



Order, Order!

The Newsletter of the Association of Former Members of Parliament

Winter 2009

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE NEW SPEAKER, JOHN BERCOW, HAS AGREED TO BECOME OUR PATRON.

John very generously hosted our annual reception in Speaker's House within days of taking office and was warmly received by all our Former Members.

We look forward to working in harmony and receiving the good advice and support which we enjoyed from the previous Speaker, Michael Martin.



THE INSIDE STORY OF THE SCOOP WHICH CHANGED THE FACE OF BRITISH POLITICS – BY THE TEAM WHO BOUGHT IT

INSIDE

- THE MOLE WHO UNEARTHED OUR MPS'
- BLUNKETT'S DOG OPENED PARLIAMENT

- SECRETARY WIVES WORK ON SUNDAYS
- ELIZABETH PEACOCK Yorkshire's Worshipful Second Lady Woolperson
- ALBERT MCQUARRIE Last Conservative in Scotland

- THE LEAVERS LIST IN FULL
- OBITUARY Lord Peter Blaker
- BLITZ ANNIVERSARY: GERMANS BOMBED OUR CHIPSHOP!

REVIEW

No Expenses Spared

by Robert Winnett and Gordon Rayner

Bantam Press, 368pp, £16.99

It is difficult to know if this book relates to the expenses of MPs, or the amount of money the Daily Telegraph and other newspapers spent to pay towards a demand for £300,000 bounty money, plus the cost of employing an army of journalists on overtime, to hunt down every MP who ever bought a lavatory seat from John Lewis.

All the information listed on a computer disc which had a staggering, unbelievable 1700 pages of items for every single MP. Alas, there is no mention anywhere of the very near 400 sitting MPs who were given a clean slate for impeccably honesty, but who might yet be mowed down at midnight on polling day in May.

PETER AND GARY

The story begins when two soldiers called Pete and Gary, (names changed to protect the whistleblowers), were moonlighting on their leave from Basra.

They had been hired as contractors by the Stationary Office, who unbelievably, did not insist this on information, trivial or not, being covered by the Official Secrets Act.

Pete and Gary said they needed the money to buy American army boots at £125 a pair and better bulletproof vests costing \$500 to \$700 because the British army kit was rubbish. OK for Belfast, but not Basra.

Well it always has been.

Fifty years ago when I was an RAF bomb loader at Suez, we complained too.

COCK UP

Anyway, on their first day Pete and Gary were told they would not be supervising government reports or discs but would, with another group of temps and casuals, be checking ONE AND A HALF MILLION individual receipts going back four years, listing every penny paid to every MP.

Including sensitive information, such as MPs bank account numbers, mortgages, payments to staff, second home addresses, mileage claims etc. And all items which were supposed to be blanked out before the documents were made public.

But somewhere along the line, the contractors chosen by the Stationary Office cocked it up and all was revealed, or perhaps stolen.

REFUSED

For the past eight years, our Association has been imploring the Fees Office and Post Office to please, please let us have the names and addresses of retired MPs (some of whom are perhaps in financial difficulties). But we were always adamantly refused because these departments hide behind the data Protection Act, and rigidly enforce it.

Pete and Gary were very angry. So were the other moonlighters, especially when they saw the John Lewis prices for large screen televisions.

Somehow the anger and fury of the contracted staff spread and festered over several months until as always, a "mole" burrowed its way out and spread the secrets to the papers. At a price of course, but rather like the Scarlet Pimpernel, delivered with honour and integrity.

MOLE

Eventually the mole turned out to be a lifelong Conservative supporter from Worthing, who was a former officer in the SAS, and who had the scruples to insist that he would sell the details at a price, originally of £300,000 which the Times refused to pay, much to their credit.

But he did insist that ALL the MPs details of every party must be revealed, and he would not allow the "cherry picking" of any single party or person.

Also he wanted protection from any legal action.

BOMBSHELL

Mr. Robert Winnett who wrote this book and furnished all the information is the Daily Telegraph's deputy political editor who agreed on behalf of his newspaper to accept these rules, although at a much smaller price, and the first four MPs were targeted.

Elizabeth Peacock, Second Lady Master of the Woolmen

ELIZABETH PEACOCK, the vice chairman of our association, and the former Member of Parliament for Batley and Spen, has been installed as Master of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen at a service at St Michael's, Cornhill, in the City of London with a celebration at a dinner in Carpenters Hall.

The ancient Livery Company, the Worshipful Company of Woolmen, can trace its history back to 1180 and can justifiably claim to have been the power behind the development of the nation's wool history from the 12th international wool trade.

The Livery, through its educational support for students and charitable efforts, continues to support the development and sustainability of the industry.

Elizabeth Peacock said: "It is a great honour and privilege to be the second Lady Master of the Woolmen in almost 900 years, following in the footsteps of HRH The Princess Royal who was the very first Lady Master in 1994.

"As I am a Yorkshire woman I have a clear understanding of the international importance of the industry and I see my year as Master of the Woolmen as an opportunity to continue my longstanding support and promotion of the wool industry."



Mr. Winnett and Gordon Rayner who wrote the book were not the first to break the news.

TELEGRAPH MARKET

On February 8 this year the first bombshell exploded when the Mail on Sunday published a story about Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, then two weeks later singled out Tony McNulty at the Department for Work and Pensions to be featured and fingered.

But the mole, as you would expect from an SAS officer, preferred to work with the Telegraph as a more fitting platform to market his treasure. The mole did have scruples too. He accepted that the Telegraph did not want "to pay money to criminals" but he would have to have protection

from legal action, and it would be madness not to have "any sort of insurance".

GARDEN GNOMES

The first four MPs targeted had track records totalling 6,933 pages of items and spread over four years. They covered one million lines of incomes, receipts, credit charges, bank statements, e-mails etc, all of which had to be checked, including garden gnomes and Peeping Tom items of ladies' underwear and soft porn videos for curious schoolboys.

In political terms it wasn't the Titanic. It was Hiroshima and Nagasaki all in one.

Pete and Gary's treasure trove of

devastation can't be counted until next May when it is highly probable that a large part of 400 MPs who had a clean sheet recorded will also perish in the aftermath of a General Election. Their researchers, secretaries, and their own families of sons and daughters will also be skinned at the count.

Gary and Peter will get some brownie points and any formal relationships there used to be between the Press Gallery and sitting MPs will now be shattered for a long time.

Political history is going to face its biggest change since 1945 and 'No Expenses Spared' will have a very relevant title in history.

Joe Ashton

MIND THE DOG – IT'S ON TV

ON November 18th, Parliament celebrated 20 years of live television in the House, somewhere between the end of the Miners' Strike and Mrs Thatcher's tears as she ended her career, leaving Downing Street.

* * * * *

Before that the opening of Parliament was always around Guy Fawkes Day when the only TV shots allowed were of Black Rod banging on the Commons door with his ringmaster mace as both front bench grandees gritted their teeth and smiles at each other while jostling to stay in front of the camera as they walked from the Commons to the Lords.

Amateurs, all of them.

* * * * *

The real Parliamentary pros were the handful of canny old lags who quickly fell into the Cabinet line-up and jumped the pecking order to grab hold of David Blunkett's dog.

Then we shouted loudly: "Mind the dog! Mind the dog please," just like the man who shouts "mind the door please" on the Tube. No TV producer in his right mind would miss out on a dog opening Parliament and Mr Blunkett and his then dog Lucy certainly captured the animal lovers vote for all next year, with the gatecrashing backbenchers holding on to the dog's collar and beaming at the cameras.

* * * * *

Until it was televised, Parliament was only allowed still pictures on Tuesday's and Thursday's Question Time.

Safe from the cameras, on all other occasions, Dennis Skinner and his Bash Street gang from the Beano had a free run and inevitably Mrs Thatcher, the Iron Lady, was their target.

In her early years they had perfected the technique of sitting just below the gangway and hurling abuse but not quite loud enough for her to make out what was being said.



"She does the work of two men," Dennis would proudly announce. "Laurel and Hardy!" And bewildered she would become confused as to what the laughter was all about and think it was something she had said.

On other fiendish occasions the usual suspects would simply turn round and loudly chatter to the bloke behind them about last night's football, rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb gossip, none of which was shown or broadcast by the static cameras due to the "wah, wah" noise of the members' ribaldry being jammed by the BBC.

It was cruel. Not as cruel as the Daily Mail and others in the Press Gallery were to Home Secretary Jacqui Smith and Speaker Michael Martin but enough to convince some Members of the House that showing all the moving pictures and words of the individual MP, who was speaking, was the only way to outlaw this pantomime.

The bigwigs at the table and the Speaker severely controlled the words but just carried on with the tradition of the jamming but without showing a moving picture of who was doing all the heckling and bringing the House down with Private Eye jokes but never once panned the camera for a re-run or sending the culprit off with a red card flourish.

Can you imagine the Match of the Day arena without a commentator and no explanation to the viewers of what it was all about?

* * * * *

Tony Blair then hit on the idea of all-women shortlists to encourage more TV viewers and a prettier, better looking Labour Party.

OBITUARY



PETER BLAKER

4th October 1922 to 5th July 2009

PETER Blaker was a regular attendee in the House of Lords from the

day he was made a Peer in 1994, until he died.

By then he had left a full, eventful and successful career, first as a distinguished diplomat than as a stout defender of all things threatening his constituency in Blackpool.

Peter was a true supporter of the foreign policy of Margaret Thatcher. His career began in Hong Kong where his father rose to become chairman of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the South China Morning Post and the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce.

From this fortunate start, Peter was to go on to the Toronto University where he gained a First in Classics.

He joined up in 1942 and was badly wounded in 1944 during the invasion of Europe. His family had been interned in Honk Kong by the Japanese.

After the war, he went to New Collage Oxford and gained a degree in PPE and a first class degree in jurist prudence. It was there he formed a friendship with fellow student Tony Benn which lasted to the end.

He qualified as a solicitor and was called to the bar at Lincolns Inn. In 1953 he joined the Foreign Office and married Jennifer, daughter of Sir Pierson-Dixon, and began a career as one of the best informed politicians in both the Commons and the Lords.

Chosen from more than 300 applications for his seat in Blackpool, he entered the Commons in 1964 and soon established a reputation as a friend of America and a trenchant critic of the Soviet Union.

When the regime in Russia collapsed, he said: "Communism in Russia was born without a mandate and lasted 74 years too long."

Peter was promoted to the Foreign Office by Ted Heath and was in at the birth of Zimbabwe and witnessed the signing of the Test Ban Treaty.

He supported Margaret Thatcher's ban on support for the Moscow Olympics and, under Lord Carrington, he stoutly condemned the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

When Peter died many expressions of regret came from his constituents in Blackpool, not least from his successor the Labour MP Gordon Marsden who paid tribute to his work for Blackpool and its holiday industry.

Peter leaves his wife Jennifer, one son and two daughters and a host of good friends in that Lords. He will be sadly missed.

Lord Ted Graham

But the Back Street boys still chortled away and the punters at home still didn't understand what was happening and vowed never to vote again.

Tony Blair next thought of having 100 assisted places for sweet charming Labour ladies to encourage a Parliamentary Pop Idols contest but even that didn't work.

The new women were smart enough to quickly realise that there are far more votes to be gained visiting nurseries or play centres than forever hanging around all day to catch the Speaker's eye to make a turgid speech about the Euro.

Even though Tony had smartly changed the hours of business to match the TV news programmes.

* * * * *

But now there is neither the spontaneous wit, poisoned arrows or plots from what used to be the best stage in the best theatre in London. The House badly needs a gale of fresh air. A new Coronation Street/Eastenders front bench soap would keep the viewers enthralled every day with real love 'em or hate 'em Harriet Harmans or Nick Cleggs.

How? By stopping the useless rhubarb and giving the cameras and microphones and producers the freedom to send out the BBC and put up the warts and all real

anger, frustration, treachery, blatant bullshine and honeyed deception which the viewers of 'Match of the Day', or a cliff hanging vote for 'Strictly Come Dancing' now enjoy.

* * * * *

Twenty years on it can easily be done. The Parliamentary Channel is a superbly assembled day to day record of the business but it has also become a terrific history channel too, using old newsreels and stories to bring back the nail-biting elections and characters we loved so well and the villains we hated.

Interviews after the uproar are nowhere near as riveting as a good old Thatcher v Skinner free-for-all used to be. But the channel is rarely highlighted or advertised, except perhaps on occasions in the Radio Times.

Millions of voters should not have to rely on perverse reports from sour Mr Quentin Letts of the Mail to tell them what the Prime Minister whispered or that it must be half term because the Liberal benches are empty.

Let us have full freedom with roaming cameras with full sound for the old dears sitting at home all day like me. Let the cameras and voice recorders zoom in the chamber as and when they like and let the viewers see what all the MPs see and hear too. *Joe Ashton*

POLITICALLY NAIVE

IT is obvious that Sir Christopher Kelly is a very nice man but unfortunately so politically naive and innocent, it is laughable.

He said: "The employment of relatives is a very unusual arrangement and something that looks extremely odd to the public."

Good God, Has he never been in a pub? Or a chip shop? Or on a farm? Or to a Basil Fawlty's hotel? Or any other small family business?

He does seem to come across as a civil servant encyclopaedia who knows everything about Parliament but literally nothing about politics and how MPs have to survive and win votes in their constituencies to keep their job.

* * * * *

Somebody should tell him that politics in the sticks is a seven days a week, 16 hours a day family business. For any MP to stay in office, he has got to carry on working from Thursday to Monday right around the clock, scratching up the votes and goodwill.

The family's help is absolutely essential.

Like the casualty ward in a hospital he has to serve all-comers at any time, every single voter demands instant attention.

And believe us Sir Christopher, there are a lot of them about.

Does Sir Christopher not realise that Parliament is about POLITICS?

Seriously, what the 200 family members on the payroll in various constituencies do on standby for 16 hours every day, seven days a week, quietly and without publicity is to generate the system's democracy and make it work.

Sir Christopher would do MPs a favour if, without publicity, he would make learning curve visits to certain marginal constituencies at the weekend and realise how many times the MP is stopped in the street, from constituents demanding action on their grievances.

Perhaps he could notice how many emergencies turn up every day from families stranded abroad without passports or domestic violence or racial conflicts or street crime or serious child abuse – all demanding the MP's intervention immediately because the Town Hall doors are closed and the DHSS locked up and the police don't want to know.

* * * * *

And all of this is likely to end in his family's tears after two hours of television when the count is made at midnight on Polling Day.

If Sir Christopher does not make himself aware of these genuine MPs' problems outside Westminster, then he is in for serious trouble.

FROM THE HOUSE MAGAZINE.... February 26th 1990

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH reports that MPs' secretaries are on the warpath again about pay and conditions. Furthermore they are very angry at

Members employing their wives to do the job. Like I do.

Actually job seekers regularly apply to be my secretary. First thing I ask them is "Where is Basset-law?" None of them ever knows. My missis not only knows where it is, she knows every street and damn

near everybody in it. Most of the time the voters say don't bother with him - just ring her it will get done

quicker. She not only knows all the Party members but all their grandkids names too, and is on standby from eight in the morning until eleven at

night. She even works Sunday mornings taking dictation (although she says she does not wear curlers in bed).

She has worked for me ever since she packed up her secretary's job at the Brightside Co-op Coal Dept. when I came here in 1968.

There was no secretarial allowance then. Or any other allowances either. She did the job the job for nowt. What am I supposed to do now? Put her out to grass?

Mind you, we do have a lightning strike once a week. Sometimes there is

even a lock out. With me, the boss, locked out. That is why the typing on this next bit is not very good.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Press Standards

Dear Editor,

The article "The Press Gallery Needs Standards Too" in the summer issue of Order Order! contrasted witty writing by The Guardian sketch writer Simon Hoggart with the humourless bigotry of his Daily Mail opposite number.

Earlier this year, I encountered Simon Hoggart in a real life coincidence that would have no credibility if used in a work of fiction.

He had written sarcastically about the title of my 1996 book "Seventeen Years in Obscurity: Memoirs from the Back Benches". Presumably the irony in the title had eluded him and one could only conclude that he had not even read the book's opening sentence – "The obscurity of the back benches is a favourite among clichés employed by political writers in general and by lobby correspondents in particular".

Three days later, I found myself sitting opposite him on a tube train. I introduced myself. We had an amicable conversation and parted on friendly terms. He mentioned our meeting in a subsequent column and even mentioned my more recent novel "Class and Consequence".

Speaking of which, I was irresistibly reminded of my invented tabloid muckraker, Len Lightteller, when listening to Joe Ashton's exchanges in July with Quentin Letts of the Daily Mail on the BBC Today programme.

There is, of course, nothing new about low press standards since Northcliffe introduced mass circulation papers in 1896 to provide pro-establishment reading for the working class people, then made literate by the 1870 and 1880 Education Acts.

Stanley Baldwin described newspaper proprietors as seeking "power without responsibility, the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages". Lord Beaverbrook stated that he only went into newspaper proprietorship to gain political power.

Half a century ago, the distinguished writer A.P. Herbert, who also served for 15 years as an independent MP, observed that some publications had ceased to be daily newspapers and become daily entertainers. Since then, some of them have lost even entertainment value, in a long slide to the level of a virus that poisons everything it touches.

David Watkins, former MP for Consett, Durham 1966-1983 (aged 84)

PLEASE PLEASE! E-MAIL ADDRESSES



A plea to our members that if you have an e-mail address and have not notified me of this, I would appreciate having the details.

With 340 members and limited funds, it is impossible to send postal mail-outs to all our members except occasionally on important topics. With an e-mail contact it is so easy to send out items of interest. It has also been put to me that members would welcome a copy of the agenda and minutes for our regular all-member meetings, which I will be happy to do by e-mail.

Please e-mail me grocotts@parliament.uk if you have not so far notified me of your e-mail address.

*Many thanks
Sally Grocott*

THANKS TO THE TEAM

The Association of Former Members would like to thank the team which produces "Order Order" three times a year.

They are:

Joe Ashton, Editor and Features

Sally Grocott, Co-ordination and Pictures

Alf Bates, Distribution

Dods, for circulating 1750 copies to all MPs, all Peers and our members

Lord Ted Graham, Obituaries

Nick Battley, Design and Printing

Kevin Meagher, Script, Subbing, and Research

Parliamentary Archives Department

"Order Order" is also sent out to members of the Press Gallery and many other departments of both Houses, as well as to Overseas Associations.

NOSTALGIA AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

Germans bombed our chipshop!



No more chips for hungry kids

On December 12 it will be 69 years since the German Luftwaffe bombed our chipshop.

Normally we wouldn't be laying a wreath until 2010, but at our age you never know how much longer you have got, and 2010 might be a bit risky.

So, before Liverpool, Manchester, Coventry, Birmingham and Glasgow etc etc announce their grief we will start celebrating our Sheffield Blitz now.

Chip shop bombing was certainly part of Hitler's cunning plan. Just about every other food was on ration except potatoes and fish. And the queues! At some shops you had to order three or four days in advance, just like getting a table at the Savoy, except all wrapped up in the Sheffield Star.

Hitler's cunning plan was the same for every city. First he would send 200 Junkers to wipe out the railways, main

roads and gasometers in towns where their factories made tanks, guns, battleships and Spitfires etc.

Then two days later launch another wave, this time to drop thousands of little incendiary bombs and burn down those roofs and terraced houses next to the shipyards or foundries where the workers lived.

During the war of course, every able-bodied man and woman had to register and get a ration book, until they proved they were not spivs, but were doing serious work to feed or entertain the workers.

Our chipshop was right next to the Foundry Working Mens' Club and about ten doors from our house and about 200 yards from the canal where they filmed the worldwide smash hit, "The Full Monty". True, all true.

You will notice that I did not mention Leeds in the heroic cities list because all Leeds made in the war was the WAAF's knickers and the other items from Montague Burton's, the tailors, for when the troops were demobbed



The Full Monty

and coming home. The Leeds textile industry was not on Hitler's hit list.

When the troops got demobbed they received a full outfit of clothes from a hat to their shoes in a bundle nicknamed "the Full Monty". It was a standing joke that the first thing the troops would do on arriving home after three years' stint in the desert or France was to peel off every item and chuck it down the stairs, then chase their wives or sweethearts.

The film actually grossed a breathtaking two hundred and seventy million dollars worldwide for admission charges only, not including television (well some old ladies saw it 20 or 30 times to bring back happy memories).

Anyway, in big city neighbourhoods there were always a few goodtime girls, but the tough Minister of War said all women with no kids had to work in factories or food industries, so quite a few "ladies of the night" moved into food, rather than fornication, and bought a chipshop. Which quite often was a better job than gold digging.

Sadly, many chipshops got bombed too.

It was then that after the first raid which took the roof off, some wit originally from Liverpool, would pile up some bricks and would chalk on the side: **"Thanks to Hitler, chips will be littler"**.

The next day, another wag would chalk, **"Thanks to**

Himmler, chips will be similar".

Then after the third bomb finally flattened the rubble, **"Thanks to Goering, gone back to whoring"**.

You don't see that on the History Channel 'World at War' programmes do you?

So the committee at the Foundry Working Mens' Club (which by an act of God still stands today) held an emergency meeting and decided it was daft to waste good ale at a time like this with houses burning all around, so they opened the bar and shouted "It's all free brothers!" and launched a party which the likes of Dad's Army never even dreamed of.

Gangs of brave mad fools ran into the blazing houses (including ours) staggering out with every wireless to the cheers of the crowd, because they were all on hire purchase from Banners, the local department store. The watching mob laughed while the records of who owned what went up in flames and smiled at the thought of getting a new council house which wasn't overrun with bugs, mice and crickets and everything else that comes out of a hot steel works, and outside lavatories which never worked in winter.

Sodom and Gomorrah? It was sod 'em all and a rampant display of Full Monty behaviour which a seven year-old lad like me should never have been allowed to see.

No wonder I have remembered every minute of it.

It was marvellous, the Blitz. School got bombed too and we had three months' holiday, roaming through the rubble and making the ARP men chase us over the walls, to say nothing of streets of broken lampposts, dead cats to swing, and roast your chestnuts anywhere on an open fire.

Eventually we just moved a bit further along the canal to, would you believe it, Chippingham Street.

There, inside a hundred yards, grew up, myself the MP for Bassetlaw, Jim Marshall, the sadly-missed MP for Leicester South, Alderman Dame Grace Tebbutt, the very first woman leader of any big city council, and Alderman Sir Ron Ironmonger.

Ron would work on permanent night shift at Metro Vickers, catch the tram home at 6am for a few hours sleep, then catch another tram to go and run the Town Hall and the huge city council from 3 until 5 in the afternoon, on nothing more than a toasted teacake.

Dad's Army? The BBC made it all up.

LIFE AFTER LOSING OR LEAVING

MANY of our members and readers will recall that following the 2005 election, we produced a report from the University of Leeds, led by Professor Kevin Theakston, entitled "Life after Losing or Leaving", based on the experiences of former Members of Parliament (some of which were dispiriting and grim).

Professor Theakston has now asked if our leaving MPs would help the University again in a similar survey for 2010 and we have agreed. It will soon be nine years since our Association was launched and we have acquired a large fund of knowledge and experience of how to work as a formidable ex-Parliamentary group.

We have over 340 members including 40 former Cabinet ministers, including Tony Blair, John Major, Boris Johnson, and two Speakers with 80 members in the House of Lords.

We have gained substantial extra benefits and influence on the appropriate House committees on Parliamentary Pensions, and the Members Fund.

We are solvent (just) and have a dedicated team of professional ex-MPs.

However, we can only get the chance of recruiting new members following a General Election.

We do urge all leaving Members to join our democratic association because you will find that following a General Election, most of your old colleagues and friends will be lost.

The Fees Office and the Post Office adamantly refuse to let retired members have addresses of their former colleagues and claim that to do this would be breaking the Data Protection Act.

We are therefore asking all our leaving colleagues from all parties to join us in a full and frank question and answer discussion on how to give up your Westminster office with dignity, how to gain a pass to continue your access to the premises and how pension problems can be resolved.

We will also be having our own Executive democratic election after the General Election.

* * * * *

So we are holding a reception for all retiring MPs on Monday 1st February in the Macmillan Room of Portcullis House from 5.30 to 7.30pm. Invitations will be sent out in the New Year.

Joe Ashton – Chairman

MEMBERS STANDING DOWN AT THE NEXT ELECTION

LABOUR:

Hillary Armstrong
John Austin
John Battle
Colin Burgon
Stephen Byers
Richard Caborn
Colin Challon
Ben Chapman
David Chaytor
Michael Clapham
Harry Cohen
Frank Cook
Jim Cousins
Ann Cryer
John Cummings
Claire Curtis-Thomas
Janet Dean
Jim Devine
Bill Etherington
Neil Gerrard
John Grogan
Doug Henderson
Keith Hill
Patricia Hewitt
Beverley Hughes
John Hutton
Brian Iddon
Adam Ingram

Lynne Jones
Martyn Jones
Ruth Kelly
Fraser Kemp
David Lepper
Ian McCartney
Rosemary McKenna
Andrew Mackinlay
Bob Marshall Andrews
Eric Martlew
Christine McCafferty
Alan Milburn
Margaret Moran
Elliot Morley
Kali Mountford
Chris Mullin
Doug Naysmith
Bill Olnor
Greg Pope
Bridget Prentice
John Prescott
Ken Purchase
John Reid
Martin Salter
Mohammed Sarwar
Clare Short
Alan Simpson
John Smith
Helen Southworth

Howard Stoate
Gavin Strang
David Taylor
Mark Todd
Paul Truswell
Des Turner
Kitty Usher
Rudi Vis
Betty Williams
Alan Williams
Tony Wright
Derek Wyatt

CONSERVATIVE:

Michael Ancram
Peter Atkinson
Tim Boswell
Angela Browning
John Butterfill
Derek Conway
David Curry
Christopher Fraser
Paul Goodman
John Greenway
Douglas Hogg
John Horam
Michael Howard
Michael Jack
Julie Kirkbride

Jacqui Lait
Michael Lord
Andrew Mackay
David Maclean
Humphrey Malins
Michael Mates
Malcolm Moss
Andrew Pelling
Michael Spicer
Anthony Steen
Ian Taylor
Peter Viggers
Ann Widdecombe
David Wilshire
Ann Winterton
Sir Nicholas Winterton

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT:

John Barrett
Colin Breed
Paul Keetch
Mark Oaten
Matthew Taylor
Phil Willis

OTHER:

Alex Salmond
Adam Price

This list is taken from a reputable website – ukpollingreport.co.uk – and is an independent survey. Labour MPs are 66 of the total, Conservative 28, Liberal Democrat six and Scottish Nationalists two. Six or seven on the list may have lost their seats due to boundary changes or reselection. They could be selected for another constituency becoming vacant at the last minute, or even stand as an Independent.



SIR Albert McQuarrie will be 92 on New Year's Day. He is as fit as a fiddle and looks 20 years younger but is probably our oldest member.

Sir Albert's secret is an exercise bike in his garage which he uses as a treadmill every day and a wee dram of Famous Grouse at night. Albert is a great friend of Michael Martin and would like us to convey his good wishes.

It's probable that Sir Albert McQuarrie Kt, born in Greenock in 1918, may well be the last Conservative MP who sat in the House for a Scottish seat.

Albert was educated at the Royal Collage of Science and Technology in Glasgow. When war broke out in 1939, he was one of the first to join up and served as an officer in the Royal Engineers until 1945.

He had a successful career with his family firm and played a prominent part in the Scottish and Conservative and Unionist Party.

He was elected to Parliament as the MP for Aberdeenshire East in 1979 and was the MP for Banff and Buchan from 1983 to 1987, when he lost the seat to the SNP and Alex Salmond.

* * * * *

Albert says: "In 1987 I was unfortunately defeated due to Maggie Thatcher introducing the Poll Tax. The Liberals voted with the SNP and the seat has been SNP ever since. The Conservatives were virtually wiped out in 1997. We lost all our seats and there has been little to help us back since then. We did not have a credible leader but the advent of Cameron has changed things dramatically now.

"I understand it was George Younger, the Secretary of State for Scotland, who recommended to Margaret

Albert's Secret

Thatcher that the Poll Tax should start in Scotland first. That, of course, gave our opponents an opportunity to shout: 'Can't pay, won't pay, don't pay'.

"I told Margaret Thatcher in 1985 that we would lose our seats but she said: 'Oh no Albert, that can't happen.'

"Well it did happen and 11 of us went out and in 1987 I lost the seat. Principally from areas like Moray and Nair. It was the Liberals who voted SNP and that removed me. The SNP could not have done it on its own."

"At one time Scottish members of the Westminster Parliament were quite a force. Today there is an absence of it. Why? There are virtually no Scottish Conservative MPs. We are hoping that the next election will produce a number of them. The strategy is to have a good candidate that people can believe in because people have become sick of politics.

"The advent of the Scottish Parliament has helped to some degree but it is not really a Parliament with real power.

"The in-fighting between the Scots and Westminster is sad for people who want to remain in the union. If Alex Salmond gets his referendum I am sure he would not get the result. I am all for a referendum but it should only be 'yes or no' with no sidetracking issues.

"The main point would be what kind of Army, Air Force and Navy are you going to have? Who would join it and finance them? Who would need borders and passports as we are an island and it would be impractical and not financially viable because the oil and gas would run out.

"The Westminster MP will be the most important person to look after the interests of constituents."

Sharp, clear and articulate as ever, Albert is a great Parliamentarian. His words of wisdom should be seriously regarded.

We wish him a Happy Birthday and Hogmanay!

For the inside track on the new Parliament



**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 **020 7091 7511**



10 Downing Street Reception

Many of our members and their partners enjoyed a splendid evening at 10 Downing Street on the evening of Tuesday the 24th November, admirably hosted by Sarah Brown, wife of the Prime Minister.

Unfortunately our deadline means we cannot cover this until our next edition in the New Year.

Our next All Member Meeting is on Thursday the 10th December at 4.00pm in Committee Room 10.

The Executive Committee will be meeting earlier at 2.00pm.



We wish all our 340 members a Happy Christmas and, fingers crossed, a Good New Year. Amazingly, we had less than 20 obituaries in 2009.