped up and on one occasion, at least, allegedly pulled the rug from under emerging competition. The metaphor, therefore, seemed entirely apt.

Paul Farrelly was MP for Newcastle-Under-Lyme, 2001–2019

BUT DID HE FALL?

Nigel Griffiths

A Fallen Man

By Tom Levitt



TOM LEVITT'S DEBUT THRILLER gets off to a flying start – literally, as a man sails head first off a decommissioned Derbyshire viaduct, the 'Fallen Man' of the title. Victim or perp? When asked 'did he fall or was he pushed?' the late Nicky Fairbairn resigned as Solicitor General and said "I tripped."

This is an accomplished debut novel about a mouthy, populist MP Damon Hough who is involved in a bit of money laundering,

embezzlement and dangerous gay sex. His nemesis is a former school mate, Paul Roe, now on the opposite benches, whose constituent has evidence of wrongdoing by the Fallen Man.

Using the W.E. Johns formula beloved of true thriller writers, each chapter ends with a flourish and starts with a new development from somewhere else in the plot. Levitt keeps the flow and the suspense going.

He moves quickly from Prime Minister Thatcher's famous 'Belgrano' interview in 1983 to contemporary events in Parliament, mixing in real politicians such as David Cameron with a fictitious Chief Whip Charles Mallory.

Tasked with unravelling the threads are two female detectives, Alison Allyson the 'boss', and her constable Ruth Gaunt. What was he doing up a disused viaduct? Why was the Fallen Man's wallet missing – and his shoe as well? Who gave him the single cufflink still in his shirt? And why was he carrying the business cards of his school-chum MP Roe, an ex-lover from uni, now an investigative journalist Kate Mellor, and Lee Hardman, the lawyer of jailed crook who left Hough to look after lots of dodgy money and now he wants it back. "Politicians are constantly reminding us that no 'magic money tree' exists, but no-one explained that to Hardman's boss. He harvested its crop for several seasons – and out of season too."

DI Allyson's task is made all the more difficult because these three people of interest have secrets about the dead man they don't want to share. And all of them want Hough to get his just deserts.

The jailed crook's vicar on earth, Hardman is a failed Parliamentary candidate because 'when other politicians were pounding the table, Lee was always more at home tabling the pounds.' He reminds us of a sadly dying age as the MP's secretary "wondered whether hers would be the final generation to learn Pitman."

Levitt has a number of nice turns of phrase – his Chief Whip "controls MPs' hormones, especially those concerning flight and fright". And Roe's constituent tells him that her mother's solicitor is Damon Hough MP, who has mismanaged her "extensive share portfolio!"

While this book is more Jeffrey Archer's *Kane and Abel* than Miles Archer, from his 'already-chambré Malbec' to his 'chilli sin carne', Tom Levitt's book is a delicious read.

Nigel Griffiths was MP for Edinburgh South, 1987–2010

ONE FAMILY'S HOLOCAUST

Louise Ellman

The Last Train

By Peter Bradley

Published by HarperNorth



PETER BRADLEY'S dedicated research on his family's fate in Nazi Europe has produced a readable, intriguing and disturbing book.

Peter's father, born Fritz Brandeis in Germany, became Fred Bradley when he was released from Buchenwald, one of the few to secure a temporary British visa on the eve of war. He was one of thousands of Jewish refugees who were classed as enemy aliens, and shipped to internment camps in the

Isle of Man and Canada. After the war he married a girl from Frankfurt and settled in England.

Peter grew up knowing little of his family's history or his Jewish background, but after his father's death he discovered memorabilia that drove him to delve into his past. He travelled around Europe, retracing some of the steps that took his family to their deaths, and discovering archives that shed light on their fate.

Fred Bradley last saw his parents as he boarded the train at Frankfurt South Station on 10th May 1939, to start a new life. The train Fred's parents, Sally Salamon and Bertha Brandes, were to embark on in November 1941 carried them to their deaths. His mother, two aunts and two uncles were made to strip naked, before being machine gunned in a ditch near Riga. His father was last seen in 1943 as a slave labourer in Latvia.

The book contains poignant family photos. A 1928 photograph at Fred's Barmitzva marked the last time the family was together. Peter explains: "1928 was a turning point – within 15 years none of the 17 in the photo remained in Germany. Six fled, 11 were murdered" This tragic history is interwoven with analysis of how the Nazis and their collaborators were able to turn European antisemitism into mass murder, in the extermination camps and human shooting ranges of the Latvian forests.

It notes how so many people became bystanders, indifferent to the plight of the Jews, Romas, Sintis, disabled people, homosexuals and political opponents who were exterminated by the Nazis.

The Last Train ends with a discussion on current antisemitism, from the left as well as the right. Peter quotes the comment of Labour's former Leader Jeremy Corbyn, made in the context of an argument about Zionism, that Jewish Zionists "having lived in this country for a very long time and probably all their lives don't understand English irony." This statement sends a shiver down the spine of most English Jews.

This is an important book. It weaves important family history with prescient questions on racism, antisemitism, refugees and much more. It should be read by all who want to comprehend the enormity of the Holocaust and reflect on its significance for today.

Dame Louise Ellman was MP for Liverpool, Riverside, 1997–2019

BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL MP...

Ivan Lawrence

Travels with Members: A Clerk in Parliament, From Wilson to Blair

By Bill Proctor

Published by New Generation Publishing



HAVING JUST BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH, in my 86th year (and 65 in politics), to have survived a heart attack, and thereby gaining an intimation of mortality, Bill Proctor's book has a special meaning for me!

He was Clerk to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee when I was a member, 44 years ago. I have learnt from his fascinating book that what I had always believed was my brilliant and wounding questioning of Mikhail Gorbachev on the subject of his betrayal of the Helsinki Accords had

been orchestrated all along by the Foreign Office, in league with the Russian Embassy and Bill, to minimise any harm to our relationships that my clumsiness might occasion.

The clerks' department, under the guidance of the diplomatic service, also did an enormous amount of behind-the-scenes work to correct the false impression created by Tam Dalyell and friends that the sinking of the Belgrano in the Falklands War had been unnecessary.

Likewise, I had almost no idea what was involved in preparing politicians for a complicated visit to Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines, as that part of the world began to recover from the horrors of civil war and from the ending of the West's failed efforts to keep the peace. Bill, and the clerks' department, also guided us as we very nearly succeeded in bringing the Greek south and the Turkish north in Cyprus peacefully together again.

And these were just fragments of the work under Bill's suzerainty that I was involved in. His book also covers his work servicing Parliament's transport committee, and science and technology committee, and in establishing the procedure committee, and the new select committee system introduced to shadow government departments. And Bill played an all-important role in the parliamentary procedural work of the Council of Europe and the foundation of the European Parliament.

You had to be brilliant to be able to grasp the minutiae of this incredible variety of activity. To make these activities so enlightening to the general reader, as Bill has done, requires another particular talent. I would never have called myself a 'committee man', but I have found this book to be informative and extremely interesting, and not just because of my own involvement.

I have been able to discover one mistake. On page 250, Bill records that "the survivors (from the Foreign Affairs Committee) met for the last time in the garden of Gloria and Ivan Lawrence's house in what appeared to be a rather grand traffic island in Ealing." It certainly isn't! It is a beautiful old white weather boarded cottage, said to have been home to Percy and Mary Shelley, on a quiet village green, surveyed by the Thames, in lovely Shepperton.

But I suppose that even the most brilliant clerk must be forgiven for this relatively unimportant slip, given the sheer volume of detail in this delightful book..

Sir Ivan Lawrence was MP for Burton, 1974–1997

TRIBUTE

WILLIAM POWELL

3 August 1948 – 22 March 2022

Conservative MP for Corby, 1983–1997

Remembered by Roger Evans



WILLIAM WAS AN OLD CAMBRIDGE FRIEND and Cambridge University Conservative Association Chairman, one of the late 1960s CUCA chairmen who ended up in Parliament at varying dates, who included Howard Flight, John Watts,

David Mellor, and Richard Ryder. William was always noted for his interest in politics and his obsessive expert knowledge of US congressional electoral districts. He also had an enthusiasm he kept from his political friends, for horse racing.

He was one of six children, all educated at public schools, of Canon Edward Powell, incumbent of Belchamp St. Paul in Suffolk for 46 years, and his wife, Anne. The Vicarage was a very hospitable, but somewhat eccentric household. Shades of Anthony Trollope, Canon Powell ran a small private boarding school in the rambling Victorian vicarage full of books, and, of course the vicarage was subsequently sold by the diocese.

William, like his father, was a zealous high churchman, and keenly devoted to the Church of England. He was particularly delighted by his part in defeating the Appointment of Bishops Measure 1984, a particular excess of the General Synod, well put down. William insisted that his surname was properly pronounced "Pole", and, his references to one Enoch Pole were not always immediately followed by those not knowing. He asserted that he was a kinsman of William Edward Powell of Nanteos, MP for Cardiganshire from 1816 to 1854.

Those of us who shared bachelor flats with William recall his catastrophic attempt to cook rice, which ended with every bowl, bucket and bin overflowing.

William was called to the Bar and joined the chambers of Billy Rees-Davies QC MP. He married Elizabeth Vaudin in 1973. She and William launched a mayonnaise under the name Blondel, a more promising idea then, as Hellmans was only just coming onto the British market, but, unhappily, they were too under-capitalised to enter the food market successfully. In 1983, having been selected just before the election for the then new seat of Corby, he was elected in a very good year for the Conservatives. He successfully defended Corby until the avalanche of 1997.

He subsequently joined chambers in Peterborough and practised extensively at the Bar until illness forced him to stop, shortly before his death. He leaves his widow, Elizabeth, and three daughters. Friends remember him as good company and an excellent raconteur. Howard Flight and I visited him shortly before he died.

Obviously ill and largely chair bound, William was still in excellent spirits, following political events with his accustomed enthusiasm for detail. His last political prophecy was that Putin cannot win the war in Ukraine. We all hope he was right about that too.



MILESTONES IN MAY 2022: A CELEBRATION & THE PASSING OF A PLP EXILE

Lawrie Quinn

On 9th May 2022, Westminster's Institution of Civil Engineers hosted an event to celebrate 25 years since the New Labour General Election Landslide.

Despite lingering effects of the pandemic, an impressive headcount of over 70 promised a lively occasion to make those life changing effects of 1997 worthwhile.

We planned to toast "Absent Friends" and read out with messages from those unable to join us.

Greetings of old friends added to a celebratory mood amongst the self-named "PLP Exiles" with current Parliamentarians joining the festivities.

Remarks from Margaret Beckett, Hilary Benn, Yvette Cooper and Ed Balls, added to the convivial mood.

Sadly, our mood was short lived with news fellow 1997 Veteran Bob Blizzard, MP for Waveney, had died aged 71, two days before our celebrations.

Typically Bob had sent apologies, as his fight against cancer had made travel impossible from his home in Lowestoft.

Our sadness in our celebrations turned to personal reflections that Bob was a fine role model as an MP – never losing the common touch and taking a genuine interest in people and championing their concerns.

Across Parliament, he was known as a "staunch advocate" for his local communities, which he had served as leader of Waveney District Council for six years from 1987.

Bob remains the first, and only, non-Conservative MP to hold the Waveney seat since its creation.

His 13-years, from 1997, at Westminster included notable achievements to alleviate major traffic bottlenecks in Lowestoft, and campaigning for seaside communities across the UK. He chaired several all-party parliamentary groups, including those for British offshore oil and gas, renewable transport fuels, Brazil, Chile and Latin America.

Another personal milestone for Bob was when he voted against the Iraq war and resigned from his position as Parliamentary Private Secretary: the only time he voted against his government.

Gordon Brown made Bob an assistant treasury whip in 2007, before promoting him to Lord Commissioner to the Treasury.

He held onto the seat in 2001 and in 2005 winning by a majority of almost 6,000 ahead of Conservative challenger Peter

Aldous, who would go on to win the seat from Bob in 2010. Bob stood for Waveney unsuccessfully five years later and retired from parliamentary politics.

His voluntary positions over the years included being a member of the board of governors of Lowestoft College and the Sentinel Leisure Trust, and honorary president of Lowestoft and District Mencap Society.

Bob remained a passionate active campaigner for animal rights and for the law against hunting with hounds to be enforced.

His love of jazz saw him involved with the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group (APPJAG) and founder of the Parliamentary Jazz Awards, as well as becoming chairman of the national organisation Jazz Services, and founding the Lowestoft Jazz Weekend.

Speaking to local journalists, he said: "I have been in love with jazz since I was a student, and my personal music collection is nearly all jazz."

Former Deputy Leader of the Labour Party Tom Watson sums up our affection for Bob: "Bob and I had been exchanging text messages in recent months, and it was all about music – jazz music. I've compiled a Spotify playlist of his recommendations. Maybe it will provide a little comfort in your moments of reflection."

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3FkAuTmxvnj4SPHbsPvzPQ?si=aVrgB1FoRsS156sFVkJZgwQ>

Bob's memorial service was held in Waveney on 27th May with the thoughts of the PLP Exiles going to all his loved ones and Jane who loved and cared for him in his final days.

9th May 2022 was truly a Milestone moment for those of us attending that evening, remembering 1997, and Bob Blizzard, RIP.

If you'd like to hear more about the "PLP EXILES" please contact Lawrie Quinn via e-mail: lawriewquinn@gmail.com.

Lawrie Quinn was Labour MP for Scarborough and Whitby, 1997–2005

LEAVING PARLIAMENT MISSING HISTORY, DISPOSAL OF EX-MPS' RECORDS

John Austin

I am grateful to members for their responses to my report on Leaving Parliament. The Association has now submitted the report together with an addendum, based on members' comments, as its evidence to the House of Commons Administration Committee's Enquiry into General Election Planning and Services. As sitting MPs will be the beneficiaries of any changes we have recommended, I have also sent the evidence to the Chief Whips of the parliamentary parties (none of whom, with the exception of Plaid Cymru, has responded or acknowledged!)

During the consultation process, a number of members referred to problems of disposal of data and records when MPs retire or are defeated. This did not form part of my report but the Executive Committee has now decided to look into this issue and seek further comments from members.

Victoria Borwick's concerns were about data relating to the Grenfell fire (see below). That was a specific, perhaps unique, event but others may have had similar experiences with other major incidents.

Circumstances have changed significantly since many of our members were MPs – there are probably fewer paper records with much greater reliance on digital technology and I presume that many MPs will have back-up of their records which they will have access to when they are disconnected from the Parliamentary network. This is an issue we will raise with IPSA and the Administration Committee. We will also seek clarification on the implications of current data protection legislation.

Several members referred to the difficulty of being 'on their own' having lost support services and having to deal with the

Several members referred to the difficulty of being 'on their own' having lost support services

complexity of winding up, and for many who lost their seats, at a time of emotional turmoil. One of our respondents referred to the difficulties in arranging for IT equipment to be donated to a local charity. Another member made arrangements for collection and confidential disposal of records but was in dispute with the company over their failure to do so correctly. The member in dispute withheld payment, was pursued for the debt and sought help from IPSA which was refused.

One of our members with a deep interest in local and regional history was conscious of the historical relevance of much of the documentation he held – a record of the personal experiences and struggles faced by people at a time of industrial upheaval and economic and social change. He wanted to donate his records to a local archive, with an appropriate time restriction on access, but had difficulty establishing the legal position. He was advised that the only way of doing this was to obtain the written consent of every constituent! With thousands involved this was an impossible task and arrangements were made for the records to be confidentially destroyed.

We would like to hear from any members who faced difficulties over data and records when winding up their offices or have experiences similar to Victoria Borwick's.

Any comments on this subject should be sent to John Austin at johnaustin1944@gmail.com

Grenfell data: A case history

Victoria Borwick

LEAVING PARLIAMENT is traumatic, especially for those MPs that have been there some time and are not expecting to lose – but it can also be very difficult for constituents who have ongoing issues or casework that is taking time to resolve. Suddenly the relationship is lost, the correspondence is closed, and it is up to the constituent to start again with the new incumbent.

This was particularly pertinent after the Grenfell Tower fire. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, who preceded me as MP, had years of correspondence with the residents. In my time as MP, we held surgery sessions in the residents' space and had meetings about their concerns about the refurbishment. I had helped set up a residents' forum, and had taken the various views and issues up with the authorities and local councillors.

But when I lost my seat, IPSA told me that all the correspondence would be deleted. I protested that there would

be an enquiry, and the correspondence from the residents would need to be taken into account. There had been a range of issues regarding the building and the refurbishment processes. Residents had been without water, gas and services on many occasions.

I decided to print out as much as I could find from the email system and put it in a folder which I passed over to the police. The police went through it with me and my senior caseworker who had previously worked for Sir Malcolm, as I knew he would have valuable earlier experience to be able to pass on.

In spite of several requests to IPSA to not delete the emails and correspondence – particularly where they could see it related to Grenfell, I was not successful. I said that I don't need to have access to it, but you, IPSA should keep it, in case you are asked for it. Otherwise you are destroying



potential evidence that may or may not be relevant.

IPSA allowed me an extra two weeks in order to put the police file together which I handed over. I have no copy.

This system is not only brutal for the MP, but most unhelpful for the residents who never hear from us again. That just adds further insult to the whole business. I would have liked to have written to them all and said sorry I can no longer help you.

Victoria Borwick was MP for Kensington, 2015–2017



HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH?

Future Communication Strategy for Members

Lawrie Quinn



Since early 2020, the Association has been restricted by the impact of the pandemic, like most volunteer organizations, and by the inability of many of our members to travel to Westminster to fully participate in our normal programme of events.

Many former colleagues would have had little use or need to communicate with their regular interest and hobby groups by any means other than regular face to face meetings in local venues – or perhaps a quarterly day trip to London to engage with old friends and colleagues, as part of the routine of life after leaving Westminster.

I, for one, had never heard of “ZOOM” before March 2020, and remote meetings for work purposes via “TEAMS” were as rare as a visit from a unicorn.

The pandemic changed all and, as many of you may know, I was asked to help our Association Secretary Sally Grocott to set up a workable means of ensuring safe remote COVID-free communications for our Executive Committee. I am pleased to report that, after some initial reluctance, our Association Officers and Executive Members took to communications via ZOOM like fish to water.

I was therefore delighted, at the first totally in-person Executive Meeting in 1 Parliament Street, at the end of April, to be asked to lead a discussion on how the Association can make the most of social media, IT based communications and new technologies, to allow the best engagement across all Association Members.

We all know that former MPs perhaps are not known as the first adopters of new technologies, but since early 2020 it has felt as if we have taken giant steps in communicating with each other as a result of having to work from home and to abide by the restrictions of Pandemic lockdown.

With this in mind, and to ensure I give the fullest report back to our next Executive discussion in early July, I'd like to ask you to offer some personal feedback on how you've used the tools of ZOOM or TEAMS or other IT based communications platforms over the last 30 months.

Other organisations I've been involved with have been able to stream speaker meetings, seminars and consultations recently. This obviously helps with the costs associated with long distance travel down to London, saves time and maybe hotel bills but above all else allows participants to have their say and keep engaged with the relevant interest group not only across the UK but globally!

So, if you'd like to help us steer a new and emerging strategy on member communications, it would be great to hear from you.

Please drop your thoughts about how we should develop communications across the Association via email to myself, so I can work with our new Association Secretary, Laura Blake, to make the most of the wide range of IT tools available to give our members the best communication in the months and years to come.

Please drop an email with your thoughts/comments to lawriewquinn@gmail.com before noon on **6th July** so the Executive can have a wide ranging consideration of how we might move from face-to-face engagement to hybrid arrangements allowing the fullest participation of colleagues across the UK and further afield.

We look forward to your feedback!

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