



Member
Alf Bates
Labour MP for Bebington & Ellesmere Port 1974-1979



Member
Cllr David Bellotti
Liberal Democrat MP for Eastbourne 1990-1992



Member
Maureen Colquhoun
Labour MP for Northampton North 1974-1979



Member
George Cunningham
Labour/SDP MP for Islington S.W. 1970-1974 and Islington S and Finsbury 1974-1983



Member
Gwilym Jones
Conservative MP for Cardiff North 1983-1997



Member
Professor Eric Moonman OBE
Labour MP for Billericay 1966-1970 and Basildon 1974-1979



Member
Ernie Ross
Labour MP for Dundee West 1979-2005



Member
Richard Tracey JP AM
Conservative MP for Surbiton 1983-1997



Member
Bowen Wells
Conservative MP for Hertford & Stevenage 1979-1983 and Hertford & Bishops Stortford 1983-1997

Nomination form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number/E-Mail: _____

Constituency and Dates Served: _____

Party: _____

Details of relevant experience in no more than 50 words:

Please return by the 31st July 2010 to: Sally Grocott, Executive Officer, Association of Former MPs, Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, House of Commons, London SW1A 2NE.

NOSTALGIA AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

MAIDEN SPEECH? FAKE IT!!

Even 20 years ago, the only training apprenticeship for a newly arrived MP was when his allocated Whip guided him into the Chamber and said, "Sit next to Albert (or Jeremy, if he was a Tory). He's been here 30 years and he will put you right as to what is happening.

AND THAT WAS IT! Of course, all rookies were herded ten to a small room sharing desks and paying for their telephone calls as they used it.

Now all new MPs are bombarded with 80 page pamphlets on, "A Members Guide to Parliament", or 30 pages of a "Survival Guide", the essential information for new MPs.

It is no different from buying a new car with the salesman pushing the manual onto to the driver and showing him how the air conditioning works.

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There are chapters on "How to work for your constituents, How to be a good select committee member, How to speak in the chamber and how to deal with the Press and climb up the greasy media pole.

There is even sincere advice from the House Sage, Sir Patrick Cormack, on how to build cross-party friendships (probably by inviting new splendid fellows to lunch at the posh Tate Gallery) and probably, exactly like the first day when I arrived in 1968 and the first two questions always asked were "Where is the lav, and when do we get paid?"

* * *

SADLY, ONLY OLD LAGS who have ever been in both opposition or government parliaments know what it is really like. And only about six of them, such as Austin Mitchell, Edwina Currie, Gerald Kaufman, Roy Hattersley, Chris Mullin ever had the chutzpah to tell the truth, about the best job, on the best stage, in the best theatre, in London.

It is the Ladder or the Limelight on the greasy pole in the Palace of Varieties where suicides and divorce, family, jobs, free travel, free dinners and the narcotic of fame is better than working 9 till 5 any day.

But rookies don't really need 'L' plates for new MPs and pamphlets on how to reverse their principles. They soon learn that the first thing to study is how to do a little side step while smiling and waving to the constituents and whips.

* * *

Lesson 1. The Speaker will usually allow only about four maiden speeches from new MPs every sitting day. This means it could be next Whitsuntide before some poor saps get called. Their local party will be very annoyed that their new MP has come last in the pecking order.



The trick is to write the speech out, send it to the local paper when there is a mass murder big news story on, then swear blind you stood up and delivered it a month ago. Nobody will bother to read the Hansard. Not even the local rag. A friendly whip will easily turn one up for you in a Hansard of last year and all you have to do is swap the names of your own local village and school etc and fall into the routine.

* * *

Lesson 2: Never let anybody know where your house is in the constituency (or better still out of it) or your telephone number. Nutcases (and every constituency has hundreds) will think nothing of coming straight up your path to bang on your front door at midnight because they have left one of the kids and all the luggage in Benidorm.

Or their Kevin has been arrested for borrowing a car and hitting a crowded bus shelter and the MP is needed right now to bail him out.

* * *

Lesson 3: Forget the new rules about travelling second class on the train. If you do make a train journey there are bound to be a load of nutters or football fans on it who will plague you for every single minute of the journey to London demanding all the nudge, nudge, wink gossip and more money for the old age pensioners.

Instead, go to work on the national bus service to Victoria Station, none of the passengers can speak a word of English and it is cheaper too.

Do not go into constituency pubs, it will cost you a fortune. At least three pints for every vote they gave you, and some of them even ordering champagne at the bar from the

barmaid and saying that the MP will pay the 'tab'.

Politely, very politely, send kindly apologies from day one to any invitation to a Muslim wedding or any other wedding. Every one of these will take up six hours of your time every Saturday afternoon of the year and their voters will be grossly offended because you went to all the others and not theirs. And always, every single bride will have 250 relatives who will never vote for you get the brides name wrong.

Even if you move the earth to do a favour for a middle class family who want their kid in a better school, they will still cover their car with Liberal stickers when polling day comes. There is no such thing as gratitude from the public.

* * *

TREAD CAREFULLY WITH THE FREEBIES. It can be tricky. When you wangle your way to travel on a select committee jaunt, all round the world, looking how various lotteries in Las Vegas or Sydney or Tokyo have been fiddled, nobody will ever accept that this is part of your job. (Even if you do tip them off that higher numbers win bigger prizes because birthday numbers stop at 31). The others go on until 40.

Tell them when you get home that you have brought back promises to build ten casinos in downtown Blackpool which will provide marvellous jobs for the unemployed and fill the empty boarding houses. Then when it never happens, blame the Home Secretary and say he wouldn't give the planning permission.

* * *

AND IF YOU ARE EVER INVITED to Hollywood, take it. You will be

going on a fact finding mission to find out why there is no cinema in Little Twittering in your remote rural constituency forcing the kids to wait a year for the new Harry Potter to come out on DVD, and are consequently seriously deprived of their heritage.

Your constituents will wholeheartedly agree but the local papers will not until you tell them how much new advertising it will bring in.

* * *

WHAT ARE YOUR PROSPECTS of becoming a cabinet minister? About as much chance as Blackpool getting to play in the Premier League. It happens once every 39 years.

But when and if it does, say you fixed it with Peter Mandelson but you have sworn not to reveal how.

* * *

SO. BE A REBEL INSTEAD. Stick two fingers up to the whips and the front bench and vote against your own side if necessary at every opportunity.

The whips will soon buy you off by making you the Junior Minister in charge of Commonwealth Bananas in the Carribean with a pay rise, a chauffer driven car and free flights anywhere, to all the 427 conferences in the World Cup, Olympic Games, Save the Planet, and the Railways of India.

Finally, always remember the old soldier's motto of "Nil Carborundem". Never let the whips grind you down. Especially if you know where the whips have buried their own lurid skeletons in years gone by.

You too could be Big Ben's only honest honourable member!

Best of luck you could go a long way.

Joe Ashton

OBITUARY by Eric Moonman



ALBERT BOOTH

28 May 1928 to 6 February 2010

MP for Barrow-in-Furness

Albert Booth was a most modest and unassuming Cabinet minister, a steadfast left-winger who nevertheless faithfully backed and implemented the Callaghan Labour Government's controversial wage restraint policies.

In government, he became Secretary of State for Employment in 1976 taking over from Michael Foot. Albert was identified with the left of the party but he was not a dogmatic or leading member of the left-wing Tribune group. It would be fair to say that he owed his subsequent ministerial career to the influential friendships he had made on the left – notably with Michael Foot.

After Labour's 1979 General Election defeat, Albert became the opposition spokesman on transport. After losing his

seat in 1983, he was appointed as director, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and later became Hounslow council's public transport officer.

Albert maintained his political ambitions. In 1983 he stood for the post of Labour Party Treasurer which carried with it a seat on Labour's national executive committee. In 1987 he made an attempt to return to parliament as Labour's candidate for Warrington South in the General Election of that year but failed to make it.

Albert met his wife Joan in the former Labour League of Youth when they were both teenagers. They were a great team as she worked as his constituency secretary. She predeceased him in 2008. His son Derek died in 2002. Two other sons survive him.



ALL MEMBER MEETING

Please note that the next All Member Meeting will be at the earlier time of 3.30pm on Tuesday the 13th July in the Grand Committee Room. The new venue is because the main committee rooms are needed for select committees that day.

The Grand Committee Room is off Westminster Hall, up the flight of stairs signposted to the Jubilee Room and the GCR.

For those who have applied to attend, our Annual Summer Reception in Speaker's House is now at the earlier time of 5.30pm. Speaker Bercow is receiving the Canadian Speaker later that evening.

Alf is Not Dead Yet!

It is a shock to read that you are dead! But it happened to me just before the General Election. True, I hadn't been too well, but then suddenly I received a copy of an e-mail from the Leader of Trafford's Labour councillors, Dave Acton, which had gone to all party members, informing them of the sad news of my death.



I pinched myself to check it wasn't true and then Mark Twain-like replied to our election agent that there was something of an exaggeration. An immediate phone call of apology followed but by this time I had got over the shock and found the incident amusing. The sad fact was that a former colleague also called Alf had died.

The news was reported to the campaign headquarters where it was misheard and misunderstood and they assumed it was me. I was touched to hear that the room went quiet and that there were some tears.

I thought I should ring Dave Acton. He is a very good friend of mine but he was nervous when he picked up the phone thinking I had called to complain. In fact I just wanted to thank him for the

kind things he had said about me in the 'obituary'. I said that it was an unusual delight to read it when I was alive because I wouldn't be able to do it when I was dead.

But news like this travels fast. Less than an hour after the original message, I rang a friend in Glasgow, also a former councillor from my area. He has a good sense of humour and he was bound to enjoy this story but when I rang, he almost had a heart attack. "Alf? Alf Bates?, But you're dead."

It was at this point I realised I needed to let some people know I was still on this mortal coil. First, my mother. She is liked and respected by many of my friends. I didn't want them taking round flowers and messages of condolence for the death of her son before she heard the truth.

I had to spend two days letting friends and family know I was still here. My nephew is a bright young man with a wicked sense of humour. He had said he was going to search the card shops for the 'Glad you are not dead section'.

In a touch of irony I had written a short piece in the last Order, Order! "You used to be Alf Bates" It was just after I lost my seat in 1979 when a young lad on a bike swerved to stop in front of me and said with shock: "Excuse me mister, you used to be Alf Bates."

Well to all my good friends in this Association, I would like to say at least at this time of going to press I still am Alf Bates.

Executive Committee member Alf Bates was Member of Parliament for Bebington & Ellesmere Port 1974-79 and a Government whip 1976-79.

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the Association of Former
Members of Parliament



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DINE IN STYLE!

A reminder, especially to our newer members, that the Executive fought for and won dining rights in the House at certain off-peak times.

Details are given below, and we do hope you will take advantage of this facility.



The House of Commons Catering and Retail operation is delighted to welcome former Members of the House of Commons who are pass holders to use the dining facilities with effect from the return of House in October 2008.

The Speaker and the Administration Committee have agreed to recommend that former Members should be allowed to make use of the House of Commons restaurants at the following times:

- The **Adjournment Restaurant** on Wednesday for dinner and Thursday and Friday for lunch,
- The **Strangers' Dining Room** on Thursday and Friday for lunch
- The **Churchill Room** on Thursday for lunch

We would like to point out a few conditions that The Speaker and the Administration Committee have asked former Members to adhere to. These will be confirmed at the time of booking.

- Parliamentary business must take precedence (i.e. should the House sit late or when there are no tables available, bookings will be cancelled)

- Meals could be booked a maximum of one month in advance
- A maximum of four covers would be allowed per booking
- Only guests who were family members would be allowed
- Former Members would be explicitly forbidden from using the privilege in connection with lobbying activity

Bookings should be made by calling
(10.30am-9.30pm Mon-Thur 10.30am-2.30pm Fri):

Adjournment Restaurant	020 7219 6470
Stranger's Dining Room	020 7219 5343
Churchill Dining Room	020 7219 5337

In the event of any difficulties please contact the Catering and Retail Office on 020 7219 3686 (Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm)