

CANDIDATES UNDER DIFFERENT PHASES.



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FURY AND CHAOS AS HUNDREDS MISS OUT ON VOTES!



Ross Parry Syndication/ Sheffield Star.

One might expect it in a banana republic but not in the land that gave us the Mother of All Parliaments.

And it happened on my doorstep!

Here we are, the missus and me, a couple of old pensioners living at 16 Ranmoor Park Road, Sheffield and just a few doors down at number 5, were literally hundreds of students in Mr Clegg's fan club causing total chaos and panic, all trying to turn in their X Factor and Pop Idol TV votes for Nick, (who walks on water), at our very own parish centre.

All locked out in pouring rain, with poor old pensioners and mothers with babies in arms, angrily waving their umbrellas, queuing two hours to cast their vote and not even taking a blind bit of notice of the huge 'VOTE LABOUR' placards in my front garden.

Although me and the old dutch didn't get soaked or pushed. We had seen it all before.

* * *

We first came across this whipped up evangelical student hysteria at the last General Election in 2005 when Tony Blair was the idol and Nicky wasn't even an MP in the House.

It was me who insisted to the Polling Clerk then that there should be two queues. One for the local residents and one for the students. And why not? We live here 52 weeks they don't.

The votes referee agreed and the students, most of whom never bother with things like poll cards or ID etc, but who are used to blagging their way in

and gate crashing any night time event, if it is free, were put in the long queue.

So, this time, we asked for postal votes. We have lived in this house for 36 years surrounded by a staunch family neighbourhood of Hallam Tories and MPs like John Osborne and Irvine Patnick. And why not?

Clause one of the Labour Party Rule Book distinctly says there is nowt too good for the working class.

36 years ago the student population in Sheffield was 9,000. Today it is well over 45,000 and we have local leader Nick Clegg to sweep up every street.

Most of the first year freshers are canvassed on their arrival and let their

names be listed for the Drama Society, Save the Whales, Global Warming, and while we are at it - why not put your name down for the Liberals? Students are even allowed to choose whether to vote at home or vote in their brand new spanking student village in Sheffield.

Does anybody ever check whether they vote twice? I doubt it.

And how do we know it was stage managed for the Liberals? Because exactly the same manoeuvre was taking place at Liverpool Wavertree, Brent Central North London, Warrington South, Sutton Coldfield, and Manchester Withington.

Shouldn't there be a call for a stewards enquiry?

AS FOR GOLDEN BALLS MR CLEGG the new David Beckham of politics, he scared Cameron and Brown witless.

Here is a guy on back bench wages who has only been in Parliament for five years who climbs up faster than Obama.

Suddenly the TV 'Strictly Come Dancing' team catapults him into the Deputy Prime Minister's job and inside five years he is knocking the croquet balls through the hoops at Dorneywood and Chevening, while it took over 30 years and 9 parliaments for poor John Prescott to open that door.

At the rate this guy Clegg is going he will have the Prime Minister's job sewn up by Christmas 2012.

He has already paid his debt to the previous Liberal Hallam MP by putting him into the Lords after the young guy had only served two parliaments. He gracefully stood down and gave up his plum seat for Nick.

Nick's constituency office is ten minutes walk from where I live yet never once, in five years, have I ever seen Mr Clegg either on the streets canvassing, living a normal life in a normal house, with his kids in local state schools and a wife searching for bargains in the local shops. Or even quaffing a pint in our excellent real ale pubs.

Yet, with the votes of the students (not counting those locked out in the pouring rain) he amassed the biggest turnout and majority of Liberal votes in the UK.

Ironically enough, all from the students in the newly built tower blocks of flats five minutes walk from the Polling Station, built as a students' village by the Labour Government – who paid for it too!

Not counting of course the concessions these students get. If they take the lock off their door they don't even have to pay television licences like many old age pensioners. They have a special 50p bus fare from the village, much cheaper than the normal fare, and very cheap beer in their bar subsidised because it pays no rent or other overheads. They get eighteen weeks of holiday every year and all of their life were hand fed by the Labour Chancellor and Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

But, as kids everywhere, they grab what is available and there is no such thing as gratitude for politics or parents.

* * *

ON THE NIGHT BEFORE POLLING, Mr Clegg and the Liberals held an open air rally in front of the Sheffield Town Hall and the City Hall and just under 1,000 fans, practically all students, turned up carrying banners.

I stood talking to a few of them, who were in ecstasy at this big occasion, which was of course free too. They were very polite but knew nothing about Sheffield and its Labour history.

"This is hardly worth calling it a demo." I told them. You should have been here when Arthur Scargill was on the platform and 18,000 miners and their brass bands and banners turned up.

They looked blank and then one young woman from down South politely asked, "Who was Arthur Scargill?"

Who knows! In 2050 their grand kids will probably be asking, "Who was Nick Clegg?"



It could still turn out that historians might find that Nick Clegg's ancestors were not as nice as he looks.

A local history tutor in Sheffield called David Price, has written an excellent book entitled 'Sheffield Troublemakers – Rebels and Radicals', which has a long and detailed history of the Clegg Clan.

Sir William Clegg 1852-1932, was the Leader of the Sheffield Liberals and, at the turn of the century, pursued a strong anti-Labour policy. In 1919, just after the First World War, he led the Liberal councillors into a coalition with the Conservatives (exactly as it is today) and together they formed a 'Citizens Party'.

However, as unemployment soared in the 1920s and the slums got worse, Labour became more and more popular.

In 1926 Sir William Clegg led the fight against trade unions and the General Strike.

Sadly for William, the Labour Party won the local elections to become the first Labour council of any big city in Britain.

The Liberal and Tory alliance was literally booted off the aldermanic bench and Labour ruled for the next 42 years, losing it for only one year when Harold Wilson made his 'Pound in your Pocket' speech.

Yet to this day, Labour has never won Hallam – Clegg's seat – and probably never will. But Labour has never lost any of the other four seats and probably never will either.

It's funny how history goes round in circles.

Joe Ashton

A Warm Welcome

On going to publication, membership of the Association is now 395, which we confidently expect to rise to well over 400.

Our current membership includes ex-Prime Ministers Tony Blair and John Major and former Speakers Betty Boothroyd and Michael Martin, and over 40 ex-cabinet ministers and over 80 members in the Lords.

There are now over 900 ex-MPs scattered everywhere across the UK. We cannot contact many of them because the Data Protection Act prevents the various departments of the House from passing on their addresses.

Consequently it is very difficult to keep track of MPs once they have left Parliament.

A reception was held in February to which all those MPs who had said they would be standing down at the General Election were invited to learn about membership of the Association. We are delighted to list below those who have already signed up and warmly welcome them to our ranks.

Apologies to anyone left out, but we will be printing a comprehensive membership list in our next edition of Order, Order!

We will be writing to all those who lost their seats at the election to invite them to join us.

Peter Atkinson	Jim Devine	Brian Iddon	John McFall	Don Touhig
John Austin	Bruce George	Adam Ingram	Rosemary McKenna	Kitty Ussher
John Battle	Neil Gerrard	Lynne Jones	Malcolm Moss	Peter Viggers
Liz Blackman	John Greenway	Robert Key	Kali Mountford	Alan Williams
Timothy Boswell	Mike Hall	Bob Laxton	Chris Mullin	Betty Williams
Colin Breed	Doug Henderson	David Lepper	Bill Oler	David Wilshire
John Butterfill	Keith Hill	Tom Levitt	John Prescott	Ann Winterton
Colin Challen	Douglas Hogg	Humphrey Malins	John Reid	Nicholas Winterton
Ben Chapman	David Howarth	Bob Marshall-Andrews	Anthony Steen	Derek Wyatt
Michael Clapham	Kim Howells	Eric Martlew	Howard Stoate	
David Curry	Beverley Hughes	Michael Mates	Ian Taylor	
Janet Dean	Joan Humble	Christine McCafferty	Paddy Tipping	



Eric Martlew

A special thank you to Eric who for seven years served as MP liaison on the Executive Committee and whose help and advice was invaluable.

A NOTE ABOUT THE PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTORY PENSION FUND

In the last parliament, one of the biggest issues our Association dealt with was the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund. We did not achieve all we wanted but we scored major successes. We persuaded the Leader of the House and the Trustees that the scheme should be adapted to reflect the obligations that parliament has imposed on schemes in the outside world, particularly with regard to the rights of retired members. Sir Graham Bright has done that job admirably on our behalf.

It is clear that the pensions scheme will still be a big part of our work in the new parliament. We knew that all the main parties felt the existing scheme was too generous and certainly the public thought so. But it was only in the dying days of the previous government that we got a glimpse of the future. The new Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, IPSA, is to be given control not only over members' expenses, but also over the pension scheme. We intend to ensure firstly that there is no threat to the accumulated benefits earned by retired members and secondly that retired members will in future play a full and equal role in the running of the scheme and in making any changes to it.

George Cunningham,
Executive Committee Member

THE CASE FOR WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT



Parliamentary reform is presently in vogue and rightly so to rebuild the confidence of electors in our democratic process following recent problems.

FIXED TERM PARLIAMENTS and a reduction in the number of members may well gather support in the near future.

In the last Edition our Chairman posed the question 'Should Women have half the seats in Parliament?' On this narrow proposal I could agree with the Chairman but would have added the words 'at least'.

Where I, and I believe most women politicians disagree, is the assertion that 'women are just too nice for politics, too honest, too gullible, too tea and sympathy and far too kind'. I managed for over 30 years in politics, with fourteen years in the House and confirm I subscribe to all the above! All this allied with the need for special privilege to enable us to make progress in a male dominated world! What an insult!

It is true that a case could be developed, and legislation introduced, to ensure that women filled half the seats at Westminster. Not such an outlandish proposal and something that could be achieved within a reform package if the women of Britain put their minds to the proposition. Initially the current male dominated regime would object and block such heresy, but we would win in the end!

However, would women really want such preference, privilege and legislative support?

I, for one, would not.

Women are quite capable of working and succeeding in the current male dominated political arena if we are given fair treatment and equal opportunity. Women will rise by merit not by special treatment.

Throughout my 14 years in the House, I never felt inhibited by men and was always treated as an equal.

In my view it is a bit of a myth that women are disadvantaged at Westminster, but it is true to say we need to stand up to men if they become overpowering. It's not difficult to use female logic to 'put them right'.

I have never believed in all women short lists to select parliamentary candidates because electors must have the best available representative, be they man or woman.

I do, however, agree there is some difficulty with the selection process in that there are often insufficient women interested and free to embark on a political career that will mean working away from home and family for a large part of any week. Women are, therefore, outnumbered by men at this first hurdle.

The second hurdle is equally troublesome in that the selection process at constituency level is often female dominated and for some reason women do not appear to want to select women candidates. We get too practical, too domesticated and ask 'what about your husband? What about the children?'

We genuinely need to get more interest in politics, not just at local level, but at national level also. It is not a party political issue and should be tackled at national level by positive government support with an on-going programme of communication and encouragement for women to serve in local politics and at Westminster. It is also important to encourage women in selection committees to select women candidates.

*Elizabeth J Peacock
Vice-Chairman*

OUR OTHER ELECTION

Under the terms of the Association's constitution, approved by the House of Commons Commission, elections to the Executive Committee are held after every General Election.

On the facing page is a self nomination form for the use of any member wishing to put himself/herself forward. A ballot paper with the names of the candidates will then be prepared and sent out to every member of the Association.

Members will be able to cast one vote for each of seven candidates on the list of nominations. The seven candidates with the greatest number of votes will form the Executive Committee. Those seven members will then co-opt a further six members from the

remaining candidates with the aim of ensuring that the committee is balanced as far as possible and includes:

- Both retired and defeated former MPs
- Members of the House of Lords
- Former MPs from all regions of the UK
- A balance of the political parties and both men and women
- Candidates with specialist experience

Two further places on the Executive should be filled by sitting MPs, nominated by the Whips' offices. These to act as liaison officers between the Association and MPs. The Executive Committee can also decide to co-opt an additional member to achieve balance.

The Executive meets every two months, usually on a Thursday afternoon at 2.00 pm. Basic travel expenses are paid for attendance at meetings. All Member Meetings are held three times a year on the same day as the Executive Committee, usually in Committee Room 10 at 4.00 p.m.

Please therefore do not put your name forward unless you can regularly attend meetings at the House.

Below are details of the present 14 strong Executive Committee who deserve our sincere thanks for their hard work and commitment over many years since our foundation in 2001. Each member takes on a specific portfolio.



Chairman
Joe Ashton OBE
Labour MP for Bassetlaw
1968-2001



Vice-Chairman
Rt Hon Lord Graham of Edmonton PC
Labour MP for Enfield and Edmonton 1974-1983



Vice-Chairman
Elizabeth Peacock JP DL
Conservative MP Batley & Spen
1983-1997



Treasurer
Sir Graham Bright
Conservative MP for Luton East
1979-1983 and Luton South
1983-1997



Membership Secretary
Sir James Spicer
Conservative MP for Dorset West
1974-1997