



Order, Order!

The Newsletter of the Association of Former Members of Parliament

Summer 2011



Photo: Terry Moore

INSIDE

CHRIS MULLIN WRITES ABOUT POLITICAL MEMOIRS

AND

👉 **JOE ASHTON GIVES HIS VIEWS ON THE SCOT NATS**

👉 **BROWNGATE**

👉 **HOW YOU GOT YOUR PASS**

👉 **ROGER BERRY TELLS WHERE HE IS NOW**

👉 **PROFILE: OUR EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

👉 **JIM'S GYM**



We are delighted that Alan Meale MP has agreed to serve as Labour's sitting MP representative on the Association's Executive Committee, following in the excellent footsteps of Eric Martlew who I am pleased to say still serves on the committee, now in the capacity as a former member.



Sir Alan Meale MP

Alan has been the MP for Mansfield since 1987 and is a former opposition whip and a former minister at the Department of the Environment. Alan was knighted in the June 2011 Queen's Birthday Honours. We are very grateful for his support.

We have yet to hear from the Conservative Chief Whip about a possible Conservative MP member.

Association Chairman, Sir Graham Bright writes:

All Member Meetings

I am sure members will agree that the new system I have introduced of having a speaker at our all member meetings has been very successful, and has succeeded in my objective of making the meetings more interesting and constructive.

We had an excellent session on the 31st March when Lord Norton of Louth gave a very informative address on Lords Reform followed by a number of considered comments and questions from members present.



Sir Alan Haselhurst MP

Our next meeting is on the 5th July at 4pm in Committee Room 10 at which I am delighted to say Sir Alan Haselhurst MP has agreed to speak. As you will know, Alan is a distinguished former Deputy Speaker and is presently Chairman of the Commons Administration Committee.

Reaching Out

Continuing the work of the Association's Outreach programme, Eric Moonman and Elizabeth Peacock visited Leeds University where they engaged in a lively discussion on parliamentary profiles and policies with students from the Economics and Political departments.

Eric reports that Politics Professor, Keith Theakston, warmly welcomed the two former MPs and introduced the students, some of whom would be working as interns in parliament in the coming year.

Professor Theakston made it plain that the attendance of the former MPs was very much appreciated and he had no doubt that other universities would be keen to get involved. Eric is presently contacting a number of other universities about the programme. He is to be congratulated on this initiative and the hard work he has put into it. I have no doubt the programme will go from strength to strength.



Eric Moonman

Your views

Finally, Joe Ashton, founder and former Editor of Order Order, in his column in this edition is asking members to write in, either in article or letter form. Do let us have your thoughts, views, reminiscences. This is your magazine and we want it to be a really good read.

NB A number of members' e-mail addresses no longer work. PLEASE e-mail Sally at grocotts@parliament.uk if your e-mail has changed, or if you have one for the first time. Otherwise you will miss out on Association information and notices.



JIM'S GYM

It was very exciting to win West Dorset in February 1974, and like all other new boys I arrived at the House immensely proud and happy.

Having spent most of my life in the army, and in particular the Parachute Regiment, fitness was an essential part of my life.

I was therefore horrified to find that we had no gymnasium or resident doctor. So I took it on myself to press the then Speaker Jack Weatherill, and Denis Howell, then Minister for Sport, for a gym.

The response at first was not encouraging, but I persevered and slowly but surely began to gather some support. But the problem of where it could be sited was difficult to solve. I suggested the shooting range could be better used for this purpose, but that suggestion was greeted with horror!

Finally and grudgingly, I was given permission to set up a gym in the basement of Canon Row Police Station.

Then came the problem of finding the cash to make alterations and buy the equipment. Denis Howell played the part of Fairy Godfather and somehow managed to come up with some money from his departmental budget.

The response at first was not encouraging, but I persevered.

So at long last we were up and running. Jack Weatherill gave us his full support, and it wasn't long before we had a membership of well over 200. I was really proud that at a very early stage, it became known as "Jim's Gym".

But now I doubt that I would recognize the place – its brochure boasts "an extensive range of fitness activities including a gym, exercise classes, saunas, steam room, therapies and refreshments". It even boasts a "nutritional therapist".

Jim Spicer
MP for West Dorset 1974 - 1997

AND SPEAKING OF NUTRITION...

A reminder of dining facilities for our members:

You can book:

- the **Adjournment Restaurant** in Portcullis House for Wednesday dinner and Thursday and Friday for lunch: telephone 020 7219 6470
- the **Strangers' Dining Room** on Thursday and Friday for lunch: telephone 020 7219 5343
- the **Churchill Room** on Thursday for lunch: telephone 020 7219 5337

AND

We are currently liaising with the Administration Committee to see if our members can use the **Terrace Pavilion** on less busy days. It offers a lunchtime "help yourself" buffet in the light and airy Pavilion in June and July only. We will keep you informed!



THE ADJOURNMENT



Former Editor and Founder of Order Order, **Joe Ashton** writes:

Welcome to Order Order's new feature. It's based on the chat in the tea room, in Annie's Bar and the Terrace, which so many of us miss, where old colleagues could recall long gone plots and whispers.

It's a chance to let our members have a say, a whinge, or a gripe or tell an old House joke, or perhaps a scandal.

There may be some time during the long winter nights, when our members would like to sound off about this government, or any other previous rotten government, instead of driving the wife mad by switching to every TV channel inside five minutes.

Surely, with our 300 old sweats from the back benches plus over 100 wise men and women from the despatch boxes, we can get someone to tell us how to make life easier.

We don't want to sound like Victor Meldrew and we don't want to play politics or come up with fantastic ideas on how to save the whale, but simply to tell a good yarn and a tall story such as the time our Select Committee went to Hollywood to investigate why Harry Potter films are cheaper over there than they are here, or why the Australian National Lottery is cheaper in Sydney than it is in Swansea .

And what happens to all that Lottery money which doesn't get claimed? Does the Chancellor keep it? Who knows? Why not ask him.

MPs love to talk (so do their wives) and we don't care if either of them sends in an idea, or a moan and groan.

Praise and grumble and send it to us, and we will put it in the Adjournment. And don't go easy on the nostalgia.

Here's one to set you off:

IT'S TIME FOR THE ENGLISH TO FIGHT BACK!



Didn't the Scots Nats do well in their May Election?

Labour, Liberal and Conservative were all virtually wiped off the ballot papers.

No wonder Alex Salmond has his own personal helicopter and chauffeur driven limousine, and will be telling Ireland and Iceland how they should be

It is like putting Glasgow Rangers and Celtic in the same league as Manchester United and Chelsea

running their business. And soon he will be challenged to demand a referendum on Scottish Independence.

Good!

Scotland now takes almost £23 billion from English tax payers to provide free prescriptions, free university tuition fees, and free social care for the elderly. It is estimated that every Scottish citizen receives £2,000 per year from the rest of the United Kingdom and around 60,000 Scottish jobs in their public sector depend on English handouts.

It's time the English fought back. Let's for one year give them nothing. Let's see if they can do better than Ireland and Iceland on their own.

What about the oil? Let them keep it.

It's running out fast and getting more and more difficult to pump out as the sea gets deeper and deeper.

Tell them we have no objection to a Glasgow/Dublin coalition, just like the Liberals and Conservatives in England. Then we can count how fast they would crash like Ireland and Iceland did.

Will that happen? Never! Do turkeys vote for Christmas or for Hogmanay? But let's call Mr. Salmond's bluff.

Cut their subsidies to the same levels as English welfare, public spending, education, and ignore the constant attitude of the Scots Nats with their short arms and long pockets.

Let both sides in England and Scotland have to take a passport check when they cross the border, and see how much that upsets the Scots when they need a passport to holiday in Blackpool.

Referendum? Where can the Scots go if they vote against England? It is like putting Glasgow Rangers and Celtic in the same league as Manchester United and Chelsea. They would be relegated after one season.

Mr Salmond, like many other leaders of a One Party State, would be rushing for his helicopter, with the rest of Scotland begging the Queen to bail them out.

The bagpipe army had better get ready for it.



PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMATS AND DEMOCRACY BUILDERS – CPA UK

By Rt Hon. **Sir Alan Haselhurst** MP
Conservative MP for Saffron Walden

In July 1911, parliamentarians from across the Empire gathered at the Houses of Parliament to discuss the challenges of parliamentary democracy and on the 18 July in Westminster Hall, the Empire Parliamentary Association was established. Just over 100 years later, on Monday 25 July 2011, the Houses of Parliament will again host a conference, this time the 57th annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) for some 650 delegates from across the Commonwealth.

All Commonwealth, and indeed, many other legislatures look to our Houses of Parliament for parliamentary exchanges, advice and support. Each Commonwealth parliamentarian considers him or herself to be a stakeholder in the Houses of Parliament, for in every Commonwealth legislature, parliamentary practice and procedures have their roots at Westminster. No longer though are exchanges a one-way street. Westminster continues to learn much from other Commonwealth parliaments and the special relationship between British and other Commonwealth parliamentarians is the very essence of parliamentary diplomacy.

CPA UK is funded by both Houses of Parliament and by international work. It runs annual international parliamentary outreach programmes which comprise parliamentary diplomacy

and parliamentary strengthening. Specialist conferences and seminars, country programmes and bilateral relations draw on Westminster's human resource of MPs, Clerks and officials. CPA UK works in partnership with the parliaments of emerging democracies, the FCO, DFID, the British Council and many other organizations.

The Houses of Parliament and CPA UK recognise that parliamentary strengthening and capacity-building is undertaken and received best by those who work in parliaments, and such programmes are the growth area of CPA UK's work which is not confined to Commonwealth legislatures. CPA UK has been visiting legislatures in Georgia, the Lebanon, Morocco, Oman and the Ukraine. We look forward to establishing more direct "MP2MP" dialogue and making better use of video conferencing.

We value greatly our relationships with, and the excellent advice we receive from the FCO, DFID and the British Council in Posts abroad. CPA UK seeks to work with Posts to strengthen relationships with host country parliaments, and to build sustainable parliamentary practice and procedures and good governance by enhancing inter-parliamentary relations.

Sir Alan is the Chair of CPA UK's Executive Committee. He is a former Deputy Speaker and is presently Chairman of the Commons Administration Committee.



A week is a long time in politics...

John Austin writes:

Since 2009, discussions had been taking place on proposals to coordinate the work of the House on international relations and give it "a more strategic focus".

Although some Members had reservations, negotiations were proceeding involving CPA, IPU and the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly which would have led to staff of all three bodies transferring to the House authorities.

It was intended that the new International Relations Directorate would be up and running by 1 April 2011 but all this has changed.

An invitation to join the IRD had been issued by The Speaker and The Lord Speaker. The BIPA agreed to the proposals and on the 15 February the Executive Committee of the CPA UK Branch recommended acceptance of the invitation, which had to be put to a General Meeting.

But on the 15 March the BGIPU rejected the Speakers' invitation and the following week, on the 23 March, a Special General Meeting of the CPA rejected the recommendation of its Executive.

So there is no International Relations Directorate, although the Speaker has now invited BGIPU, CPA UK and other international parliamentary bodies to put forward proposals to the Commission on how the benefits of greater coherence, effectiveness, value for money, and transparency might be achieved by other means.



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Roger Berry, MP for Kingswood 1992 – 2010

Being elected an MP is a major life-changing event. So is losing your seat in a general election.

My initial reaction was one of sorrow – because my party had been kicked out of office and I had just been sacked from a job I loved. In truth however, I was not greatly surprised by either. Kingswood has always been a marginal seat.

The downside was having to adjust to no longer exercising a direct impact on public policy. I had developed particular interests in disability rights, economic policy, arms export controls and international affairs and an important platform for pursuing these interests had been abruptly removed. I still very much miss being able to make a contribution from inside Parliament.

Having said that, there are significant upsides from ceasing to be an MP. There is the feeling of liberation that I can now speak and write about whatever I wish without having to consider what party managers might think. And I don't miss the endless (and, frequently, staggeringly irrelevant) texts from the Whips' Office, the unnecessary three-line whips and the painful inefficiency of late night votes.

I've always liked the idea of statutory services providing the cake, with voluntary organisations providing the icing.

My most common answer to the regular question, "And what are you doing now?" is to say that I've become a fully paid up member of the "Big Society". By that I don't mean that I support or, indeed, fully understand, the Prime Minister's flagship policy. What I mean is that I am spending most of my time doing unpaid jobs in the voluntary sector, mainly with disability organisations locally and nationally.

The "Big Society", or the "Good Society", as many of us used to call it, in which millions of people do voluntary work is about meeting need that is not met by the statutory services or the private sector. It has a long and honourable tradition.

Disability organisations for example provide employment support services and benefits advice with funding from central government - either because government does not have the necessary skills to do this essential work, or because they have chosen not to do so.

Most of us have always been active in voluntary work but when you are doing it virtually full-time, as I am now, you do learn rather more about the critical importance of the voluntary sector in delivering services, and the importance of government funding to do the job.

You also quickly realise why, at a time of unprecedented cuts in public spending, the government's idea of the "Big Society" is widely seen as cover for these deep cuts in public services. Indeed, Dame Elisabeth Hoodless, who has led Community Service Volunteers for 36 years, has said that the government's cuts are "destroying" the voluntary sector.

It's bad enough to drastically cut frontline services (for which the coalition parties have no mandate) but to tell the voluntary sector that it has to take up the slack is causing real anger and anxiety.

Indeed, the voluntary sector is being hit by a double-whammy at the moment – a significant increase in demand for its services as a result of public service cuts and rising unemployment and, at the same time, a drastic cut in its funding.

Where the line should be drawn between the responsibilities of the state and the role of voluntary organisations has been a matter of heated debate since the foundation of the welfare state. And it is an issue that is red hot again. For myself, I've always liked the idea of statutory services providing the cake, with voluntary organisations providing the icing.

The debate about the "Big Society" has enormous implications for millions of people, be they volunteers or the users of services provided by the voluntary sector. And you don't have to be in Parliament to engage in it.

PROFILE

ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE OFFICER SALLY GROCOTT

Keith Mans writes: We felt it was time that members learned a bit more about the person behind the running of our Association, our one-man band, Sally Grocott.

Sally volunteered from our start in 2001, helping Joe Ashton get the Association off the ground, offering her many years administrative experience and expertise for free. Undoubtedly it is down to Joe and Sally jointly that the Association exists at all. Both admit that without the other it would have been pretty impossible, but now ten years later, it is an undoubted success with over 420 members.



Sally and Association Founder Joe Ashton

Sally knew about setting up an organization from scratch. She and her good friend Val Corbett had founded what Sally called "Spouse in the House" a social club for the partners of Labour MPs which was a great success, with Cherie Blair and then Sarah Brown as Patron. It provided opportunities for wives/partners of MPs to get to know others, share problems, and most importantly she says, to have some fun. When their respective husbands moved from the Lower to the Upper House, she resisted the temptation to change the name to "Broads in the Lords", particularly as the Club did have a few brave male members!



Sally studied social science and politics at Leicester University in the 1960s. She worked as a social worker in Birmingham but gave up full-time employment when her first son was born, then working part-time as a lecturer. When her husband Bruce was first elected to Parliament in 1974 she had the opportunity of bringing all her skills together, running his office. She was proficient in shorthand and typing, so that together with her social work skills and her deep interest in politics, meant she was ideally qualified to work as his parliamentary assistant. Bruce said at the time it had the undoubted advantage that he could safely sleep with his secretary.

When Bruce lost the election in 1979 Sally became Clerk to a Parish Council for a number of years, leaving to work for him again when he was returned to parliament in 1987. He was appointed to the Lords in 2001 and Sally says she was delighted when his successor David Wright asked her to run his Westminster office which she has done ever since.

Sally said, "I have been very lucky to have worked for two thoroughly principled Members of Parliament and I get so angry when politicians as a group are traduced in the media. In my experience MPs of all parties are honourable men and women, working extremely hard on behalf of their constituents. There has been widespread

misinformation in the press and people need to know much more about the job of an MP.

I am proud to work for the Association and contribute to more general public awareness of the worth of our political system and our politicians".

The Association's funds are very limited. We rely on membership subscriptions and a very small grant from the House of Commons Commission, so we are only able to offer a small honorarium to Sally, which in no way reflects the number of hours she puts in on our behalf.

She says that when the Association was first set up it soon became apparent that many other democracies throughout the world had long established Former Member organisations, properly resourced and supported, who were very surprised to find that the Westminster Parliament had only just set one up. Sally says, "although we have come a long way since 2001, there could and should be more support on offer from the House authorities in recognition of the tremendous help and expertise available from former MPs in the promotion of democracy generally, and the promotion of politicians and politics as being a very honourable profession".



BROWNGATE: THE GATECRASHING OF NUMBER 10

By **David Atkinson**, Member for Bournemouth East 1977- 2005

The Association's reception at Number 10, hosted by Sarah Brown in November 2009, was hugely enjoyable for all of us who attended. After her words of welcome I gave her a letter telling her that I had in fact been in the same room exactly a week before, enjoying similar hospitality...

I should not have been. Everyone present was a government minister, except myself and the Speaker. Thus, I was the only Tory present! How could this have happened?

We had been alerted to the Association's reception many months before and the date duly went into my diary. The invitation arrived and so did I, at the gates of Downing Street, 15 minutes early. I showed it to the bobby together with my ex-MP's pass, was screened through security and told to knock on the door across the way as I was expected.

I was directed down the corridor of No 10, up the stairs and found my way into the state reception room. I was the first to arrive. I took a glass of wine from the tray and awaited my colleagues.

Of course I recognised them as they came in. Several recognised me and we got chatting. It was only after a while that I realised none of them were ex-MPs, but serving members and ministers to boot. I was bemused, but carried on enjoying myself. After all, they seemed pleased to see me.

Then, behind me, I heard "Order Order" and on turning round saw the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, with Sarah beside him. He thanked us for the valuable job we were doing during these difficult times, and then shared an exclusive preview of the contents of the Queen's Speech – the last before a general election - to be delivered by Her Majesty the following day. "We have wrong footed the Tories, and we will win the election", he said to loud applause.



*I was the only Tory present!
How could this have happened?*

By now I had realised with increasing discomfort that this was the Prime Minister's traditional Eve of State Opening reception for his ministers, AT WHICH I WAS THE ONLY CONSERVATIVE PRESENT. When chatting and drinking resumed, I was approached by the familiar face of Angela Smith MP, whose constituency



of Basildon I had fought in 1974. "What are you doing here?" she asked. I showed her my invitation card from Sarah. "David", she said, "that's for NEXT TUESDAY." We both fell about laughing, but soon after I fled, thinking my luck was unlikely to last much longer.

As I walked away down Whitehall I thought about what had happened. It could be very embarrassing to Gordon and Sarah if it were to be reported in the media, particularly as the White House had also been gatecrashed by uninvited guests earlier that month. More seriously, it would demonstrate a serious lapse in security at the heart of British Government which was in no-one's interests.

So I decided to write a private letter to give to Sarah the following week. When I told her what was in it, she

said "Oh, you're the one!" clearly having heard about my intrusion the week before. It was more than six weeks later that I received a reply to my letter. Perhaps it was felt prudent to see whether any reference to the event would appear in the media. In her reply, Sarah said, "With regard to the episode, I am pleased you saw the amusing side, but I will ask the Political Secretary here to look into matters further".

All this happened nearly two years ago and the personnel at Number 10 have of course moved on. However, in 1994 having been the subject of every headline dubbed "BLAIRGATE" because my then assistant had been found in the parliamentary office of the Leader of the Opposition, I cannot help but feel that if I had run to the press with my story nearly fifteen years later, the headline would have been "BROWNGATE"!



Smoking Can Damage Your Health and Sex Life

By Syd Rapson

Many years ago when I was employed for a living I had a friend who was only just craftier than me in avoiding "real work".

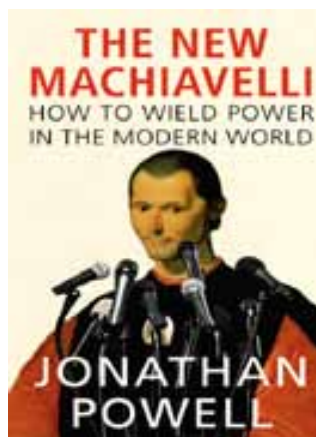
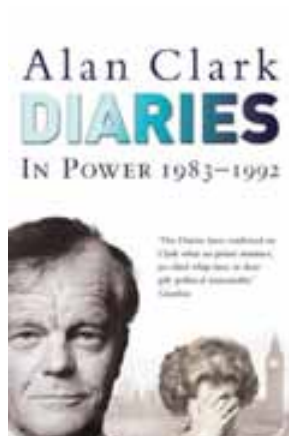
One of the things we did was to drain aviation fuel from aircraft into drums for re-use. My friend had to get rid of about a bucket full at the end of the day but there were no empty drums left. He also had a regular habit of spending half hour each morning in the toilet studying the Daily Mirror and enjoying a smoke at the same time. He was a creature of habit and always carried out the same ritual of dropping his pants, sitting down, lighting up his cigarette and throwing away the lighted match between his legs into the toilet bowl.

The day after he found that there were no empty fuel drums the toilet exploded with an enormous bang and my friend staggered out, shaken but not seriously injured. Apparently he had poured the contents of the last bucket of high octane aircraft fuel down into his regular toilet facility the night before, and flushed it away, so he thought. The fumes had built up and eagerly awaited ignition by the discarded match. Luckily for my friend he had changed the habit of a lifetime and had lit up his cigarette before sitting down and igniting the fumes causing the explosion.

We both dreaded to think what would have happened if he had sat down first - roast beef and two veg I think.

Yes smoking can damage your health and on this occasion would have caused real problems with his sex life too.

It goes without saying that we never disposed of fuel down the toilet again.



Which of the New Labour memoirs will still be read 25 years from now?

Chris Mullin offers his thoughts

There are two basic types of political memoirs. Those written by politicians who have occupied the Olympian heights and those produced by inhabitants of the foothills. It is the latter that tend to endure.

Why? Because they are more likely to be irreverent and colourful and less likely to be preoccupied with self-justification.

Think Chips Channon, Jock Colville, Alan Clark. All well down the political pecking order and yet all of whose works have outlived those of their more senior contemporaries.

Chips Channon's political career peaked at parliamentary private secretary to the *deputy* foreign secretary – for just one year. His secret was that he had married a Guinness and entertained on an awesome scale. The King comes to dinner, in the middle of the abdication crisis. Every one who mattered gathered at his dinner table.

Jock Colville was private secretary to Chamberlain, Churchill and Attlee. His diaries are a far more entertaining and reliable account of the management of the war than the works of his master. What strikes one reading his diaries is how much less frenetic – even in the midst of a world war – government was in those days. His entry for May 7, 1940, the day of the Norway debate which brought down the Chamberlain government, begins: "Rode at Richmond before breakfast under cloudless skies..."

The diaries of Alan Clark, never a politically significant figure, have probably outsold everyone. "Malicious, lecherous, self-pitying and enormous fun," was the verdict of one of his fellow Tory MPs. His account of the fall of Thatcher is classic.

Which of the New Labour memoirs will endure? The Blair memoirs, certainly. Anyone who has been prime minister can reasonably expect that his version of events will be dipped

Anyone who has been prime minister can reasonably expect that his version of events will be dipped into by students of the new Labour era

into by students of the new Labour era. Likewise Alastair Campbell's diaries, the unexpurgated version of which is currently being published in four huge volumes. Fluent, honest and reliable though they are, the Campbell diaries are an exhausting read, reflecting the frenetic nature of 20th and 21st century government. They will not be read for fun, but they will be rich source material for future generations of historians.

For my money, however, the most entertaining and insightful memoir from inside the new Labour court is Jonathan Powell's "The new Machiavelli." The reader of this elegant little work will learn more from this than he will from many weightier volumes, including that of the Prince himself. Powell was one of the most discreet of the Blair courtiers. What's more, almost uniquely, he survived from the first moment to the last.

Although the author denies this is a memoir that is exactly what it is, albeit cleverly organised around a dozen of Machiavelli's choicest epigrams. Most notable is a fascinating chapter ("Of those who by Their Crimes Come to be Princes") describing in glorious detail the fraught relationship between Blair and Brown.

As he makes clear from the outset, Powell's purpose is not to feed the cynicism all too prevalent in the modern world. However, he says, "it is important that idealistic and optimistic people who come to office understand the reality of how power can be wielded effectively." Amen to that.

The third and final volume of Chris Mullin's diaries, "A Walk-On Part", will be published in September.



A PASSING TALE

There has recently been a spate of FOI requests, mainly one suspects from sections of the press, seeking information on former MPs with a security pass.

Cynics would say this is solely an attempt to further discredit politicians by suggesting that passes are being abused by ex MPs working as lobbyists. If so, the exercise has failed.

Any former MP found to be in contravention of the regulations would have his/her pass removed immediately. To my knowledge this has happened just once, a few years ago, well before the media coverage on MPs' expenses, and he was not a member of the Association. Indeed there are honourable members who refuse to apply for a pass because they feel there might be a conflict of interest.

But on the subject, I was asked about the history of former MPs' passes. The Serjeant at Arms Office found the answer via the Journal Office.

On the 16 July 1991, twenty years ago, the then Services Committee decided that former members with at least 15 years' service, should be allowed to apply for photo-passes. Minutes of Proceedings of the Select Committee say:

"Mr Stanley Orme reported the following Resolution from a joint meeting of the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee and the Catering Sub-Committee:

"That former Members of this House with a total of fifteen years' service and in receipt of a Parliamentary pension, be allowed to apply for a photo-identity pass formalizing their right of access to the Members' Lobby and giving them the privilege, as "Special Guests" of using the Strangers' Bar and cafeteria facilities to be determined by the Catering Sub-Committee, or by any successor body appointed in its place".

It was ten years later, in 2001, that the Association was founded, due to the energy and enthusiasm of Joe Ashton and with the enormous help of Speaker Michael Martin. As Joe reported then, although he was eligible for a security pass, he had only got to know about it by accident, the parliamentary authorities showing a marked reluctance to advertise its existence.

So one of the Association's first campaigns was to argue that ALL former MPs should be entitled to access parliament, and not have to queue outside. We made strong representations to the then Administration Committee chaired by Marion Roe. We persuaded them to reduce the qualifying period to 8 years, which more often than not would have meant that an MP had served two terms, fixed five year parliaments then not an issue for debate!

This was a step forward, but we still felt

that ALL former MPs should be treated equally. With the agreement of Michael Martin, the concession was eventually offered to every former MP, the only exception being any MP who had voluntarily stood down after one term:

"Former Members of Parliament who have served more than one full parliamentary term, and those who have served one full parliamentary term and have been defeated at a general election".

We also strongly argued that former MPs should not be called "Special Guests". They are rightly proud to be former Members of Parliament. The pass now says "Ex Member" which is a definite improvement, but most would prefer "Former Member".

And of course contrary to press reports, it is not the Association that gives out passes as part of membership. Any former MP, member or non-member of the Association, can apply to the parliamentary authorities. But we like to remind former MPs who have not joined that they only enjoy this privilege because of the work of the Association!

And contrary to the fears expressed at the time by some MPs and officers, parliament has not been swamped by former MPs. Although for some reason, never properly explained, the right of access to Members' Lobby was at some point withdrawn.

Sally Grocott
Executive Officer of the Association

Special half price offer open to all members of the Association of Former Members of Parliament



Buy an annual subscription for **only £97.50** (RRP £195)

To take up this exclusive offer, please call Sarah Kinnane on **020 7091 7682**



DATE OF NEXT ALL MEMBER MEETING:

5TH JULY 2011, 4PM
COMMITTEE ROOM 10

SPEAKER:
RT HON SIR ALAN HASELHURST MP

(PARTNERS ALWAYS WELCOME)

*****STOP PRESS*****

We are delighted to announce that Sir John Major has agreed to address our Winter All Member Meeting to be held on Monday the 14th November at 4pm in Committee Room 10.

Full details will be in the October edition of Order Order.

House of Commons calendar May 2011 – January 2012

MAY 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

JUNE 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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JULY 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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31						

AUGUST 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

SEPTEMBER 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

OCTOBER 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

NOVEMBER 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

DECEMBER 2011						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JANUARY 2012						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SITTING TIMES

MON	2.30 – 10pm
TUE	2.30 – 10pm
WED	11.30am – 7pm
THU	10.30am – 6pm
FRI	9.30am – 2.30pm

Normally followed by half hour adjournment debate.

The dates of periodic adjournments are normally decided by the House on the basis of a motion tabled by the Leader of the House.

Please note that all dates are provisional and are subject to the progress of the business.