



# Order, Order!

The Newsletter of the Association of Former Members of Parliament

Summer 2007

## **THE GREAT SUMMER BOAT RACE AND REGATTA OF 1986! NOW IT CAN BE TOLD! EXCLUSIVE!**



*Cartoon by Nick Garland of the Daily Telegraph showing the 1986 Labour Front Bench setting its manifesto*

**SOGGY JIM AND TORY WETS, PLUS THE ARCHBISHOP'S  
BLESSINGS, BRING CHURCH CASH ROLLING IN!**

**INSIDE. THE FULL STORY OF A HISTORIC EVENT NEVER REVEALED BEFORE!**

**CAST OF HUNDREDS RISK DEATH!**

**MANY FAMOUS LIVES PUT IN PERIL FOR AIRLINE TICKETS AND CHAMPAGNE!**

**WOMEN NEARLY DROWN! AND WHERE WAS CAPTAIN BIRDSEYE?**

*continued over*

It's doubtful if the House was ever as divided, and riven by factions at any time in the last 60 years, as it was in 1986.

The scene was a long hot summer of US versus THEM, Unions versus the Government, Northern dole queues versus the Loadsamoney of the South.

A time of bitterness, shortly after the miners strike had collapsed. Ken Livingstone across the water in County Hall was cocking two fingers up to Big Ben, with the Greater London Council hoisting large banners, telling its citizens, tourists, and MPs across the river that unemployment had now reached three million and was still rising.

Just nine months earlier the IRA had succeeded in blowing up Mrs Thatcher's bedroom in the Grand Hotel, Brighton at the Conservative Party conference, and Neil Kinnock was still three months away from launching his historic speech attacking his own loony left members at the Bournemouth Labour Party conference.

All politicians in the House were praying for the long recess to heal their wounds.

So what better time to extend the olive branch and fly the dove of peace for all MPs, Lords, staff and even lobby journalists by spending a day of joy and friendship simply messing about on the river?



### SPEAKER JACK



Jack Weatherill

The Royal Wedding of Prince Andrew and Fergie was to be held at Westminster Abbey the day before the MPs left for their hols.

So why shouldn't Parliament celebrate the event and call a truce by staging its very own Regatta and Boat Race for charity from teams of volunteers, sponsored to raise cash for a Westminster worthy cause?

Sadly the man who instigated this historic event died just a few weeks ago. He was Speaker Bernard "Jack" Weatherill, a Tory legend who left school early to start work in his father's tailoring business. He was admired and respected by every MP from all ranks and parties, and his obituary is carried on another page in our magazine.

Jack gave the official approval for the House to stage a "Big Splash" to raise cash to restore "Parliament's Own Church" of St Margaret's built in 1614 next to the now newly restored Westminster Abbey.

Winston Churchill was married there, and countless other politicians had made their vows, or had eulogies read out in the final farewells of their friends.

The church had already raised £820,000 but needed another £80,000 to finish the new roof.

### RIBALDRY? LAUREL AND HARDY?



Colin Moynihan

Jack asked Colin Moynihan MP for Lewisham, later to become Mrs Thatcher's Minister for Sport and already an Olympic silver medallist for rowing, to take

on the job. Colin is currently Lord Moynihan, Chair of the British Olympic Association, and member of the 2012 board that includes Tessa Jowell, Ken Livingstone and Lord Coe.

Colin is a laid back bloke who simply ignored the ribaldry from Annie's Bar, and the tea room, and with the backing of the House Magazine led by Michael Trend, launched an astonishing "Funday for Funds", the likes of which have never

been seen before or since, and are barely recorded anywhere.

The aim was to recruit a hundred different sponsored crews of 8 rowers and one cox each. All totally inexperienced, unfit, highly gullible, lazy, prima donna individuals, to race in boats from Speaker's Steps to two different winning posts, depending on whether the river was at Flood Tide or Ebb Tide, somewhere between 11am and 7pm, after posing for pictures on the launch taking them to the starting post.

Phew!



Laurel and Hardy

Before departing, international oarsmen would give them advice on how to come forward, paddle towards the rudder, turn direction, square the blade in the water to anchor, and then do it in the opposite direction after 2.45, when the tide turned. That is of course when Bow Side holds, while Stroke Side paddles on.

Oh Yeah? Expecting politicians to master that lot was like expecting Laurel and Hardy to invade Suez.

## STEADY AS SHE GOES

Nearly 900 odds and sods in the Parliamentary barmy army volunteered, to form crews including The Dukes of Hansard, Curries Men (led by you know who), Annie's Bar, The BBC, ITN, Press Gallery, the Times, Guardian, the SDP (including David Owen and Charles Kennedy), The House Magazine, the CPA, and the IPU.

There was even a Ship of State "coaxed" by Gwyneth Dunwoody. Notts and Derbys led by Kenneth Clark and Patrick McLoughlin, and of course "Eton" skippered by Nicholas Soames. Even Mrs Weatherill captained a crew.

Ian Mikardo the grand old bookie of Labour's hard left warriors, didn't row, but like all good fixers laid odds on every team, as he had done for shadow cabinet elections, or what time the House would rise on Budget Day etc, since the year dot.

Mik was not very optimistic about the "Labour 8" boat. He said "with Jim Callaghan as Captain, that boat will move no faster than steady as she goes, and that is never fast enough to win"

He tipped the "All Lords" from the Orkneys to do well but warned of these raiders from the North. "Never mind your daughters" Mik said "lock up your cattle".

## CAPTAIN BIRDSEYE HIMSELF



Ted Heath

There were actually only 99 registered teams so Sir Ian Percival QC made the numbers up windsurfing on his own, up and down and across the boats,

for the fun of it, causing total havoc.



Graham Bright

The teams were offered prizes from the sponsors of free air line tickets, holidays, magnums of champagne, theatre tickets, cases of gin, Bruces Bitter, and

even pretty girls in pink t-shirts giving out "Sweet 'n Low" sweeteners, supplied by Graham Bright MP.

One familiar face was missing. "Old Captain Birdseye" himself, Parliament's one and only award winning yachtsman and former Prime Minister, Ted Heath, who had once won the Sydney to Hobart race for England in his *Morning Cloud*, the smallest boat in the race.

Unfortunately he was becalmed in the chamber leading a very important rebel vote against his own party who wanted to lift sanctions on South Africa.

The Leader of the House John Biffen, grinned fiendishly and said it was nonsense that the business had been chosen deliberately. Mrs Thatcher wasn't in the chamber either. She bestowed her presence prominently at the balustrades loudly cheering on the crews and showing that Britannia ruled the waves, giving her security guards nightmares at the thought of long distance IRA snipers focusing their sights on her from Westminster Bridge.

## STARTERS ORDERS

Naturally Fleet Street and the TV news programmes manned the balustrades too, fervently hoping for another Dunkirk, with not too many drowned, but with the lemmings of Right Hon Lords and Ladies, and Commoners, or even "Fleet Streets Finest", going for an early bath.

They didn't have long to wait.

Some of the crews never even got under starters orders.

Who would have thought the "Labour 8" captained by the old sea dog veteran Jim Callaghan, not only former Home Secretary, but Chancellor and Foreign Secretary too, and a Royal Navy war

veteran, would go arm over tip into the drink. He never even got under starter's orders, and was ruled out on his way to the off.

His bonny lads Jack Straw, Bob Kilroy-Silk, Bill O'Brien, Terry Lewis, and Alan McKie were also dumped on the floating platoons at high tide, on a windy choppy day with the waves not knowing whether to ebb or flow.

## SOGGY JIM

It took the motorised dinghy of the St John's Ambulance Brigade to supply every Fleet Street editor with the "Catch of the Day" tabloid headlines of "SUNNY JIM, NOW SOGGY JIM!" All of them showed the 74 year old Father of the House up to his chin in the river, but still wearing his glasses, and shouting "Don't Panic, Don't Panic!" as Kilroy-Silk got into the act and the pictures, claiming he had saved the life of the former PM, and perhaps should get a medal for it.

Jim climbed out and like any good old politician blamed the Archbishop of Canterbury for not giving the right blessing, and claimed that too many of the Labour crew were leaning to the left, instead of the centre.

What's more he had read somewhere that salmon were now living in the Thames, so the water wouldn't hurt him would it?

And would you believe there were no signs of a life jacket anywhere?

## HOT BATHS AND BRANDY

There were Tory Wets too.

The loveable 21 stones Geoffrey Dickens MP (nicknamed BIFFO in the chamber not just because he looked like the Rupert Bear character in the Daily Express cartoon but because he was a "Big Intelligent Friend From Oldham" (or words to that effect)), claimed he should be entered in the Guinness Book of records as the heaviest cox in rowing history, and did several quayside press ups to prove it.

Sadly history records that when Geoffrey sat down to steer the "All Party Paddlers", the other end of the boat rose straight up in the air, and Frank Haynes, George Foulkes, Neil Thorne, Norman Godman

and Michael Latham all sponsored by McDonalds Hamburgers, went up in the air too and the boat turned on its side.

The House Magazine crew led by Michael Trend with Keith Young, Sue Crawford, Joe Ashton, Harry Greenway, Peter Snape, Bob Porter and the lovely Julia Langdon (who swore her Dad had been a captain in the Navy and had shown her how to coil ropes) barged their boat into the Tory Ministers' crew and shipped aboard an enormous amount of river water.

Then like all good journalists, they panicked to cries of "Abandon Ship!" with the male MPs shouting "Ladies first please!" just like the Titanic. With most of the crew overboard, the three MPs found that the very much lighter boat refloated itself, with Miss Langdon left steaming in the river and Sue Crawford



in tears at losing her shoes.

All rubbed in by safe and sound Ashton putting on his famous Long John Silver impersonation with a croak of " 'Ee stay 'ere my hearties, while we

shoves orf, and them wot sinks will be the lucky ones."

"Well done the House Magazine" cried Mrs Thatcher, "Hot baths and brandy now", she advised in her motherly way, "Thank you kindly Ma'am ", we called back touching our wet forlocks and oarlocks.

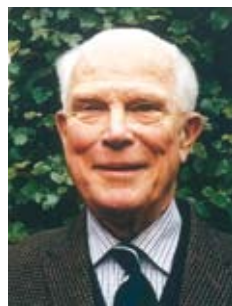
Mrs T's hopes were actually riding on her favourite crew called "NO TURNING BACK" coxed by Edward Leigh and 8 other dry as a bone stalwarts, ranging from Michael Portillo, to Francis Maude, Peter Lilley and Neil Hamilton.

So dry they could not only walk on water, but immediately and deliberately, started off by ramming their opponent's boat and taking no prisoners.

## HAND OF GOD

Never were so many genuine prayers sent up from the Speakers Steps by brave mad fools who wished they had stuck to the famous first law of the House, in

never, ever volunteering for anything, for any promise, at any time.



John Osborn

John Osborn, a practising rower when at college recalls that he was in the Council of Europe boat with Michael Morris (as always in the Chairman's seat), which unfortu-

nately crashed into the Lambeth Palace crew and capsized, John was saying his prayers, with a mouth full of river water and no life jacket, when a huge left hand of God swooped down from the six feet six inches tall Church Commissioner. Terry Waite and plucked him back to life.

## NOT GUILTY

By far the most educated, prestigious boat was the "Legal VIII" full of lawyers and packed with no less than six QCs and two Old Bailey solicitors, including Grenville Janner, Ivan Lawrence, Patrick Mayhew, Peter Archer, Alex Carlile, and Nicholas Lyell.

M'Learned Friends immediately offered four different opinions and straddled their boat side ways. By a miracle, and by inches, they just missed smashing it into the bulwark of Westminster Bridge then hurtled backwards straight down the river towards the Thames Barrier, finally having to be humiliatingly towed back by the grinning River Police, and all pleading not guilty to dangerous boating and foul language.

There was yet another crisis around tea time when some miserable curs in the House called a division on the South Africa sanctions.

The Government only had a majority of about 183 and loyalty to the whips was stretched to the limits, until the glamorous Marion Rowe MP, from the All Comers crew, sponsored by Everest Double Glazing, decided that she was going to do her duty in her fetching shorts and a singlet, and three other crews immediately caused panic on the slipway by deserting their vessel to follow her.

## FORMIDABLE SIGNS

By 3pm the Strangers Bar (in those days opening out onto the Terrace with no marquee) ran out of beer. What a calamity! Forty trade union MPs who liked nothing better of a afternoon in summer than to spend their time on the terrace plotting the Labour Party conference, immediately moved an Emergency Resolution that in future all Regattas should be banned forthwith, and all non – members cleared off the terrace now, until the ale crisis had been sorted out.

As usual with emergency motions nobody took a blind bit of notice.

Naturally the boat called "Eton" brought its own champagne to sustain Nicholas Soames , Douglas Hogg, Heathcoat-Amery, Cranbourne, Bonsor, Waldergrave, in their bitter battle against the "Avon Ladies".

Don't laugh. These were a formidable bunch of Sirens including Cabinet wives Lady Howe, Mrs Hurd, Mrs Wakeham, Mrs Baker and Mrs Garel-Jones, who alleged the Old Etonians had cheated to win the heat.

Mrs Baker, married to the Education Secretary of State said "That lot didn't learn to row at Eton, they learned by practising on their fathers lakes."

"We would have beaten them hollow if the Archbishop of Canterbury (again) hadn't made an unholy mess of the start."

But the Sirens did have the last laugh and cheers when Captain Soames brand new Panama hat blew off and had to be rescued by a passing tug boat.

## KISSOGRAM GIRLS

Unfortunately all the proceedings had to be abandoned at the semi-finals stage when a huge oil tanker insisted on churning right through our boats with their crew putting two fingers up at the toffs.

So the judges decided to give a special award to Jim Callaghan, and also to Lord



Jim Callaghan

# BERNARD OR JACK— HE WAS A GENTLEMAN

**Our Association has lost a strong supporter and one of its founder members, with the death on the 6th May of Jack Weatherill, former Speaker of the House of Commons.**

If the aim of every Speaker is to earn the respect of the House, Jack did that from day one. He set out to give backbenchers as much leeway as possible, often favouring them above their frontbench colleagues.

Jack will always be remembered for his proud ancestry in the tailoring trade, and he always carried a silver thimble to remind him of his roots. He has never denied the story of how when he first entered the Commons he was in the toilets when he overheard two of his Tory colleagues talking, one saying to the other "I don't know what this place is coming to, why even my tailor is a member now".

Jack had a distinguished wartime record, serving in the Bengal Lancers, which opened up for him a new world. He had even mastered the language of Urdu, which only two other MPs had managed – John Biggs Davidson, and Enoch Powell.

He was the first Speaker to serve after the agreement of the Commons to be televised, and so he entered the living rooms of the nation. He was Speaker from 1983 to 1992 when besides the major political events such as the Falklands War, the miners' strike, and the poll tax riots he had to deal with a Labour Party who had the best hecklers

in the business, - such as Dennis Skinner, Bob Cryer and Tam Dalyell.

It is said that once, Eric Heffer was being taunted mercilessly as he tried to complete a speech. Until he finally snapped and yelled at a particular tormentor "Why don't you shut your big mouth, you horrible little git?", whereupon Speaker Weatherill snapped "Order, Order, I thought I was supposed to say that".

When I published my book "From Tyne to Thames via the Usual Channels" he was kind enough to endorse it with the comment "In the Commons Ted Graham, and I were London Whips, frequently responsible for London business, and it was in this period that our friendship was forged."

It was reinforced in the Lords when I was Convenor of the Crossbench Peers and Ted was a successful and respected Chief Whip. Those who are interested in how the parliamentary system really works, should read this book".

In the Lords Jack succeeded Lady Hylton-Foster as Leader of the Cross Bench Peers and he played a crucial role in the House of Lords Reform Bill in 1999.



Although the Leader of the Conservatives, Lord Cranbourne, and the Lord Chancellor, Derry Irvine, agreed the main outline, Jack successfully moved what has become known as the "Weatherill Amendment" which secured a stay of execution for 92 hereditary peers until the division of powers between Commons and Lords had been agreed. A true footnote of historic significance.

But it is as a solid supporter of our Association that we are most grateful to Jack. He recognised from the start that the rights and aspirations of ordinary backbenchers and former MPs, should be recognised.

Away from the Speaker's Chair he was a most delightful companion and a great parliamentarian. He leaves us with many fond memories and a deep respect for a lovely man. His wife Lyn, his two sons and his daughter have our deepest sympathy in their loss.

Lord Graham of Edmonton

Orkney's team for the best turned out boat. The event raised £60,000 for St Margaret's (about £200,000 at today's money), and a good time was had by all. Sadly though apart from Soggy Jim's geriatric swim, the news and pictures of the great parliamentary occasion didn't get a massive coverage on Fleet Street.

## STAG NIGHT

That day was also the evening of Prince Andrew's stag night at a secret hideaway

party, with Elton John and Billy Connolly doing the turns.

Princess Diana and Princess Fergie decided to run a spoiler by dressing up as two kissogram girls in police uniforms and crashing Annabels after tipping off all the paparazzi photographers in the West End.

Ruefully every politician knows that the Royals will always get the front page, ahead of a poor drowning ex Prime Minister.

*Order, Order, would like to thank Stephen Ellison and Annie Pinder of the Parliamentary Archives Service for their support and valuable research in this feature. We are also grateful to Nick Garland of the Daily Telegraph for allowing us to use his 1986 cartoon on our front page.*

*Unfortunately Hansard has no record of this unique historical event and it is disappointing that the newspaper and House Magazine photographs of that day, do not reproduce on high quality modern technology.*

Joe Ashton.



## NOSTALGIA AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE THE NEW £700 MILLION WEMBLEY STADIUM BRINGS BACK HAPPY DAYS OF 60 YEARS AGO FOR TED GRAHAM.

### WOR JACKIE – “HOWAY THE LADS!”

When the first game was played at the new Wembley Stadium in May I smiled as the ticket prices, the cost of a beefburger, and the programme, were revealed. Things were different when I was a lad! In 1948 I was a Teller at the Newcastle Co-operative Society in Newgate Street.

Dividend Day was a truly Red Letter Day for thousands of Tyne-side families. That was the day they queued for hours to draw their “divi”, earned from their purchases in the Co-op Stores. It was much anticipated, for it was the means and only means of buying shoes, towels, shirts and blankets and leave something in their passbook for the rainy day they all knew would come.

The crowds were marshalled along a dark corridor and funnelled into the General Office, where ten of us waited to pay out the dividends. All mothers were accompanied with tiny kids scratching and screaming. Mothers would push their passbook through the grille, we would check for a signature on the back of the book, and pay out what was required.

During the frenzy, I looked at the man in front of me and froze. It was Jackie Milburn, even then the Pop Idol of Tyneside. “Yes, Mr Milburn, What can I do for you?” I asked, shaking with excitement. He pushed a passbook through and said “What can I get on this?” I looked at it and said “I am sorry, I cannot pay you anything” Why not? “Because it is in your wife’s name, but if you get her to sign it I will pay you”.

How much can I get?” Jackie asked and I replied “You have

to leave three shillings in the book, and there is seven pounds seventeen shillings in, so that means I can pay you seven pounds and fourteen shillings” “That’s almost a week’s wages!” Jackie said delighted and off he went.

He was back the next day with the form duly signed and I paid him. As he turned to leave I said “Mr Milburn, you and I know that one day Newcastle will get to the Cup Final at Wembley. Can I write to you and ask if you can let me have ticket?” Jackie said “That’s true. We will get there, and you write to me and I will do what I can bonny lad”.

In 1951, Newcastle got to Wembley and off went my letter, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope and the price of a stand ticket, three shillings (fifteen pence). Three days later an envelope landed on my doormat with a Newcastle United logo on the front. Inside was a three shillings ticket, my stamped addressed envelope, and a compliments slip and scrawled across it was “From Wor Jackie”

Newcastle won the cup in 1951, and again in 1952 and in 1955. I forget the details of those victories, but I will always remember, when today Jackie Milburn would have been paid £50,000 a week, he was then paid £8 a week in the season, and £6 in summer.

When he died at an early age they lined the streets of Newcastle to pay homage to a real hero, and a gentleman. To me, and thousands like me, he will always be “Wor Jackie”

## Parliament could use our experience

Since we launched the Association of Former MPs we have been asking what other legislatures do for their former members. We are in regular touch with associates in Australia and New Zealand, Canada, the United States, both the Federal Senate and Congress, Nepal, Barbados and the European Parliament.

We send them Order, Order, and they send us their publications, and ask us to attend their annual meetings. We have to decline their invitations as our budget does not cover overseas travel. However I shall be going to a meeting of the European former Members in Brussels in June to hear a report on exactly what each of the Parliaments of the European Union do. I will report back in a subsequent Order, Order.

Although we have not been able yet to list what each of the parliaments provide for their members in detail,

we have learnt a great deal of anecdotal stories which are well beyond our ambitions at the moment.

For example in New Zealand each retired member and spouse or partner are provided with a free return ticket to Europe. In most of these countries pension provision is more generous. For example in Barbados a full pension of two thirds salary is paid to any member who serves 10 years.

One of the most important aspects is the respect shown by current parliamentarians for their predecessors. Former members are encouraged to be involved with educating the public and particularly schools on how the democratic process works. They visit schools to meet young electors and encourage them to vote and respect our democratic institutions. Contrast this with an 18 year old I met during local elections who said she was not going to vote as she did not

“understand what it was all about.” My sympathies were with her.

Nobody teaches in school how our system is supposed to work. If we are to increase participation in our public affairs and stop the decline in respect for our democratic government, and very low turnouts, then why not send out former MPs to do that job?

There are many other ways the current Parliament could use our experience to boost the reputation of Parliament, including dealing with the press. Other countries do this to their benefit why not in the United Kingdom?



Bowen Wells is the member of our Executive Committee who specialises in our liaison with other parliaments. He was Conservative MP for Hertford and Stevenage from 1979 to 2001.

## Review

# Class and Consequence

by David Watkins

Book Guild Publishing, 335 Pages £16.99

ISBN 978 1 84624 053 9

**Running throughout this substantial novel is a satirical critique of what David Watkins considers to be the enduring British class system. It may well provoke controversy, not least through the episode when a group of ex-servicemen in Bristol publicly throw their war medals into the river.**

This episode which is illustrated on the back of the brilliantly designed dust jacket.

However, the book is much more than that. The central character, called Hugh Hughes, is a boy put to work on a farm in Pembrokeshire. He runs away and becomes a miner in the Welsh valleys. He joins up in 1914 and after serving at the Somme and Passchendaele, he is denied employment after the lockout of the miners in 1921. He moves to Bristol, where he marries a local girl. His family saga continues through the great depression, the Second World War and the huge social changes of the post-war decades.

Among other characters whose lives are portrayed is the illegitimate son of a "young master" and a maidservant, who goes on to become an unhappily married

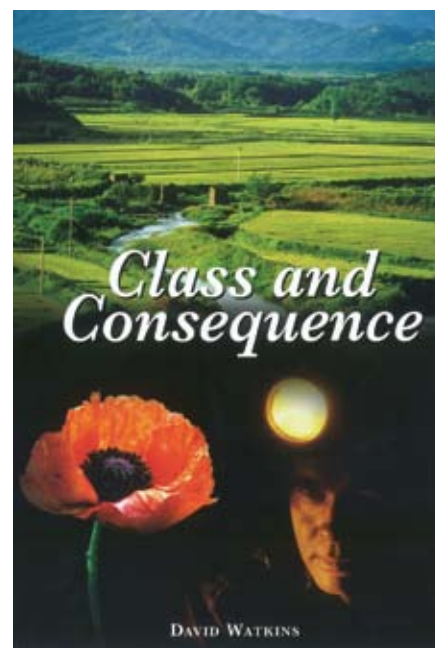
multi-millionaire industrialist and Conservative MP. There is another youth who is blacklisted and forced to leave home village in the Welsh valleys after a lockout of the miners. Later he returns as a Methodist minister, controversially marries the daughter of the mine manager who had victimised him and goes on to become a Labour MP. Another romance and controversial marriage occurs later when Hugh Hughes' son marries the daughter of his father's employer.

Some flavour of the satirical writing can be gathered from the names given to some of the lesser characters.

Sir Gerard Verrey-ffaire is introduced as "the most inappropriately named man in the British army" whose one solid achievement was in mastering the art of keeping his monocle in place in all circumstances. Then there is Len Lighteller, a tabloid journalist and Dorothy Best-calmer, a nymphomaniac bank employee.

Well worth reading – my fellow Bristolian David Watkins fully captures the feelings of these times.

*Terry Walker*



*David Watkins was the MP for Consett from 1966 to 1983 before his seat disappeared in boundary changes.*

*Terry Walker was the MP for Kingswood Bristol 1974 to 1979.*

## ORDER, ORDER! Harry Barnes Is Looking For Bloggers!

As a pensioner, I once asked an even more elderly friend how I could acquire computer skills. His answer was – "Have some grandchildren!"

But as our first grandchild was only born four days after I retired as an MP in 2005, it has been my son and daughter I have turned to for help.

I first became an MP in 1987 and was set in my ways by the time computers finally came to dominate the scene. I depended upon assistants to engage in the seemingly unfathomable surfing the net, producing DATA files, downloading e-mails and turning my scrawl into computer text.

I am now into the daily use of the computer. And as I taught politics at university for 21 years, then served as an MP for 18 years and even did my National Service in Iraq; it is natural for me to link my past worlds together in what I term "political education".

So now I circulate e-mails about political discussion meetings I organise, click into "Google" in order to research items, use a word processor to provide material for our Iraq LFIQ web-site and even to operate my own "blog", which my son set-up for me as a great 70th birthday surprise.

Having a blog is like publishing one's own column onto the scene. It is a substitute for no longer having my former MP's avenues of writing up notes for parliamentary speeches, shooting off press-releases and writing articles for magazines and local freebie newspapers.

So I can now rush out any ideas I want to on Labour Leadership, book reviews, or the visit I made to Iraqi-Kurdistan last year, or football. Especially now Sunderland are back in the Premier League. I was very proud to have my piece "A Love Supreme" republished in the Sunderland fanzine.

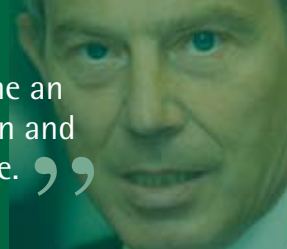
It is much easier than trying to catch the Speaker's eye.

There is no reason why ex-MPs can't establish their own blogging community – for a public debate.

If you are interested, then click into my blog at <http://threescoreyearsandten.blogspot.com> and then email me at [Harrybarnes1111@aol.com](mailto:Harrybarnes1111@aol.com) or just ask the grandkids!

Harry Barnes MP For Derbyshire N.E. 1987 - 2005





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### \*\*\*LATE NEWS – OBE FOR JOE\*\*\*



We are proud to announce that Joe Ashton, Chairman of the Association and Editor of "Order Order" has been awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Joe said, "I am delighted and grateful. As well as my own personal pride in the award, it is a sound recognition

of the hard work and commitment of our Executive Committee and our 340 members.

From absolutely nothing, we created a much needed parliamentary association of ex MPs, with the enormous help and encouragement of our Patron, Speaker Michael Martin".

Joe was MP for Bassetlaw for 32 years, serving in 9 parliaments. He was prominent in many campaigns and battles and well known as a top Fleet Street journalist. In 1986 he won the prestigious Granada Television

"What the Papers Say" award for the National Newspaper Columnist of the Year for his coverage of the miners' strike. It was presented to him at the Savoy by Norman Tebbit, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry!

He was for nine years a director of the then Premier League football club Sheffield Wednesday, and Chairman of the All Party Football Group in both houses.

"Brian Clough, Jack Charlton and David Beckham were all awarded the OBE, said Joe. "I am delighted to join them".

## NOTICE OF ALL MEMBERS' MEETING

Our next meeting will be held on **TUESDAY 17th JULY, at 4.00pm in Committee Room 11.**

For those who have applied for and received an invitation, this will be followed by our annual summer reception in Speaker's House, by kind permission of our Patron, the Rt Hon Michael Martin MP.

Would those attending please note that the reception was originally scheduled for **6.30pm** but because the Speaker has to host a dinner later that evening, it is being brought forward to **6.00pm**. The invitations will give this revised time.

We are delighted to report that our current membership is an excellent **338**.

