



Order, Order!

The Newsletter of the Association of Former Members of Parliament

Spring 2008

NOW WE HAVE OUR OWN WEBSITE!

www.epolitix.com/EN/Forums/Association+of+Former+Members+of+Parliament

Every year, since our launch after the 2001 election, our Association has taken major steps forward.

Back then we were delighted just to print and send out "Order Order" from an attic. Then we were kindly offered an office and equipment on the Parliamentary estate.

Eventually we were allocated admission passes instead of having to queue outside in the rain, and then managed to recruit 340 members.

They ranged from Prime Ministers, Speakers, and Chancellors, right down to those unlucky souls who were elected in a bye election, six months before a General Election, then tossed out again.

WORLDWIDE

We were deeply grateful when the House of Commons Commission then agreed to pay the one day a week wages of our Administrator.

It has been a roller coaster ride, for an outfit which originally started out as a few old hearts who loved politics and Parliament and the smell of the green leather benches.

Now at the beginning of 2008 we have our own website. We have spread worldwide.

We can easily link up with the vast array of other associations of former politicians right across Europe, and even Australia and Canada, covering the whole Council of Europe, and the Commonwealth.

In our last edition Bowen Wells reported on his meeting in Brussels with other countries, and in this edition Alf Bates

tells us what happened when he was invited to the Vienna Conference.

We could of course stick our heads under a blanket and simply ignore what the rest of the world is doing. But as all politicians know, it is not possible to stop the clock.

Our website will give the public and the world a greater access for us to offer our hundreds of years experience in government and politics, to thousands of young students, or historical researchers, or even the media, to access first hand practical experience of when, how, what happened, and because.



Richard Tracey

More and more professional researchers, as well as students are asking us how politics (not parliament) works.

Very often sitting MPs and their staff are reluctant to explain how their salaries and allowances of MPs are arrived at. What do they spend the money on? Do they really need a wife at home to answer the phone at midnight on a Sunday because the Adams family are stranded in Benidorm without their luggage? And who else can they turn to if Cousin Kevin has been arrested for starting a punch up in the hospital outpatients?



Why can't MPs just manage with a five days a week 9 to 5 secretary at Westminster? Well it's all about gathering votes isn't it?

And how do you get to be an MP? Where is the step ladder?

Our members know. We have been there and lived through it and the beautiful gift of our knowledge and experience is there for all.

Our Association is very grateful to Richard Tracey who joined our Executive Committee last October. He has done a superb job in getting our website up and running.

Richard was Conservative MP for Kingston and Surbiton 1983 to 1997 when he lost his seat by 56 votes. He was the Minister of Sport 1985 to 87. He is a former BBC radio and TV news and current affairs presenter, and is a Freeman of the City of London.

His expertise and extensive knowledge of Information Technology has been invaluable.

To log onto our website simply use the address above, or go to www.parliament.uk or www.google.co.uk and put "Former Members" into the search box.

Old Comrades United!

Our Association has a rule that we do not get involved in the business of the House because we are all-party and respect the policy and proceedings of Parliament. But many of our members are old comrades who served their country and we feel duty bound to support them on an all party basis.

If you would like to help Colin Challen Labour MP for Morley Leeds, and our elected Executive

member Sir John Spicer former Conservative MP and MEP for West Dorset, please write to your own MP and ask him to sign Early Day motion 102.

It is a motion to help those dwindling numbers of dedicated men and women who retired before April 1975, with less than 22 years service, to now be entitled to a proportionate pension. We understand the Defence ministers are sympathetic to their cause.

EDM 102.

EQUALITY FOR ALL HM FORCES VETERANS

That this house calls for all ex service men and women to be treated equally for the receipt of service pensions and demands that the Government reviews the regulations that anyone who retired from HM forces with less than 22 years service prior to April 1975 receives no pension at all.

Sir Jim Spicer writes:

Firstly a question. Why on earth, at the age of 82, have I become an enthusiastic supporter of Colin Challen Labour MP for Morley and Rothwell?

Because he is leading a campaign to achieve equality of pensions for all ex service men and women.

At the age of 16 (with the help of a slight age adjustment) I enlisted during the war in July 1942. In December 1943 I was commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers and served in Germany and Belgium with the Oxs and Bucks Light Infantry. I became a platoon commander, aged 19.

After that came service in the Kings African Rifles in Kenya. I then trained at OCTU in Eaton Hall as an instructor in battle warfare to young officers who were headed straight for Korea.

Then followed six years in the Parachute Regiment. But finally, in 1956 after 14 years service I resigned after the disgraceful Suez debacle. At that time I was a very disillusioned Tory and vowed never to vote Tory again.

DELIGHT

However time passed, I rejoined the party, and in 1974 was lucky enough to become the MP for West Dorset where I have lived and farmed ever since.

In 1974 the Wilson government only had a majority of 3. But much to my delight they found time to change the rules on Service Pensions so that anyone who had left after 1975 without having completed a full 22 years service, would receive an appropriate part



of what their full pension would have been if they had remained in service.

Sadly this was not made retrospective, and so many who fought in the bloody Korean War, or in Aden, and other combat areas, did not qualify for even a "pittance of a pension".

FAIR DEAL

Three months ago I supported Colin and his team when they presented a petition to Number Ten calling for a fair deal for all service men and women. Already over 120,000 people have given their support and we are hoping to reach 500,000.

We are looking for at least 250 signatures from Backbenchers too.

On the Today programme in November the Defence Secretary Des Browne said "we will ensure that all veterans get a fair deal".

How can our Association help?

We can all encourage our local sitting MP to sign EDM 120 and let you know when they have.

One final thought – we are not asking for it to be backdated, and year by year the numbers of people receiving it will diminish.

Old Soldiers are proud people. We do not go round asking for handouts, but simply fair play for all.

Jim Spicer

Jim Spicer was selected to lead the Parachute contingent for the 1953 Coronation. At 25 he was the Adjutant of 1. Para Battalion and here he leads the final inspection before leaving the Canal Zone.

WE'LL TEK THE HIGH ROAD



We have often mentioned how difficult it is for our members to get to Westminster especially when the train fares and hotel bills have rocketed since we began in 2001.



Albert McQuarrie



Willie McKelvey



Ernie Ross

Our members in Scotland have been particularly restricted from attending our meetings.

Stalwarts like Albert McQuarrie, Ernie Ross and Willie McKelvey are regular attenders, and many of the Scottish Lords also take an active part too.

Our constitution does allow the Executive Committee to co-opt six other members who have special relationships or skills, to give us the widest spread in regional balance, gender, and experience and to encourage power sharing and involvement.

Consequently the Executive Committee welcomed Andrew Welsh of the SNP when he joined us after our first election.

We have arranged a meeting in Glasgow at 2.00pm on Friday April 18 in the Town Hall, tea and biscuits with the Lord Provost at 1.30pm.

Please contact Albert, Willie or Ernie for further details. Their telephone numbers are Albert McQuarrie 01771 623 955, Willie McKelvey 01307 464 585 and Ernie Ross 01382 645 553.

Unfortunately because of the distance involved, and his full time job as a member of the Scottish Parliament, Andrew has had to stand down.

We now have well over 30 former MPs in Scotland and potentially lots more, and there is a general consensus that if we formed a Scottish arm of our Association, it would give many more members a chance take an active part in our work.

We are of course in regular contact with the Scottish Lords in Westminster, who do take a great interest, and offer excellent advice on the different benefits available to both sides of the border.

FAY WILL TRY TO SORT US OUT



We welcome Fay Jones to our ranks, who is studying for a BA in French at King's College, London University, and who will be undertaking a research project for our Association.

She will be setting up a detailed electronic database of our membership, enabling information on party, constituency, length of service etc to be readily accessed. Fay will be working on the project for three months on two afternoons each week from our office in 2 Abbey Gardens, which will fit in well with her University studies.

Fay said " Having grown up in a political family, I have seen both sides of parliamentary life, and being a student I am used to, and really enjoy research work. I am very much looking forward to the challenges ahead, and working with such an interesting and varied collection of former MP's".

Fay lists her interests as politics, music, fine food and wine. She plays rugby at university and is a RFU Level 1 accredited referee. She is also an avid reader.

We hope that if Fay contacts you for information, or verification you will help in this important survey.

NOSTALGIA AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

Fanny Hill Made Percy Poorly



Rebecca Night in Sally Head Productions' recent adaptation of Fanny Hill for BBC4

The dark winter nights are not much fun for our older members, many whom are housebound and hard up too. But this year the BBC2, BBC3 and BBC4 channels plus Channel 4's "City of Vice" has given us a real treat, all of them showing "Fanny Hill the Memoirs of a woman of Pleasure".

WOW! What did they get up to in 1770!

There is even one scene where an MP openly supports the flagellation of women. He said he didn't give a toss what his constituents thought. All 12 of them in his rotten borough.

BEATLES LP

Some of us remember "Fanny Hill" very well. There was uproar when it was republished in 1963.

That was the year the world changed. The year of "That was the Week That Was," and a modern Fanny Hill, Christine Keeler, changed it by swimming naked in the Cliveden House swimming pool, chased and grabbed by the Secretary of State for Defence, and a Russian officer who was a spy.

Philip Larkin was a Professor of Poetry at Hull University then, and the tutor of a young Roy Hattersley. Larkin said "Sexual intercourse began in 1963. Somewhere between the Beatles, and the first LP."

In May that year on Cup Final day, I was trapped for two hours in a room at the Grand Hotel Sheffield with all four Beatles, with 2,000 young lasses screaming outside. I don't think either the Beatles or the lasses had ever heard of sexual intercourse, but that's another story.

UPPER CLASS TOFFS

In 1963 I was 28. The youngest member of the council, taking that honour from my old friend Roy Hattersley.

It was a notable year when the iron regime of the Labour Aldermen,

and the working class worthies who had run Sheffield for nearly 40 years since the General Strike of 1926, had to take a momentous decision:

Which was whether or not to allow the City Libraries to buy and lend out Fanny Hill.

The tricky bit was that Roy Hattersley's mother, Enid, was chairperson of the Libraries Committee. She was a lovely woman and a lifelong Labour stalwart, but like all Labour women then, very much against the exploitation of young girls by upper class toffs.

There was no way she would compromise her principles by lending out books glorifying trollops, mollies, tarts and other ancient 1770 erotica.

And quite right too.

SHABBY RAINCOATS

At the time all City Libraries kept their risqué books under the counter. It took courage to take the wooden block with the title on it from the top shelf of the furthest part of the Library, then furtively hide it beneath your pullover and walk the length of the Library under the x-ray stare of the Librarian to ask, like Oliver Twist, "Please may I look at this book Missis?"

There was no way she would let you take it home. Not ever.

Dirty old men in shabby raincoats had no chance. Even maiden aunts, swooning at the thought of Mr D'Arcy ripping their bodices off, were frowned on distastefully.

In 1963 it was almost as embarrassing as a young lad creeping into the Co-Op chemist to ask for a packet of Durex then realising the woman behind the counter was a friend of his mother.

Life was very strict then. There was no Carry On Crumpet, never mind Carry On Fanny. So naturally, the Library Committee had some serious doubts that this upper class pornographic masterpiece should ever be shown even to young councillors, containing filth which might send them rampaging through the streets.

So the Aldermen decided that only the elderly members of the Libraries Committee should be allowed to take a copy home, for two weeks, then decide whether Sheffield Labour Group should join the sexual revolution.

POORLY

By sheer chance my mate Percy was a councillor on the Libraries Committee. What was more I was the only councillor in the whole of Attercliffe Constituency (Labour Majority 26,000), who actually owned an old banger, and who could give him a lift home, and get him to the pub before it closed at ten.

"Percy", I said using that Eric Morecombe charm. "If I don't get to read Fanny Hill then there are no more lifts."

"Take it Joe," he said. "It's making me poorly. I've got a dicky heart and it's making me tremble and sweat all over."

BOG ROTA

So I paid a shilling for a hard backed copy of Dombey and Son from a junk shop, cut out the middle of the pages, (just like you would today to hide a kilo of cocaine) and took it to work the next morning.

The lads and shop stewards calculated that by using a very tight bog standard rota, all 37 of us could get through it before Percy's next meeting. Especially if we let the gaffer have his turn in the bogs too.

Two weeks later just before Percy's meeting, on a show of hands with no amendments, we all ruefully agreed with sadness, that Fanny Hill wasn't fit to put in the libraries, bearing in mind that it would make our elderly brothers, like old Percy, poorly.

BANNED

Roy Hattersley and I sat next to each other in the council. He was Chair of Housing and I was his deputy. We sat



"Keep it under your jacket—the Bobby's seen the book!"

at desks with a tip up lid like kids in school.

I swear Roy spent the whole of the next council meeting skimming through the best bits of Fanny Hill with his desk lid half open, praying that his mother couldn't see him from the Aldermanic bench.

The council then solemnly took a vote to decide that Fanny Hill be banned forthwith, and the said copies be sent to the incinerator at the Cleansing and Baths Department tip. It was passed unanimously without abstentions.

Ten years later a film of Fanny Hill was showing nationwide in glorious technicolour, whipping scenes and all.

And Roy and I were MP's writing for the Guardian, campaigning against censorship and Mary Whitehouse, with poor old Christine Keeler getting peanuts for her memoirs.

Joe Ashton

UNION JACK CLUB



Members are reminded that the Union Jack Club has generously agreed to allow our members to use its facilities, even if they have not served in Her Majesty's Forces.

The club is two minutes walk from Waterloo station and the tube, ten minutes walk from the London Eye Big Wheel, and 15 walk minutes from Westminster.

It has recently been refurbished with excellent bar and restaurant facilities, at popular prices, with bed and breakfast at about half of the usual London rate.

A number of our members regularly stay there before meetings.

Ex-servicemen can apply for full membership, and others can book in as Temporary Honourable Members.

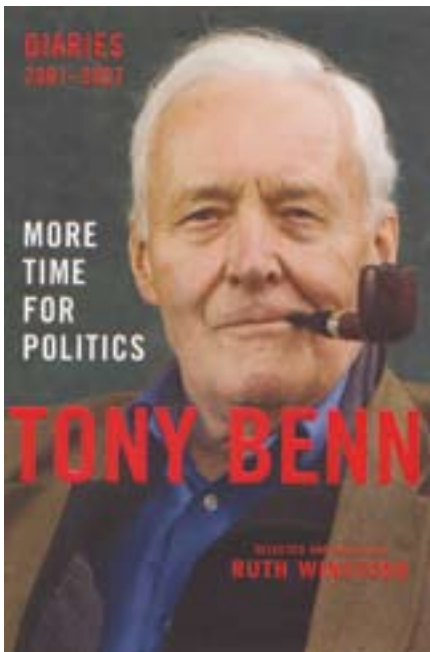
A single room with corridor bath and toilet, (no TV) starts at £33 for full members and £39 for temporary guest members.

A single room with shower, toilet and TV starts at £45 for members and £53 for guests. Double rooms are £82 and £95.

Family rooms with bunk beds for two children aged 3 to 12 are also available at £122 for full members and £140 for guests.

Please telephone 0207 928 4814 or log on to www.ujclub.co.uk for enquiries or reservations

ENOUGH TIME LEFT FOR POLITICS



At the Channel 4 Political Awards this year one book was described as “REMARKABLE” and “INCREDIBLY ACCURATE” by the Judges, who included Geoffrey Robinson MP, Tessa Jowell MP and Lord Tom McNally.

The book was “More Time for Politics”, the 8th and probably not the last book of memoirs from Tony Benn.

Sadly for Tony his book was published in the same season as

Alistair Campbell’s Diaries covering “The Blair Years”, which won the award by a short head.

Alistair Campbell accepted his prize with a profusely grateful thank you to Tony Benn, he said, for showing him how to do it, and admitted asking Tony for advice whenever he met him.

Tony said simply “Listen to the Lawyers”. Which Alistair Campbell promptly did, and immediately removed several names from his draft.

Our Vice President Lord Ted Graham has known Tony Benn for nearly 40 years and whipped him on many occasions. This is his review.

Reading “More Time for Politics” I was simply bowled over by the sheer pace at which Tony Benn lives.

I am the same age as Tony (80) and I know that I have slowed down most tellingly. But not Tony!

With page after page of getting up at 6 am to catch a train or be carried off to far corners, Tony has to be the most sought after speaker in the country. A star turn who has vision, and who will travel, and perform on request, is a rare bird.

MUG OF TEA

He tells us that by his 80th birthday, six years after leaving Parliament, he had made 555 speeches in 180 towns and taken part in 683 broadcasts and 416 television interviews.

Tony led the fashion for staging events and found the public would even pay the expenses for the hall to listen to his tales and anecdotes.

All readers of “ORDER ORDER” who love the inside stories of dastardly machinations, and the intrigue and gossip of politics, will find this a really jolly good read.

My wife Margaret and I went to see him live at Edmonton Town Hall with a sell out audience of over 400 fans.

It made for a great evening with many of us kept in delight as with mug of tea in hand he spun stories and anecdotes about Bill Clinton and Ghandi. “I first met Ghandi when I was six. In 1931,” said Tony to an awed Bill.

COME DANCING

The index to the book runs to 30 pages of names as he tells about his adventures with Joan Collins, Nicholas Parsons, Nigel Havers and Bianca Jagger and even reveals how he loves watching the BBC “Strictly Come Dancing”, particularly when his very good friend and newsreader the beautiful Natasha Kaplinsky appears in it.

Talking about ancient liberties he says, “Sometimes I find myself closer to David Davis, John Bercow and Douglas Hogg than I do to Tony McNulty, Tony Blair and Charles Clarke”.

But not all politicians earn his wrath. Jeremy Corbyn is “brilliant”, Tommy Sheridan “who I love”, John McDonald, and George Galloway get honourable mentions, and his long running hot and cold relationship with Michael Foot will obviously last until one of them departs.

Tony and I have one personal thing in common. Sadly and with deep sorrow we both lost our wives after a lifetime of close love, mutual support, and admiration.

Tony’s wife Caroline died after he had retired, as did my wife Margaret and I know what he went through. He writes about Caroline in a moving way which reveals him in a fresh light as an emotional man with a gift for an arresting style.

Undoubtedly his next book should be called “A Blaze of Autumn Sunshine”, a phrase which his father used just before he passed away in 1958. It is most apt and moving.

Lord Ted Graham of Edmonton

TURBULENT IRAN:

RECOLLECTIONS, REVELATIONS AND A PLAN FOR PEACE

By Sir Eldon Griffiths

As the US and Britain seek to withdraw their troops from Iraq the British Administration accuses Iran of arming and financing terrorists to set up a second Islamic theocracy in south and central Iraq, and reaching out for nuclear weapons.

Iran calls America the "Great Satan", rebuffs efforts to inspect its nuclear installations, and uses its oil resources to include China and Russia, to veto UN sanctions.

Are the US and Iran on a collision course?

Sir Eldon Griffiths "snapshots" of Iran are rich in anecdotes, interviews with Mossadegh and the Shah, revelations about the origins of Iran's nuclear power, insights into President Carter's failed attempt to rescue the American diplomats held captive by Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards, and President Reagan's offer to trade US missiles for other US hostages.

Recent visits to Iran lead the author to suggest a twin track peace deal based on a non aggressive pact covering Iran's fears of invasion, the future security of Iraq, and a nuclear free Middle East.

Donald Rumsfeld's resignation and

the repudiation of the Bush administration by the American electorate in the November 2006 election, opened the door to a "new direction" for US policies in the Middle East.

Sir Eldon's proposals for peace are radical, contentious and timely.

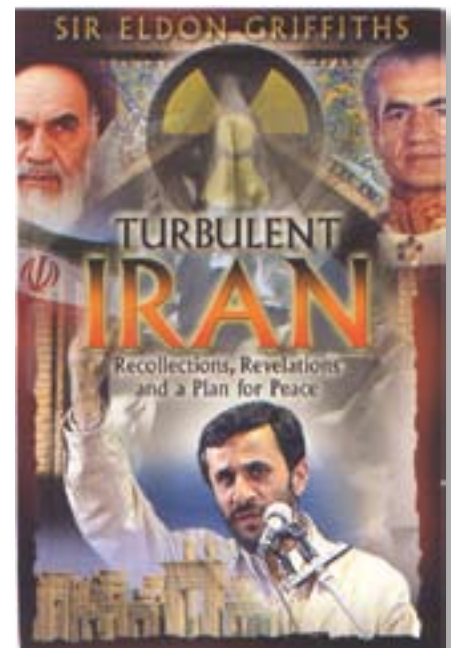
Eldon Griffiths was the MP for Bury St Edmunds from 1964 to 1992 and before that he was editor of Newsweek magazine from 1956 to 1963, and the Washington Post Chief European correspondent from 1961 – 1963.

He was a junior minister in the Ted Heath government and Parliamentary Advisor to the Police Federation for over 25 years. He is currently chairman of the World Affairs Councils of America, and lives in California for much of the year, but returns to Britain quite frequently.

Sir Jim Spicer writes

Many of us remember Eldon Griffiths in the House but few knew the full extent of his knowledge of Middle East affairs and of Iran in particular.

We all understand that Iran now holds the key to peace and prosperity throughout the Middle East and it is against this background that I read and greatly enjoyed Eldon's book "Turbulent Iran".



He charts the many tasks which lie ahead if we are to "break down the plethora of disagreements" which exist between the USA and Britain on one hand and Iran on the other.

I hope those in authority will read this book, learn from it and then try to chart a way forward to peace and prosperity, not only for the Middle East, but for the whole world.

"TURBULENT IRAN" is published in America by Seven Locks Press, and will probably be launched in the UK later this year.

THE EX FACTOR

Have you got your new pass to the House yet?

If you have, you will see that it describes you as an "Ex-Member". Ex? Ex? Some colleagues have protested that it should say "Former Member". Ex sounds, well – how shall I put this? – just a little bit too terminal for comfort.

So please let us know what you think.

First. For someone at all young, "my ex" is almost a term of endearment for a previous girlfriend or boyfriend – or if you're older, a former spouse. If we're very lucky, most of us are called "Ex" by more people than we care to think about. "Ex" just means "former".

But secondly, it's important to remember this too: Our colleagues campaigned hard to get passes in the first place.

"Impossible" they were told at first. "Impossible" they were told at first. Then, after a lot of canvassing, "maybe after 10 years service" – then, "ok maybe 8 years" – and then "oh all right, you can have them if you don't abuse them". (So please don't!)

What you will find is that the Officers of the House are always very friendly and helpful to us if we have a sensible case – so we all got our passes for access. But those passes said "Special Guest". We asked "Please could they say that we used to be Members?" Once more we were told it was impossible. But we asked

again, and now, quietly, it's happened. We should say "thank you", not grump about the term "ex". Being the people we are, some of us would probably want it to say "for he's a jolly good fellow".

And thirdly you may like to know this. The former members of the European Parliament are called the "Association Des Anciens Députés".

Ancien? I'm sure it translates better from the French than it sounds. But I think I'm happy to be called an ex-MP, which is true.

It sounds so much better than "Ancient", which is getting a little too close to reality.

Alf Bates

OBITUARIES



JIMMY LAMOND

November 29th 1929 to November 20th 2007

Few people outside Westminster, Aberdeen and Oldham knew James Lamond.

But at his funeral last November over 300 mourners, including some from very high places, packed the Aberdeen crematorium to say goodbye.

Lord Hughes of Woodside (Bob Hughes) his lifelong friend, delivered a moving eulogy followed by a resounding hearty rendering of the "Red Flag".

Tributes to Jimmy and condolences from the Speaker Michael Martin, and Prime Minister Gordon Brown were sent to his wife June, and read out to the congregation.

Jimmy, a very clever and intelligent man, suffered a heart scare last summer, but died while recovering from a second bout of the deadly bug *Clostridium difficile*.

Jimmy began his working life in the Aberdeen shipyards before qualifying as a draughtsman, and becoming a member of the TASS union for 60 years.

He joined the Labour Party at 22 and became the Aberdeen Labour Group Leader in 1969 and Lord Provost of Aberdeen in 1970.

Earlier in 1969 Jim and Bob Hughes had to compete against each other for the very safe seat of Aberdeen North, Bob won.

Jimmy was then asked by his union "TASS" to try for the nomination at Oldham East. Much to his surprise Jim won the nomination, and the seat too, with a majority of just 760 votes.

His quandary was he had only just taken on the Lord Provost's job in Aberdeen, over 300 miles away. Aberdeen was not best pleased.

It was a good thing that Jimmy liked travelling. Whats more he would go where others feared to tread.

He was noted for his extensive knowledge of North Korea, Ethiopia, Peru, Bulgaria, Bangladesh (he had many constituents from there), Columbia, Afghanistan and all points east behind the Iron Curtain. He always knew what Ceausescu would do 12 months before the Foreign Office found out.

Yet he was an assiduous chairman on the Speakers panel. His chairmanship on committees was a master class. A complete knowledge of the bill, perfectly at home,

witty, terse, sharp, scrupulously fair, and would stand no filibustering.

He lived by his firm principles and his majority rapidly increased to well over 8,000.

When his seat and the one next to it held by Joel Barnett were merged into one, Jim was a long way from being favourite. Joel was a Cabinet Minister and Chief Secretary to The Treasury. The third most important man in the Callaghan government.

But Jimmy won, and Joel had to be content with a front bench seat in the Lords. Maybe it had something to do with Jimmy continually fighting for compensation for cotton workers suffering from the lung disease of byssinosis, while poor old Joel had to tell them no more pay rises.

In 1992 Jim finally got fed up of airports, and the points of order, and returned to Aberdeen for good, where his wife June and daughter Jenny had become longstanding highly valued members of the Aberdeen council.

Jimmy too got himself elected onto the Grampian Regional Council, until he finally called the last Order Order in May, and retired at the age of 78.

A quiet man of great wit and stature, and Old Labour to the end.

Ted Graham



JOHN GUNNELL

1933 to 2008

John Gunnell came late to Parliament at the age of 59. He was elected for Morley and

Rothwell in the 1992 election, taking over from Merlyn Rees.

John was a very highly respected, intellectual whose second name was "assiduous" and "conscientious." A tremendously hard worker often ringing up his students at Leeds University at midnight to discuss their tutorials, but he also had a passionate love of all sports and opera.

Especially Leeds United, the Yorkshire cricket club, and Opera North.

He was actually born in Birmingham, the son of the sports editor of the Birmingham Post and a supporter of West Bromwich Albion and Warwickshire, but John soon adopted Yorkshire when studying at Leeds University.

He gained a PGCE there and then took his family to New York to lecture at the United Nations in Manhattan. In true 1960's style of hosting parties, going on camping trips, and giving lectures in Central Park.

John was a pacifist who refused to do his two years National Service, and instead as a conscientious objector, had to spend two years as a hospital porter in St Bartholomews hospital. A lasting experience which made him always campaign against low wages and rotten jobs in the public sector.

The big issue in New York then was Vietnam, and an unashamed pacifist was quite welcome at the United Nations International School.

In 1977 he returned to be elected to the West Yorkshire County Council. He continued with his lectures at Leeds and became Leader of the West Yorkshire Council in 1981. His chairmanship included seats on the Yorkshire and Humberside Development Board, the North of England Consortium, and serving in the Assembly of Regions in Europe.

He worked 18 hour days becoming Leader of Wakefield Council, and even launching the National Mining Museum which achieved national status after the miners strike, and has a regular annual attendance of 120,000 visitors a year.

John's passion for opera made him a founder member of Opera North based in Yorkshire and the largest permanent Arts organisation to be located outside London.

His remarkable grasp of detail made him a firm favourite in the Whips Office, willing to serve on all those "drizebone" committees, studying unintelligible clauses, and amendments of shuddering complexity.

His dry sense of humour behind this resolute approach to everything he did and enjoyed, was a treat to all.

Sadly John died from heart failure just a few days after the funeral of his loving wife Jean. He also leaves three sons and a daughter.

Joe Ashton



JOHN HARVEY

1920 to 2008

John left the Commons more than 40 years ago after winning Walthamstow East in 1955

at the second attempt, and holding it until 1966 on small majorities.

During the Second World War he was in the Merchant Navy and survived after clinging to a raft for three days in shark infested waters when his ship was torpedoed in the Indian Ocean.

After the war, when his business was taken

over by Burmah Oil, he became its Director of Public Affairs and a lifelong friend of Dennis Thatcher.

John worked assiduously in the House for the Epping Forest he loved, before moving to Loughton. He became a Freeman of the City of London and eventually Master of the Guild of Freemen, and a Verderer of Epping Forest, from 1970 to 1988, as well as a Freeman of the Lone Star State of Texas.

Patrick Jenkin worked with John for many years and says he was a man of integrity. When Winston Churchill said he would not stand again for the safe seat of Woodford,

John was approached and asked to take over, but he insisted on standing by Walthamstow East in his marginal seat. Patrick Jenkin was then eventually selected to replace Churchill and I kept a close watch on things as the Leader of the Enfield Council.

The love and respect for John was plain to see at his funeral which I attended, and later at the reception held in "Murray Hall" named to commemorate another great Epping Forest lover, Len Murray the former T.U.C leader.

Truly it was an all party respectful event.

Ted Graham

OUR EXECUTIVE MEMBER IN VIENNA

The European Association of Former Members of Parliament from the member states of the Council of Europe of the European Union invited Alf Bates to attend their Bureau. Here is his report.

There is no doubt that Former Members in most countries of Europe are held in higher regards than here in the UK. Bowen Wells who had attended a meeting of European Associations on our behalf in Brussels in June, outlined some of the facilities they receive in the last edition of "Order Order" – and they invariably surpass ours.

But it is not just the facilities which those Associations enjoy; it is the way they are respected.

To follow up Bowen's June meeting, I attended a meeting in Vienna in November. There was an outward-looking confidence of former members who know that their experience still gives them some influence.

The meeting was opened by the Speaker of the Austrian Parliament in a specially recorded video – and she particularly stressed the importance of the work we all do in promoting democracy. Former Members in Europe are seen as having an important continuing contribution to society.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION

Since we set up our organisation just a few years ago it has been a struggle to establish ourselves and deal with our internal domestic issues. As we move forward, I echo what Bowen said in his article last time, that we should look to use "our wide experience and high quality knowledge of Government and constitutional history" for the wider benefit of young people.

Our membership of the European Association based on the Council of Europe can help us. At the moment, we have observer status in the European Association but there is no doubt that we would be very welcome as full members. All the contacts I have made in Vienna were keen for us to play our full part.



The main business of the meeting showed how the European Association is outward looking and influential. They were deciding the subject for a "Colloquy" to be held in Athens in October. For those of you who like me haven't a clue what a colloquy is (and probably, I suspect, it's an unpleasant condition for us older men) let me enlighten you. From the Latin – no I didn't study it either, I looked it up – it just

means a lengthy conversation or informal discussion.

The European Association holds one every two years to have an in-depth look at a subject of interest and importance to nations across Europe, and try to produce a generally agreed view on the matter.

What is of interest is that Parliaments and Governments in the rest of Europe genuinely take notice when former Members produce views in this way. We're a bit behind the times there, I'm afraid.

DEMOCRACY

It was agreed that the next meeting in Athens should discuss democracy in Europe – a topic motivated by the increasing loss of confidence, particularly among young people, in representative democracy. Should we perhaps move more towards participatory democracy such as the use of referenda, as happens in Switzerland and Ireland?

These are important matters for the future of democracy, and we should have our say on them. The historical strength and depth of democracy in this country, and the knowledge of members of our Association gives us a powerful base on which to contribute.

Even as "observers" I'm sure we will be listened to. But we should prepare ourselves soon to become full members and make a full contribution. Both we and they will gain from the contacts we make.

Alf Bates

“Granddad. Tell us about Big Ben and Guy Fawkes (then show us your certificate)”

Our Members have often suggested wistfully that it would be a nice family heirloom if they could have some recognition of their years of service.

Nothing Buckingham Palace style, but simply a memento to show the grandkids that grandad or grandma did actually work under Big Ben and occasionally appear on television as a real live Member of Parliament. And of course they met the Queen.

Perhaps there is even a video tape of it somewhere up in the attic. Which could hardly be hung on the wall.

So. It brings us pleasure to announce that our patron the Right Hon. Michael Martin has agreed to our request to award a Certificate of Parliamentary Service



to all former members who apply for one.

We show a copy of this produced on thick cream paper edged with black and with the Crest and Mace in raised gold. It is suitable for framing and is personally signed by the Speaker himself.

It is entirely up to individual members whether or not they wish to receive this. If so, please complete the application form below.

All returned forms will be collated and forwarded to the Clerk's Department who will liaise with the House Print Unit over its production. The certificate

will be signed by the Speaker and then sent out.

Some former MPs may have served in more than one constituency and the wording on the certificate would be adjusted to accommodate this.

APPLICATION FORM FOR HOUSE OF COMMONS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

NAME: *(Please write in block capitals the exact wording you would wish to appear on the certificate):*

TITLE OF CONSTITUENCY: _____

DATES OF SERVICE: _____

ADDRESS TO WHICH CERTIFICATE BE SENT:

Please return this form to:

Sally Grocott, Association of Former MPs, House of Commons, Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, LONDON, SW1A 2NE

Norman and Irene. Together now for 60 Years.

Not many of us can recall the days when the Labour Party Conference was always held at Whitsuntide, in places like Scarborough.

But Norman Atkinson and his ever attractive wife, Irene, will never forget it.

Especially in 1948 – that's where they spent their honeymoon.

And on May 15 they will be celebrating their Diamond Wedding Anniversary and sixty years of being married to politics.

Irene says "I remember it well. Our honeymoon was lovely. I was 20 years old and I danced with every Cabinet Minister in the Labour Government." Even Councillors were somebody in those days and Norman aged 25 was the youngest councillor in Manchester in the safe seat of Moss Side. He was a rising star.

So naturally they were married at the Manchester Cathedral, and the mighty Manchester Evening News gave it a full spread.

It took another 16 years for Norman to rise through the ranks of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and be offered the safe seat of Tottenham, eventually to rise to become the Treasurer of the National Labour Party. Which of course always had as many debt problems as British Rail, but Norman somehow kept it running hand



Tea at the Royal Overseas League

to mouth, on a tanner a week union levies and subs, with General Elections fought on door knocking and raffle tickets.

Sixty years on, still living in their flat in Victoria, Norman turns up to all our meetings and occasionally he and Irene take tea at the Royal Overseas League in St. James Street.

As we used to say back in 1948 – there is nowt too good for the working class. Especially the free fresh air in Scarborough.

"After Parliament" – *life down under*

A guide to assist current and former members and senators in Australia has just been published.

"After Parliament" differs from our report. **Life after losing or leaving (2007)** sent out in November.

Whereas we were telling human stories, of the experiences of losing a seat, and the MP's personal views, the new Australian report is a guide of entitlements (parliamentary, financial and travel), career choices, and details of associations and contacts.

What strikes the British reader in perusing "After Parliament" is their range of facilities summed up in a clear guideline: "Our parliamentary association encourages ex-members to use Parliament House as a focal point." This is emphasised by the availability of a lounge for ex-members particular use, in Parliament House, where refreshment facilities, stationery, TV and radio are available with comfortable seating.

In addition, a computer with internet access has been installed. This friendly attitude for the ex-members is summed up in a phrase, "by keeping contact with Parliament House, the Association is better able to direct relevant information to former members and represent them when matters that affect them are being considered for legislation and submission to tribunals."

Their link with the families of ex-MPs enables a spouse of a deceased parliamentarian or senator to be an associate member and meet up with past friends too.

The Australian booklet, all 76 pages, is an enlightened approach to the way a former Parliamentarian should be treated. The chapter on "careers and income opportunities" is a frank, no-nonsense series of ideas, on what to prepare before you re-enter the outside employment market.

You are advised for instance, to get financial advice such as "income splitting" and to prepare a clear plan for your likely next job / venture – all before there is any mention of defeat in the election!

There is a valuable section on investment strategy – how best to make use of your lump sum severance and pension over the short and long term.

I have made some enquiries about the value of this type of publication amongst Aussie MP's and they are delighted with its practical advice. They are proud that their Association of Former MP's has achieved so much for their members in a relatively short time. That is a challenge for us in Westminster.

Eric Moonman

After Parliament (3rd edn. 2007)
Available from the Association of Former
Members of Parliament of Australia.
ACT 2600 Australia
Phone (61) (2) 62773487

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Summer Reception 15th July 2008 6.30pm



Mr Speaker is again kindly hosting our Summer Reception in Speaker's House.

If you would like to attend please complete and return the application form below.

Numbers are limited to 100, and places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. As usual members are welcome to include their partners, but not guests, as this would be unfair on members of the Association in view of the limited number of places available.

We will notify anyone whose application is unsuccessful once the list is full. Otherwise, your invitation will be sent out from the Speaker's Office prior to the event.



APPLICATION FORM FOR SUMMER RECEPTION

I would like to attend the Reception in Speaker's House on the 15th July, 6.30pm

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

I would like to bring my partner:

NAME: _____

Please return this form to:

Sally Grocott, Association of Former MPs, House of Commons, Room G13, 1 Parliament Street, LONDON, SW1A 2NE

NB: Date of next All-Members' Meeting- THURSDAY 13TH MARCH AT 4PM IN ROOM 10