



# Order, Order!

The Newsletter of the Association of Former Members of Parliament

Summer 2009

## A MAN FOR ALL PARTIES

John Bercow was born and brought up in Hackney. A Conservative MP who had a majority of 18,100 in Buckingham, and his dad was a taxi driver!

He has three young children and is a devoted family man. Three Labour Cabinet ministers actually voted for him.

The Times said, "He is a young, eloquent Liberal and a moderniser who should insist on greater transparency in the House".

Aged 46, John is older than Speaker Grenville was at 29, or Speaker Addington at 32, both of whom went on to become Prime Minister.

John is the first Jewish Speaker of the House.

In his vote winning speech he said, "There is a turmoil engulfing this place and a crisis of confidence in parliamentarians themselves. A legislature cannot be effective while suffering public scorn.

"I believe that the vast number of MPs are upright, honourable people who came into politics not to feather their nest but to heed the call of public service".

He is right. And Prime Minister Gordon Brown agreed, saying "The House failed by allowing a system to develop that was



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ripe and open for abuse by flipping, and capital gains tax. It did us no favours too by blacking out embarrassing details".

Our Association of Former MPs is all party and has over 330 members, including more than 80 in the House of Lords.

We can honestly say that we have never had a dispute or division which has been put to a recorded vote. We believe in harmony, public service and comradeship, and it works.

So we have no hesitation in saying we will support any new measures which will restore and enhance the respect the voters used to have for the noble traditions and practices of Parliament.

We will be formally asking Speaker Bercow to take on the role of Patron of our Association and fill the vacancy left by Speaker Martin, our great friend since our foundation in 2001.

Parliament has suffered grievously in this year 2009. Let us all work together to restore its time honoured unwritten laws

## INSIDE!

■ PRESS GALLERY NEEDS NEW STANDARDS TOO!

■ MICHAEL MARTIN, OUR MENTOR

■ THE QUIET GUY GOT 409 VOTES AND WON 11 IN A ROW

■ THE LIKES OF BRIAN. Clough Meets TV Star Austin Mitchell

■ 1974 AND MPS WIN STRIKE FOR ALLOWANCES

# MICHAEL – OUR MENTOR

If it hadn't been for the help and guidance of Speaker Michael Martin our Association would never have seen the light of day, or had the opportunity to table the essential motion in Hansard which gives us the consent of the House.

Until Michael was elected Speaker on October 23 2000, former MPs who had lost their seats or retired or suffered boundary changes were brutally ejected from the House the day after a General Election and even refused entry to their office or the use of their pass after the count.

To gain entrance they had to queue in the street and be searched then escorted to their desk and supervised while they gathered up their personal possessions in a black plastic bag, like an office boy caught with his hand in the till.

The average length of service of MPs from 1956 to 2000 was just over eight years.

## DEBT

In 1997 the Conservative Party lost 178 seats in three hours on television with many hearsay stories of serious debts, negative equity, depression, divorce, children suddenly taken out of private school, alcoholism and even suicide.

It is highly likely that similar circumstances might arise in 2010.

Losers were not allowed to receive the addresses of any of their colleagues or telephone messages from the House, and were left jobless, abandoned, lonely and isolated.

Members lucky enough to hold their seats were disgusted and angry at the way they were treated by traditions going back over fifty years.

## LOYALTY AND SERVICE

They were determined that in future former members should receive the same recognition of their loyalty and service as any other large private or public organisation and that there



would be no repeat of this guillotine exit in 2001.

So a handful of all-party veterans approached the brand new Speaker, Michael Martin (who had been overwhelmingly elected following Betty Boothroyd's retirement), to seek advice.

"You cannot succeed without a motion passed by the House to give it full status" Michael said. "Otherwise it would just be another all-party group, but meeting in a pub, with no passes, no office, no access, and no help from the officials of the House."

## WEE WORD

Our meeting with him just days before the House was due to be dissolved for the 2001 election left no time on the Order Paper for us. But then the good Lord sent us the foot and mouth crisis and the election was postponed, creating a few blank spaces on the Order Paper.

A smiling Speaker Martin said he would have a wee word with the usual channels, and the Leader of the House

Margaret Beckett very kindly drew up a motion which was unanimously approved inside half an hours' debate, and we were in business.

## ORDER, ORDER!

We had no cash, no office, no staff, no money, no passes, and no permission to use the cafeteria, or hold meetings, or receive foreign guests from similar organisations, or use Commons rooms, or appeal for the help of the House of Commons Commission. Nor have access to the House printing services for our "Order, Order!" magazine, the first edition of which was typed and sent out from the Chairman's attic bedroom.

But very quickly we had 100, then 240 members and could have doubled it if we had been allowed to have the addresses of those defeated over many years.

## BUDGET

Every year, out of his personal Speaker's budget, Michael (a teetotaler) paid for an annual champagne reception for a hundred of our members and their wives, and we have always enjoyed an outstanding and enjoyable relationship with him and his charming wife Mary. Our association, now with over 340 members (some die off) contains more than 40 ex-cabinet ministers, including Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Sir. John Major and many other Chancellors, Home Secretaries etc etc. with over 80 paid-up members in the Lords.

We have prestige and a welcome from all departments in the House and we know that at the next General Election our assistance will be very much appreciated by the unfortunate losers.

Michael, we'll keep your standard flying here.

# The Quiet Guy Scored Eleven

**IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1997, Betty Boothroyd was nicknamed "Call me Madam" and was the glittering star of the Westminster stage. Betty was, and is, in a class of her own although she never knew the tough guys in the House secretly chuckled and smiled when ever she got angry. Which was quite often. She was, and still is, a diva. And the tough guys and rebels adore her still.**

But it was the quiet guy from Glasgow who was also building up a solid reputation behind the scenes as one of the Deputy Speakers. In 1997 when Tony Blair became Prime Minister he brought with him an army of new women Labour MPs who were quickly named "Blair's Babes" by the newspapers.

## MALE MACHO

Like all Westminster newcomers they were totally bewildered and lost and unused to the regular combative battlefield and male macho ambience. Michael Martin was a rare tee-totaller, non-drinking, genial father figure who, when he was not in the chair as Deputy Speaker, spent most of his time in the tea room.

He became their godfather and mentor, who explained to the young women what they could do to solve their constituency problems and how to do it. He was the white-haired agony uncle who built up a hundred grateful customers and fugitives from the daily strife of politics, giving them advice and confidence.

## SCOTTISH VOTE

When Betty Boothroyd stood down, Michael cashed in his IOUs and probably picked up 90 votes. His knowledge of the procedures of the House and the Chair was unbeatable. As well as the Blair Babes, he also had the formidable Scottish vote too.

He was an ex-trade union official which meant he not only pulled in a block vote there but he knew how to organise it as well. Then there was the growing formidable Catholic vote in the House. There had never been a Catholic Speaker for 300 years and practically every one of them right or left thought it was about time the Catholics had their turn. And Michael was the one who had the best chance.

## ALL SEASONS

And if there was ever such a thing as a Temperance vote, then perhaps even Ian Paisley might vote for him. Michael was the perfect man for all seasons.

Ted Heath, the longest serving member of the House, and former Chief Whip and Prime Minister, was asked to chair the

ballot proceedings. There were 11 candidates and he would choose who would make the first speech to the assembled MPs.

As an old whip, he knew that in a field of 11 runners, the first vote takes some catching up. Peter Snape and myself, former whips, privately went to Ted Heath's house in Belgravia, as did all the other candidates' minders and totted up for Ted how many promises Michael had. Ted Heath listened, then nodded and said: "Mr Martin will go first".

## WORKSHOP

Of the 11 votes that night, Michael Martin won every one. All candidates and seconders made speeches. His highest score was 409 to 83 and his lowest 257 to 192. The average vote was 323 to 134, a colossal and overwhelming triumph.

Michael had served his time over many long years before his victory. He was chairman of several standing committees, the Administration committee and the Scottish Grand committee and he knew exactly what could or couldn't be done.

He said the House should be a workshop not a museum. As a former apprentice engineer, he fought against the ancient rituals and pompous ceremonies of Gilbert and Sullivan retainers who had a vested interest in their titles, knee-breeches and wigs. He was certainly the first, and only, working class Speaker the House had ever had.

## CLOUD

There was just one cloud on the horizon that night.

In Michael's previous post as the Chairman of the Administration committee, he had banned all journalists from the Press Gallery from buying drinks on the Terrace.

There had been constant complaints from MPs about journalists harassing and even chasing MPs, hounding them for a red-hot story. Michael changed the rules and said journalists would only be able to accept a drink if an MP invited them and then paid for it.

He was absolutely right and had the full backing of the MPs, but the press gallery never forgave him and took a long revenge.



*Michael Martin dragged to the chair*

# THE WISDOM OF REES-MOGG

William Rees-Mogg is probably the most highly respected, longest-serving writer, ex-editor and pundit in the British media industry.

He is a well-known Conservative prophet and esteemed by all the party leaders, who should take his advice very seriously.

In his column in *The Times* on Monday 18 May he wrote:

“The scandal of the House of Commons expenses has brought into conflict a number of national institutions, namely the press (led by *The Daily Telegraph*) the Speaker, the House of Commons itself and the Government.

“There have been some aspects of the events of the past two weeks that journalists ought to worry about. The *Telegraph* campaign has both threatened and humiliated Parliament. Yet in five years time Parliament will still be there and probably in twenty years time too.

“Almost all Members of Parliament hate having been humiliated and hate the press for it. There will be no shortage of opportunities for revenge when the Government feels strong and sees the press as weak.

“A shortlist of grounds for the inevitable counter-attack would include the law on privacy, disgust of chequebook journalism, trial by journalism, lack of due process, purloined evidence, the use of guilt by association, the lack of transparency of the prosecutorial process, the absence of normal judicial protection for defendants, the absence of an effective right to defend oneself, and the assumption of a quasi-judicial function by unqualified people with non-judicial motives.

“Anyone who thinks this press victory will necessarily enhance press freedom is likely to



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prove mistaken. Politicians have a long memory for humiliation. Serious injustices have already been done to individual members against which it has been virtually impossible for them to defend themselves.”

Many of us who have served in eight or nine Parliaments under six or seven Speakers or Prime Ministers will warmly applaud the wisdom of William Rees-Mogg. He and every other professional journalist knows that the newspaper industry is dying on its feet. Every street corner in London now has an army of young men pushing freesheet newspapers into passing hands. They are excellent, professional, perfect copies carrying all the television, sports news and unbiased information which is enough to satisfy modern users of the internet.

Who then needs to spend a pound a day on newspapers? News has never been so cheap. So why would anybody in this highly competitive business alienate its major supplier of news and shoot itself in the foot?

# THE PRESS GALLERY NEEDS STANDARDS TOO!

THE NEW PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS COMMITTEE will be welcomed by all MPs. Especially if it has a very important new section which includes the standards of the Press Gallery and the few journalists who treat MPs, and particularly women MPs, as badly as does Mr. Quentin Letts, the sketch writer of the *Daily Mail*.

Mr Letts thinks he is the cheeky diminutive jester from the *Daily Mail*, waving his cap and bells. He is not. His insults are sometimes no better than those of a football yobbo hurling spit from the shelter of the terraces.

For the past few years he has mercilessly hounded Speaker Martin and his wife with jeers of "Gorbals Mick" even though he knew that the Speaker represented a Glasgow seat well away from the Gorbals which was an area of deep poverty that was demolished 40 years ago.

He gloated: *"Gorbals Mick now has barely two weeks in the chair. Removal men are expected at Speaker's House to box up Mrs. Martin and freight her back to Glasgow. Let's hope they don't deliver her to Edinburgh Zoo by mistake."*

What sort of press standard is that??

Letts seems to relish and enjoy upsetting women MPs.



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Jacqui Smith

As the House prepared for the Cabinet reshuffle he focused on Jacqui Smith, the then Home Secretary: *"She popped dynamite down her cleavage, she knew she was doomed"* he jeered. *"So she lit the fuse, popped in the cyanide down her cavernous*

*cleavage and blew herself to smithereens. But her roly poly face was creamed with pleasure. You could have stored enough salt in her dimples to serve a couple of boiled eggs."*

The Mail's front page headline that day was "RATS DESERT A SINKING SHIP". What sort of parliamentary standard is that?

Harriet Harman, Margaret Beckett, Caroline Flint and Hazel Blears, and even women not in Parliament like Cherie Blair, are just a few who regularly have to put up with this scabrous "wit".

That is not to say that all sketch writers in the Press Gallery take the easy life of instant graffiti. Many of them have long experience, and the sharp analysis and wit from the likes of Simon Hoggart of the *Guardian* are a joy to read. But their talent is not always appreciated because the coverage of politics is constantly going downmarket to boost circulation. Instead of the Bremner, Bird and Fortune wit of yesteryear we now have Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand.

Of course women MPs should not expect to be treated differently from men, but the constant shrieking about their looks and ability often goes much too far.

Before the television cameras were allowed in the Chamber, offensive behaviour and language were forbidden and the culprits reprimanded and named in Hansard. Privileged Press Gallery writers who enjoy the amenities of a front row seat should abide by that same code of practice.

## POWERS

The forthcoming Parliamentary Standards Committee should take powers to investigate complaints of personal denigration and gratuitous abuse of MPs by the press. These journalists are their own judge and jury and paid very high salaries for their exclusive position. Such privilege should not be abused or used for personal spite.

Their constant attacks lower the standards of the House and bring Parliament into disrepute. The Press Gallery needs new boundary changes now.

Let us hope the Committee will have the courage to draw these up and announce a system where attacking the referee results in a red card, and even suspension from the House.

It works in football and is badly needed for the handful of journalists and commentators in the Press Gallery who turn the public away from politics and good government.

# MPS GRAVY TRAIN? MORE LIKE OLIVER TWIST!

On November 5th, Guy Fawkes Day 1968, I won a by-election by a few hundred votes and the day after went for a pint in the Miners' Institute.

The whole place stood up and to the tune of the Red Flag, sang "The working class can kiss his ass, he's got the MP's job at last". And then they ordered drinks all round – on me.

My pockets were empty. No wages during the month-long campaign and none until a month later either. Nothing to pay the mortgage or for the bed and breakfast in the £2 a night for four nights a week flea pit hotels behind Victoria station. My pay packet was £202 a month after stoppages.

## TWO AND NINE PENCE

There were no allowances of any kind, not even for phone calls, although we were allowed warrants. We lived on pie and chips in the cafeteria which cost two shillings and nine pence. We never ever ate in the dining room or travelled home in a late night taxi. We could barely afford the all-night bus. Regularly the lucky MPs with the big city rail stations would ride home on overnight sleeper trains and use their warrants to save a night's hotel bill.

## SALVATION ARMY

Others stayed the night in a special room at the Salvation Army hostel in Westminster or at the Mothers' Union, using a private key. Two Scots even had a wife in Glasgow and another wife in Lambeth. Sadly when the boundaries changed, and their seat vanished, they had to make a very difficult choice.

MPs on the gravy train? It was more like Oliver Twist winking and nodding for cash for questions and selling Royal Garden Party tickets for an astonishing £25 each.

There was no sympathy at all from the voters or the constituency Party activists. "It will do you good", they said. "It will keep your feet on the ground and in touch with the working class voters". Pay rises were doled out every five years, at the whim of the current Prime Minister when the natives got restless.

## ENOCH POWELL

Even then there was plenty of "monks" in the Tribune Group wearing sack cloths and ashes who showed their true socialism by loudly refusing to take the money and gaining brownie points in the constituencies.

Then quietly and craftily picking up the cash a month later. How did we know? We simply tabled a question asking how many members had refused the award. The answer was always the same – only one.



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He was Enoch Powell. All the other breast-beaters were blacklegs.

## SIX PER CENT

In June 1974 just after the General Election when Harold Wilson had no majority, he announced that the Government would set an example to the unions to stop highly inflationary pay increases. The railwaymen had just been awarded a pay rise of 27 per cent to keep pace with inflation, when Harold announced that MPs would get six per cent.

The fact that he and the Cabinet, and the Hampsted Socialist Glitterati of Foot, Crossman, Roy Jenkins, Crosland, Healey, Barbara Castle etc. had all just trebled their own salaries when they became Cabinet ministers, didn't cross their socialist minds at all.

## STRIKE

So we backbenchers actually went on strike. The Trade Union Group with 150 members called a mass meeting two weeks before the House rose, in a large basement room one night while the press were enjoying a balmy July evening on the Terrace and demanded the whips come to it too.

A message was sent to the Prime Minister that we were leaving now for our constituencies and would be on strike

until October, looking after our voters until then, but to hell with Harold's essential legislation.

For the backbenchers, the summer recess would start as of now. Wilson was astounded. So was Chief Whip Bob Mellish. Oliver Twist had actually asked for more.

### MR BEADLE WILSON



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Very quickly Mr Beadle Wilson, hanging on by a thread before an October election, actually came up with an offer of £500 a year to cover all office costs, secretarial help and car mileage too.

Wives would however still carry on as unpaid secretaries - working from a back bedroom, answering the phone at midnight, from constituents seeking an abortion or wanting to know how they could get home from Benidorm without a ticket, and be content with three free rail warrants every year to London to see how their husbands were living it up.

### WIVES WORKING SUNDAYS

Seven years later we landed another coup. We persuaded the staff unions in the House that wives doing provincial secretarial work for free were undercutting their right to a decent London wage. It was cheap labour, stealing jobs from the union. While wives worked Sundays for nothing, Westminster secretaries would never get a fair wage and their union ought to do something about it! Even the

wives of the Tories agreed, and their wrath made sure their husbands backed it.

### BED AND BREAKFAST

We then campaigned for a London living allowance too. If civil servants could claim for a three-star hotel with hot water, bed and breakfast why can't we? Then we asked for and got their car mileage too, which was twice as much as ours. Brothers we were on our way!

### RENT-A-DUMP

Soon with a little bit of teeming and ladling, it was finally possible for two or three or four comrades to pool their cash together, and rent a dump of a large house, or a large scruffy flat, in Lambeth or Kennington. And if we shared it in the recess, with a rota of families, kids, students and odd girlfriends to keep it occupied, it might not get trashed by the local savages.

### PROPERTY OWNING DEMOCRACY

Astonishingly it was Mrs Thatcher who opened the door for MPs to own second homes, when she said "of course the London living allowance could be used to buy flats and apartments." Wasn't this all part of the property owning democracy? What was good enough for a council tenant should be good enough for MPs which led to a mass exit to the publicly owned Barbican and Dolphin Square.

### SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

The election winners of 1983 and 1987 could not wait to snatch at this wonderful opportunity! Although nobody had ever heard of flipping. But as the property market fell in 1992 and their marginal seats fell too, they were faced with the twin evils of negative equity. Both at home and in London and no job to bridge the two gaps.

Sounds familiar? Sounds like 2010 for Labour may be like 1997 was for the Tories?

Ask not for whom the polls toll....

*Joe Ashton*



**GOOD NEWS!** Our members have been invited to No. 10.  
Full details and how to apply on the back page.

## NOSTALGIA AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

# THE LIKES OF BRIAN



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**IN THE ROARING SEVENTIES** Britain had four general elections, four different Prime Ministers, a three-day working week organised by the Ted Heath government, MPs for Hire, power cuts, IRA murders, Abba, and Barbara Streisand singing "The Way We Were".

We watched "Minder". Now we watch "Life on Mars" telling us what it was like.

Television studios then were dominated by northern grit characters such as Brian Clough and, guess who - Arthur Scargill.

Our very own Austin Mitchell, a Professor of Politics at Oxford, nobly gave up a £24,000 a year Yorkshire TV presenters job, for a £6,000 backbench MPs pittance in marginal Grimsby.

The "Damned United" is a smash hit film (about Leeds United, not Manchester) of 44 days in the life of Brian Clough, Bung for Bung and Trophy for Trophy the most successful football manager the world has ever seen.

The European Cup and Manchester United's millions were lost for England last May by the mighty manager, Alex Ferguson. Yet Cloughie won it twice in two seasons with tuppence ha'penny players playing on cow shed grounds and pitches, in unfashionable towns like Nottingham and Derby.

Cloughie really could walk on water.

He could walk onto the Saturday night Michael Parkinson show and outface Mohammed Ali, the world superstar heavyweight, with ease.

It is certainly worth our Association members using their bus pass and the pensioners half-price matinee just to see actual newsreel films of September 1974 with an unbelievably svelte Austin Mitchell displaying a perfect Vidal Sassoon haircut and effortlessly handling and manipulating the superstars and football's finest (when we know he doesn't know one end of the pitch from the other).

In the General Election of February 1974 Philip Whitehead, the sadly missed MP for Derby, was fighting his first seat in marginal Derby North and swore that it was Derby manager Brian Clough who won it by touring the council estates with a loudspeaker shouting "I am Brian Clough, manager of Derby County and I want you to go to the polling station NOW and vote for Philip Whitehead".

Philip won by 1,200 votes and later held the seat in 1983 by just 214, thanks to Cloughies aid.

### PATRICK MCLOUGHLIN

Later in 1986 when Matthew Parris decided to give up his Derbyshire West seat with its 15,324 majority for a life in Thames Television, and a column in *The Times*, Cloughie toured the by-election villages campaigning for the hapless Labour candidate, in order to stop the Liberal from taking over the seat.

After seven recounts Patrick McLoughlin (now Conservative Chief Whip in the House) held the seat, finally managing to gain a 102 majority to scrape home at 6.30am the following morning.

If Cloughie hadn't propped up the Labour vote, Patrick would have lost, then been made redundant at the Coal Board.

No wonder Patrick thanked God and swapped his lifelong support of Aston Villa to worship at Derby County.

### BOOZE

But sadly, Cloughie had a fatal weakness. He couldn't handle the booze. Especially after he was unbelievably turned down for the England manager's job after our country failed to qualify for the World Cup in 1974. Rejected by a board of football mandarins who were determined to keep their football employees in the tug-your-forelock traditions of grovelling for a £100 wage, and a charity game for a career-ending broken leg.



Patrick McLoughlin

© UPPA/Photoshot

## SHAH OF IRAN

One Monday morning about 9.30, I was travelling down to the House on an ancient train which had sliding door compartments holding about six passengers in the first class section (one of the very few perks allowed to MPs). The door opened and in walked a bloke holding a plastic carrier bag full of ice cubes and a bottle of Dom Perignon.

It was Cloughie. "I want you to join me young man" (he called everyone young man) "on a momentous day, because I have heard you are a young Labour MP who loves football."

I nodded. "This afternoon" he said, "I am flying to Iran in a private plane at the personal invitation of the Shah of Iran to take over their national football team. They are celebrating 2000 years of history and Shahs (soon to be ousted by the Ayatollahs) and they have offered me an unbelievable wage of £500 a week (MPs were getting £80 a week, no expenses) and that's twice as much as any other manager in Britain!"

## STALLIONS

"My family will have their own private swimming pool, a Rolls Royce with a chauffeur and the kids will be allowed to feed the Shah's world famous stallions.

"But I need to know if this is kosher, so I want you to take me to the Foreign Office to ask them."

So we went, chased off the train and down St. Pancras station by an army of journalists fighting for this red hot news.

Access to government buildings was very slack in those days before the IRA spoiled it, and we were very warmly received. The famous Brian Clough going to sign on for the mighty Shah of Iran! What a worldwide coup for the Foreign Office and Britain!

"We will get on the phone to our Mr. Arbuthnot in Iran (true, all true) immediately," the posh lady said "and telegraph him." Which took about an hour in those days.

The charming, beaming lady then returned and said "It has all been organised for you Mr. Clough and we know it is authentic because you have been allocated the bedroom in the Palace next to the Shah's".

"Only his personal bodyguard is allowed to sleep there" (Cloughie told me later

that the guy sat cross-legged with a curved sword across his knees and snored loudly all night, keeping him awake).

But Cloughie turned the job down. He just couldn't live without the cold foggy mudbaths of British football, never mind the shortage of booze.

## RAMPTON

Five years later in May 1979 Mrs. Thatcher won the election and the week after Brian Clough took his unfashionable Nottingham Forest team to Europe to win the European Cup for England for the very first time. The year after, he did it again.

By then I had met Brian Clough many times. Tom Pendry, the Chair of the Football Committee (and a Derby supporter) and Philip Whitehead invited the European Championship team to the House to show off the trophy.

So I asked Cloughie for a favour. "Anything" he answered.

My constituency of Bassetlaw covered the whole of North Nottinghamshire and included the remote, infamous Rampton hospital for the criminally insane.

It housed over 500 patients, some of whom had been in there for 30 years, with more than 800 staff resisting sweeping changes to their alternative working hours, and seriously threatening strike action.

They were very angry at the Government's refusal to negotiate and were adamant they would walk out, leaving a very dangerous situation.

I asked Brian Clough if he would pay an official visit to Rampton and bring his all-star team to the tightest security building in Britain. There was to be no publicity.

On Friday morning, just after Mrs. Thatcher filled the news programmes entering Downing Street, Cloughie brought his international team of superstars on a bus for the shock of their lives.

## NEWS OF THE WORLD

We toured the building with the young superstars stunned and lost for words. The patients all knew Brian and the footballers. In those days patients had very little to do except swallow sedative drugs and watch television or read newspapers.

One of the internationals had been turned over that week, being caught "in flagrante" by the News of the World and was astounded when a charming old lady sidled up and said "Ere, wot you been up to, having it off in the car park? Your wife was right to give you a good hiding!"

Another old dear shouted: "Bloody Arsenal. Absolute crap. Bleeding rubbish."

I could tell you a whole host of stories of that day, some hilarious, others sad and heartbreaking and others chillingly frightening and horrendous.

But the staff were absolutely magnificent and so grateful that peace had broke out that many of them had tears in their eyes because somebody high up had drawn attention to the working conditions and stress they were living under. And, astonishingly, not a word in the newspapers except a few lines of thanks from the nurses in the local *Retford Times*.

Brian Clough really did walk on water that day.

## HILLSBOROUGH

I went on to become a director of Sheffield Wednesday some time later. The last time I saw Brian was on Saturday April 20 1989 at Hillsborough. We both stood on the pitch as 96 young fans were crushed to death at the Liverpool vs. Nottingham Forest semi-final.

Brian had very serious alcohol problems by then. He took the horrible scenes deeply and very badly but his incredible composure held out to finish the game and the replay later.

Sadly he died on September 20th 2004. A football legend and idol of working class boys and men wherever there was a piece of grass and a ball.

The likes of Brian will never be replaced.

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*"The Damned United" is a major film about the 44 days of Clough's management at Leeds United. It is currently showing in cinemas and has been hailed by the critics everywhere.*

*One said: "Like or dislike of football is neither here nor there. It achieves the gradiosity of a Sergio Leone film". The Guardian and others, from the Literary Review, the Telegraph book of the week, and Scotsman, acclaimed it too.*

# THE TITANIC NIGHT WE MADE HISTORY

In our last March edition of Order Order we were within days of the thirtieth anniversary of the famous “Majority of One” night in 1979.

On March 27 Mrs. Thatcher’s opposition gained a majority of one to bring down Prime Minister Jim Callaghan and change the whole face of Britain for the next 18 years.

We briefly listed the roller-coaster ride of that fateful day when all our jobs and seats were in the lap of the gods, depending on just one fateful vote or abstention. Followed by the dreadful murder of Airey Neave MP, in the Commons car park just two days later.

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*The House Magazine*, our patron, sent two of its brilliant young executives Richard Hall (Managing Editor) and Sam Macrory (Features Editor) to our memorable evening in the Lords Room, to record some of the memories of our veterans. The event was kindly hosted by the Lord Speaker

Helene Hayman, who as a young MP, then just 30 years old, lost her seat that night.

Surprisingly over 200 MPs who voted in the division are still alive, but because of the data protection rules of the House, we are unable to trace their addresses

The BBC parliamentary television programme also ran a three-hour programme on Saturday March 28th with extensive live interviews of the drama and a full replay of the BBC news programmes and bulletins of that evening using original Newsnight interviews, discussions and films.

We are delighted that our initiative turned into such a memorable record of a unique piece of history and are grateful to *The House Magazine* for permission to reproduce their article below.

## Back for one night only

Thirty years ago, after losing a confidence motion in the Commons, James Callaghan’s Labour government fell, ushering in Britain’s first female prime minister and 18 years of Conservative rule.

In today’s era of unassailable majorities, the concept of a government surviving on an almost day-by-day basis is hard to fathom. But by spring 1979, the Labour government had done just that for two years after its majority had eroded, with its army of whips helping the prime minister James Callaghan to scrape through a series of nail-bitingly fraught votes.

A key player in the dark arts of persuasion was Walter Harrison, who had served as deputy chief whip since 1974 and played a heroic role in keeping the Labour government alive. Deals had been struck with the minority parties, unobvious persuasion techniques were deployed with ruthless regularity, and sick MPs were pressured to pass through the voting lobbies.

But on the night of 28 March 1979, Harrison’s luck ran out. For the first, and so far only, time since the Second World War, a government would lose a vote of no confidence. Defeated by a majority of just one, Callaghan was forced to call a general election. Six weeks later, and still shivering from the Winter of Discontent, the country elected its first female prime minister,



*James Callaghan- defeated by a majority of one*

Margaret Thatcher, and a Conservative Party that would remain in power for the next 18 years.

This week marks the 30th anniversary of that extraordinary vote. At the invitation of Joe Ashton – who at the time was Labour MP for Bassetlaw – and the association of former MPs, parliamentarians who were present at the vote gathered last week in the House of Lords. Some, such as Austin Mitchell, have remained MPs throughout the last three decades. Jeff Rooker was another survivor, later

serving as a government minister in the House of Lords until 2008. Others may not be so familiar, either losing their seats in 1979 or soon after. Walter Harrison himself, now 88, did not attend, but his pivotal role was recognised by all who gathered to recall that evening’s extraordinary events.

On the evening of the vote, Tom (now Lord) McNally, then the head of the political office at 10 Downing Street, watched the drama unfold from his seat in the official’s box.

“When the Commons chamber was rebuilt, Winston Churchill insisted that ‘there should be on great occasions a sense of crowd and urgency’. Well, that night you knew exactly what he meant. You could cut the tension with a knife,” McNally – who was not at the reunion – tells *The House Magazine*. “The amazing thing was we had no idea which way it would go.”

Helene Hayman, then Labour MP for Welwyn and Hatfield and now Lord Speaker, shared the same uncertainty as McNally. “It was immensely tense because it really was unpredictable.

There were all sorts of deals being done with minority parties; you didn't know what was true and what was rumour." For Rooker, it was a case of clambering back on to the knife-edge. "I left home every morning not knowing whether I'd be going to war in the evening," he explains. That night, the mood was different. "I was in the chamber and I was mesmerised, thinking 'this is not the way to end. Perhaps we'll make it through?' We'd made it through before."

The vote hinged on a handful of undetermined factors, some of which were only resolved on the night.

One was the health of Sir Alfred Broughton, the Labour MP for Batley and Morley. Though determined to vote, Sir Alfred, whose health was failing fast, had been ordered not to travel to Westminster by his doctors, a decision Harrison agreed with. "The vote we needed was dying 200 miles to the north," McNally reflects. "We told Jim to ask Broughton to come down, but Jim said no."

Broughton, Ashton recalls, "died three days later with tears in his eyes, saying he'd changed the face of politics". Callaghan would later write to Harrison to thank him for making the correct decision over Sir Alfred's non-attendance.

Two key abstentions were the Northern Ireland pair of SDLP leader Gerry Fitt and the Independent, Frank Maguire. There was concern that the IRA – who believed their cause would benefit from the harder line of a Conservative government – could target the two MPs should they support the government.

"Jim said: 'Walter, it's your decision. I'll back you whatever you do. Walter said: 'They'll do it'," Ashton recalls. Two days later, Harrison's hunch was proved correct, as the IRA showed it was prepared to act on its threats by assassinating Airey Neave, the man expected to be appointed Northern Ireland secretary should the Conservatives win the election.

John Lester, one of the Tory whips, told *The House Magazine* that the former Conservative MP Enoch Powell, the Ulster Unionist member for South Down, had been persuaded to vote with his old Tory colleagues. "But he

didn't want us to win, so he arranged for two of the Ulster Unionists to vote against us. He came through our lobby with a big smile on his face because he thought he'd fixed it. When the actual vote was declared he was horrified."

The 11 SNP members, displeased with the slow progress toward Scottish devolution, would also vote against the government. Lord McNally recalls Michael Foot making an amazing intervention, pointing at the SNP MPs and calling them "turkeys voting for Christmas".

Once the votes had been counted, the immediate result was uncertain. Lord Corbett, who at the time was Labour MP for Hemel Hempstead, recalls "sitting on one of the end seats below the gangway, and thinking I heard that Jimmy Hamilton [one of the whips] had done the thumbs-up. I said to colleagues around me, 'We've won!'".

"It was the ultimate cruelty," adds Lord McNally. "Jimmy Hamilton was waving his order paper and you could hear the Members saying, 'We've done it!'."

Hamish Watt, then SNP MP for Banffshire, puts an intriguing new twist on the factors behind the government's defeat: "Walter wasn't working as hard as he normally did. He whipped the vote to the last second every day, but on that particular day he stopped at 4pm. He didn't bother seeing me that day.

"I've always had the feeling that Jim Callaghan had decided that he'd had enough, and he didn't ask Walter to work as hard as he otherwise would have done."

McNally refutes the suggestion. "As far as I was aware they were trying to the very end. If one of the Irishmen had changed his mind it would have been a dead heat. Jim decided he would go down with dignity and take the consequences."

The consequence was defeat for Callaghan and 18 years in opposition for Labour. Historians regularly play 'what-ifs' over Callaghan's decision to resile on calling a general election in 1978, but rarely ask what might have happened had the government held onto power for a further six months and seen out its full term.

"We would have lost," says Lord



Margaret Thatcher- first female Prime Minister

Rooker without hesitation. "There was a mood in the country that it was time for a change and I don't think there was anything we could have done."

Lord Grocott, the then Labour MP for Lichfield and Tamworth, agrees: "I don't think it would have made much difference then, or if the election had been in the autumn of the previous year either."

John Evans, now Lord Evans and at the time MP for Newton, disagrees. "My own view, and I think the view of most of us, is that we would have held on at a later general election."

Whatever their conjectures, on the evening of 28 March 1979, one vote changed the political direction of this country for good – and, behind the history books, the course of individual lives. Many of the MPs who voted that night did not return to Parliament after the election. For Walter Harrison, who would hang onto his seat until his retirement in 1987, those long, unseen nights of enforcing and persuading were over.

Today, the latest polling suggests that the nation's MPs could be on the cusp of another decisive shift, with futures in the balance and careers on the line.

While the events of 30 years ago may seem extraordinary and remote, Lord Graham of Edmonton, then an MP and another government whip that evening, offers some sage advice.

"The moral is that politics really is a tide. You go out with the tide and you come in with the tide."

# More fiddles than the Halle Orchestra

**THE ACRES OF HATRED, spite, bile, hysterical loathing and malice poured out against sitting MPs and the Speaker Michael Martin is probably the most vindictive the House has ever seen since the first chimes of Big Ben 150 years ago.**

Stories of paedophiles, IRA murderers or Muslim bombers regularly fill our newspapers but stories of MPs allegedly fiddling their expenses are much more shocking.

And all poured out by journalists working in an industry notorious for having more fiddles than the Halle Orchestra.



Austin Mitchell

So says ex-media star and Oxford Professor of Politics, Austin Mitchell, MP for Grimsby. These include staying overnight with friends and claiming it as a hotel bill, sharing car journeys, signing each others' receipts and claiming for taxis while riding on the bus.

Austin even recalls the famous claim of a Yorkshire television journalist, for 35

lunches at the three-star Box Tree restaurant with "receipt lost" scrawled across it. No wonder former editor of *The Spectator* and leader writer of the *Daily Telegraph*, Boris Johnson, now Mayor of London, gave a cynical laugh when London journalists asked about the bombshell news.

And where did the *Daily Telegraph* obtain or buy its information about MPs toilet rolls from? Reportedly, a former SAS officer who has had a succession of companies (and debts), adding up to nearly five million pounds.

He is reputed to have made £100,000 from selling the details of MPs expenses to newspapers. The real question should be how did he get the information? Did he buy it? Steal it? Make it up? Or simply find it left on the back seat of a No. 59 bus?

## OBTAINED ILLEGALLY

What's more, if the Telegraph did know it was obtained illegally but then resold the information to their readers to make a profit, isn't that possibly a crime too?

Immediately after the resignation speech of Speaker Michael Martin, the Leader of the House Harriet Harman set out the proposals for reforms which would end self-regulation for MPs and introduce a new Standards Authority to revise and update the new codes of practice. She said parliament had "forfeited the right to self-regulation".

**She said: "Flipping will be banned". MP couples, or husbands and wives, will not be allowed to claim twice. All claims will in future be published online and claims for the last four years will re-examined. Doubtful claims will be rejected without appeal. There will be no more claims for household goods. MPs selling their house must tell the taxman and an independent Parliamentary Standards Regulator will be imposed.**

We hope she will add: *including press standards too.*

## ASSOCIATION TO HAVE A MEMBERS' FUND TRUSTEE

**THANK YOU TO PETER LILLEY and fellow trustees of the Members' Fund. Peter has told us that he and his colleagues support the Association of Former Members having a nominated trustee.**

This would be on the same basis that we already have a trustee on the Parliamentary Pension Fund, the role ably filled by Sir Graham Bright, the Association's Treasurer.

Although we have to wait until planned legislation is passed, this was agreed at a meeting in April between the Fund's Trustees and Association representatives, led by Joe Ashton.

This will be a great step forward, ending the frustration of not being involved, not being able to do the job that all former members would

expect of us and of not having timely information on the Fund.

Now we must do whatever we can to urge forward the progress of the necessary legislation and, in the meanwhile, the trustees have asked for the Association's help.

### CAN YOU HELP?

The Fund's trustees have been concerned to find any former MPs or their dependents who need help but fall through the net. They point to the following categories which are not automatically entitled to assistance from the Fund.

A member who left Parliament before October 1964 and with less than 10 years service.

A member who left Parliament

between October 1964 and January 1971 with less than 10 years service.

A member who left Parliament before July 1984 and with less than 4 years service.

The trustees want to find all relevant former members and appear to share the frustrations we have found. Thus they have asked if we can identify anyone who might be caught by the above categories.

It is still possible to assist former members in these categories or their widows or widowers by the Fund's discretionary powers, but first the trustees need to know who they are.

Please, can you help by stretching your memories and telling us of the whereabouts of all old colleagues. Anyone found could receive very necessary help now or later and might also welcome joining the Association.

Gwylim Jones



## House of Commons Members' Fund

### What is the Members' Fund?

The Members' Fund is a benevolent fund that assists former members of Parliament and their dependants who are in financial need.

### What is its history?

The Members' Fund was established under the House of Commons Members' Fund Act 1939 as there were no occupational pension arrangements for Members at that time. Its original purpose was to provide former members with benefits in lieu of a pension.

Further Acts were passed, namely in 1948, 1981 and 1991 to allow former members and their dependants to apply for assistance particularly in times of financial hardship.

### What is its current role?

The Members' Fund has a dual role:

- to continue to make 'as of right' payments to existing claimants
- to provide benefits either as an annual grant or one-off payment to new and existing claimants.

### How is it funded?

All current Members automatically contribute £2 per month which is deducted from their salary and the Treasury gives an annual grant-in-aid of £215,000.

### How is it managed?

The Members' Fund is managed by a board of six Trustees, who are all serving Members appointed by the House.

The Trustees consider all applications for benefits and grant suitable awards accordingly. When doing so the Trustees will look at all the circumstances of the applicant, particularly their financial circumstances.

### Who may benefit?

Any former member who meets the following criteria:

### 'As of right' Award:

- Former members or their widow/ers who served for 10 years or more before October 1964 (pre PCPF – Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund). The Trustees can waive the 10 year service requirement where they think appropriate.

### Hardship/Discretionary Awards:

- PCPF widow/ers of former members who qualify for a 1/2 rate rather than a 5/8ths pension under the PCPF regulations.
- Any former member or their dependants who have financial difficulties.

### How to apply for assistance?

If you believe that you qualify for an 'as of right' award or if you would like to apply for financial assistance from the Members' Fund then please contact the HCMF Secretariat (see contact details below).

You will be sent an application form requesting further information about your financial situation and reasons for applying. The Trustees will then consider your case and you will be notified of their decision in due course.

### Confidentiality

All matters related to the Fund are handled on the basis of utmost confidentiality.

### ENQUIRIES / FURTHER INFORMATION:

HCMF Secretariat  
House of Commons Members' Fund  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Telephone: 020 7219 1356  
Fax: 020 7219 2554  
Email: [hcmf@parliament.uk](mailto:hcmf@parliament.uk)

# OBITUARIES

## LORD PAUL DEAN

Conservative MP for Harptree  
September 1924 to April 2009



© UPPA/Photostock

**Paul graced the Speaker's Chair in the Commons, where he had presided over affairs as Deputy Speaker for the last 10 years of his Commons service.**

He then distinguished himself by going on to become Deputy Speaker in the Lords. Paul was one of the three deputies in the Chair to Bernard Weatherall, one of the others was Betty Boothroyd.

Paul was never a colourful figure but

in the Commons he earned a solid reputation for his care and concern for a number of backbench groups. The plight of pensioners and their pensions occupied his attention for a long time.

Paul Dean came into active politics after serving in the Welsh Guards and was wounded in his leg while serving in Normandy.

The son of a farmer, he had the distinction of being the President of the University Conservatives at Exeter College, Oxford, and then going on to become the President of the Carlton Club. He was a resident tutor at the Swinton Conservative College, then joined the research department of the Conservative Party and rose to become assistant director.

He made his first foray in a by-election at Pontefract only to lose by more than 20,000 votes. But by the time he had found and won his seat at North Somerset (later renamed as Woodspring) he was to see his majority rise in 1979 to 21,051. Ted Heath made him PUSS

at the DSS. One of his Parliamentary achievements came in 1973 when he steered legislation allowing employers to run pension schemes for employees to claim enhanced right to income when they reached retirement age. He had told the Commons that the right to a pension income should be regarded as pay, just like monthly salary or a weekly wage.

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher did not appoint him to Ministerial office so he became one of the shrewdest "business managers" in the House. His forte was committee working and especially, the Speaker's Panel. His epitaph is his work for the sick and the needy.

His maiden speech ranged over the plight of what he referred to as "the unemployable, loneliness in old age, widow's benefits, the sick and unemployed especially and the handicapped. These, he said, are people whose burdens are perhaps greater than any other section of the community".

Paul's first wife Doris died in 1979 and his second wife Peggy died in 2002.

*Ted Graham*

## ERNEST MILLINGTON

Common Wealth MP for Chelmsford  
February 1915 to May 2009



**Our oldest member, Wing Commander Ernest Millington DFC, died peacefully with his family around him aged 93 at his home in the Dordogne on May 9th, 2009. On his bedside table was the spring issue of "Order Order" that welcomed him to membership.**

His daughter, Carol, says it gave him much pleasure and was shown to all his visitors.

Ernest had a remarkable life. He was thrown out of home at the age of 16 with half a crown because his father did not like his preaching socialism on street corner soapboxes. This led to various dead-end jobs, although academically he was qualified for university.

He joined the Territorials just before the war, then transferred to the RAF, learnt to fly, and became the most decorated commanding officer of a squadron of Lancaster bombers.

Then, in a sensational by-election just before VE Day, the electors of Chelmsford made him a Common Wealth MP overturning a 16,000 Conservative majority. This caused the Labour leadership to press for a General Election as soon as Germany was defeated, rather than waiting until after the Japanese

surrendered.

Ernest retained the seat in the July General Election and was the only Common Wealth MP. Herbert Morrison, Labour's Deputy Leader, persuaded him to rejoin Labour. He lost in the 1950 election and after some humdrum jobs, rejoined the RAF. Back in civvy street he trained as a teacher and became an education administrator before retiring to France.

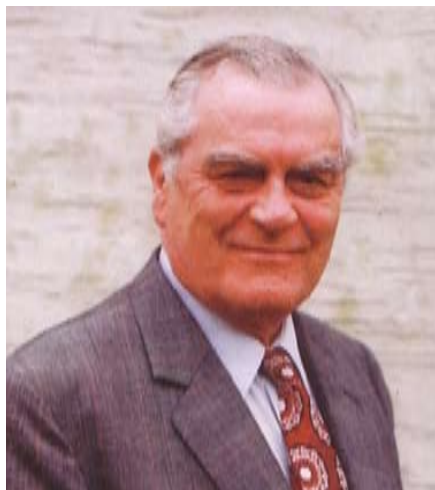
Ernest was modest about his distinguished Flying Cross, telling enquirers that it just turned up in the post one lunchtime. In fact, it was awarded shortly after he safely nursed a Lancaster bomber with two engines ablaze back from a 1,000 mile bomber raid. The decoration's citation recorded the fine record of his squadron as being due to "his courage and leadership and the enthusiasm inspired."

*Roy Roebuck*

## TIM BRINTON

MP for Gravesham

December 1929 to March 2009



**When Tim Brinton entered the Commons he brought with him a swathe of experiences. Born on Christmas Eve in 1929, he was educated at Eton, Geneva University and the Central School for Speech and Drama.**

He had joined the BBC as a radio announcer, mainly on overseas programmes, and from 1957 he was head of English programmes at Radio Hong Kong.

Prior to the 1979 election he had amassed an impressive portfolio and he became a regular on our television screens. He was very photogenic. Prior to becoming the MP for Gravesend, he was a member of the Kent County Council.

In the year he was elected he criticised the Government for failing to deliver the tough policy on immigration it had promised in its manifesto. He was in the forefront of more strict immigration into Britain for the rest of his time, voting against the Government many times and strongly objecting to taxpayers' money being used to educate immigrants' children in their mother tongue. He went on to join Tory Action, a group Margaret

Thatcher was challenged to condemn as "racist".

Trade union reform was an aspect of Tory policy in which Tim played a prominent part and he persisted in criticising the employment policies of Jim Prior. In 1980, he objected to Prior's reluctance to deal with the closed shop. He was to prove his determination by later being one of 40 Tory rebels against Tom King's treatment of the "closed shop" issue when King supported a resolution in collaboration with the TUC.

Tim left the Commons in 1987 and returned to working in television. In 2003, he joined UKIP. He married first Jane-Marie Cunningham in 1954, the daughter of Air Marshall Sir Arthur Cunningham and they had a son and three daughters. In 1965, after divorce, he married Jeanne Wedge and they had two more daughters.

*Ted Graham*

## MICHAEL WARD

Labour MP for Peterborough

April 1931 to March 2009



© UPPA/Photoshot

**To be involved in a Parliamentary recount is exciting stuff. To be involved more than once is not an experience much sought after. For Michael Ward, it came as a series of battles for Peterborough fought against the redoubtable and experienced parliamentarian – Sir Harmer Nichols.**

In 1966 these two opponents had eight recounts before Sir Harmer was declared elected – by three votes. In February 1974, it was even more dramatic when there were more recounts before Sir Harmer was triumphant by the much improved majority – of 22 votes.

In all, it took four attempts to finally oust Sir Harmer, Michael served from October 1974 until the 1979 General Election before being beaten by Brian Mawhinney.

Michael was one of the most engaging personalities in a Parliament not short of characters and I had the pleasure of sharing a room with him from 1974 to 1979, along with David (now Lord) Stoddart and Arthur Latham, then MP for Paddington.

He was educated at the Royal Liberty School, Romford, and Bungay Grammar School before going to Manchester University. He was a successful administrator before becoming the local government officer of the Labour Party. In 1958 he

became a member of Romford Council and later was a member of the newly formed Havering Council where he became Leader in 1971.

He was later to work for the most famous personality in local government – T Dan Smith – and was unfairly associated with him when later Smith was convicted of corruption together with Reginald Maudling, the Tory Chancellor, and others.

When he left Westminster, Michael was an impressive force for good in the dying days of the Inner London Education Authority when Margaret Thatcher opted for abolition of Ken Livingstone's GLC. He was later to leave the Labour Party and join the Liberal Democrats only to return to Labour.

One of his daughters is the Labour MP Alison Seaback, MP for Plymouth and Devonport. He married Lilian Lomas in 1953 and they had two daughters.

*Ted Graham*

# For the inside track on the new Parliament



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## \*\*\*SUMMER RECEPTION STOP PRESS\*\*\*

### PLEASE NOTE:

At the time of Order Order going to press we do not know if the new Speaker will feel able to honour our summer reception on the 14 July. We certainly hope so, but can only advise those members who have requested invitations that they wait to see if these are received from the Speaker's office at some point after the 22 June.

As soon as we hear anything we will e-mail those members who have supplied an e-mail address.

### Winter Reception at 10 Downing Street

We are delighted to announce that the Prime Minister's wife, Mrs Sarah Brown, has kindly agreed to host an evening reception for members of our Association on the evening of Tuesday the 17th November from 6.30 to 8pm. Numbers are limited to 120 and places will be allocated strictly on a first come first served basis. Members are welcome to include their partners, but no guests please as this will be a very

popular and prestigious event and our members and their partners are right to expect that it will be restricted to them. Your invitation will be sent out direct from No 10. There will be a charge to cover the cost of drinks and canapés which is a very reasonable £23 per head. If you would like to attend then please complete and return the form below, together with your payment.

#### I would like to attend the Reception at No. 10 on the 17th November

Name: .....

Address: .....

e-mail address (so helpful for communications) .....

I would like to bring my partner (name) .....

**I enclose a cheque for £23/£46 for 1/2 places made out to Association of Former MPs.**

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: Sally Grocott, Association of Former MPs, House of Commons, Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, LONDON, SW1A 2NE