

# THE HOUSE

Parliament's Magazine

NO.1579 • VOLUME 40 • 21 APRIL 2017



ELECTION 2017

## THERESA MAY ROLLS THE DICE BUT WILL HER GAMBLE PAY OFF?

### GEORGE PARKER

On the prime minister's  
'mandate envy'

### BERNARD JENKIN

On an election that  
came 'out of the blue'

### THE SHORT GOODBYE

The Big Beasts  
standing down

### TWO HORSE RACE?

The Tories prepare  
to take on the SNP

## IN COMMAND

Exclusive  
interview  
with defence  
secretary  
Michael Fallon

UNPARLIAMENTARY  
LANGUAGE

Black Rod



A man with short brown hair, wearing a blue polo shirt with the Boeing logo, is sitting at a desk. He is looking at a computer monitor that displays a map of the United Kingdom with several yellow star icons. He is holding a red and white striped mug. The background is dark and out of focus.

“You don’t travel  
285 miles to work  
**unless you’re doing  
something special.”**

—Neil Walker, *Boeing Lead Technical Operations Engineer*

“Back home in Yarm, I’m restoring motorcycle engines—a hobby I’ve had since I was 12. From there, I’ve never looked back. Now I am a Lead Technical Operations Engineer at Boeing. My team ensures the health of commercial aircraft. It’s a great feeling knowing that all of my aircraft are flying safely and on time. Boeing’s presence in the UK is important. Take it from me, you don’t travel 285 miles to work unless you’re doing something special!”

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ALL TODAY'S POLITICS IN ONE PLACE



### MAY'S GAMBLE

George Parker looks back on 24 hours that shook Westminster



INTERVIEW

10

### BERNARD JENKIN

The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee chair talks to Agnes Chambre

INTERVIEW

24

### MICHAEL FALLON

The defence secretary talks to Alan Mak about fighting Daesh and dealing with President Trump



GISELA STUART  
EDITOR

For Macmillan “events dear boy, events” referred to things over which you had no control. The current prime minister took control of events in a way Joe Chamberlain, who was said to make the political weather, would have been proud. Calling a general election for June 8th came as something of a shock to much of Westminster. The 2017

Parliament will look different. Some MPs will have left by choice – we run through the colleagues stepping down on page 12 – and others at the will of the electorate. But we hope the next Parliament will include many MPs who, like Jess Phillips, are not afraid to speak the truth. She has written a book about her experience of doing just that, which Tracy Brabin reviews [p36].

### 4 FIRST READING

### 6 COMMONS DIARY

Angela Rayner

### 9 PAUL FLYNN

The Electoral Commission's outdated tools for monitoring cyber manipulation ensure a free ride for lobbyists

### 12 ELECTION 2017

The snap election will bring an end to the careers of some of the biggest beasts in Parliament – and could see the return of a few familiar faces

### 14 TWO HORSE RACE?

Is the election campaign in Scotland a ‘straight fight’ between the SNP and the Tories? James Millar reports

### 16 FEATURE

As changes to freedom of movement rules loom, four parliamentarians reflect on the impact on key industries

### 22 FEATURE

What impact will Brexit have on the UK's future role in European security and law enforcement cooperation?

### 30 LOCAL AND VOCAL

Ahead of the county council elections we profile some of the UK's least-known success stories of local politics

### 32 FEATURE

The clerk of the Procedure Committee on the 200th anniversary of Votes and Proceedings

### 34 UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

Black Rod on ‘awkward’ peers and why he will soon stand down

### 36 REVIEWS

Tracy Brabin on Jess Phillips' Everywoman and Lord Lexden on Lord Sheikh's account of ‘the Lion of the Punjab’



# FIRST READING

## THE WORD IN WESTMINSTER

BY DAVID SINGLETON

While many Labour MPs were not keen on the idea of a snap general election on 8 June, Clive Lewis had more reason than most to vote against it. The Norwich South MP is due to the knot with his fiancée Katy Steel on 6 May – but the pair have had to cancel their honeymoon in Cornwall so that Lewis can fight to keep his seat. “There were wails of anguish when we realised and it’s really sad, but it’s one of those things,” Lewis said after his fellow MPs overwhelmingly backed the election.

The general election news also disrupted the final preparations of the 16 MPs running the London marathon. But at least one of their number is looking on the bright side. Jonathan Djanogly, Tory MP for Huntingdon who is raising cash for Magpas Air Ambulance, declared: “At least I’m fit for canvassing!”

When Jeremy Corbyn kicked off Labour’s general election campaign



with a surprise visit to Croydon, his team showed a curious lack of interest in the local press. For reasons that are unclear, Labour spin doctors decided not to tip off the *Croydon Advertiser* ahead of the leader’s brief stump speech. They then told the bemused local hacks that they didn’t know the leader’s whereabouts.

The news that George Osborne is to quit the Commons “for now” was quickly put into context by some of his parliamentary colleagues. One noted that the former chancellor had decided to give up the less lucrative of his six jobs and suggested that he might just survive without his MP’s wage. “That’s 2% of his salary,” they jibed.

David Mundell is not known as a Commons bad boy, but the Scottish secretary found himself accused of issuing profanities after he shouted at Yvette Cooper during Prime Minister’s Questions. As the Labour MP took Theresa May to task, Mundell was seen yelling something that rhymed with “witch” in his opponent’s direction. Two hours after PMQs, Mundell insisted he had merely been accusing Cooper of mounting a “leadership pitch”.

David Singleton is editor of Total Politics

## THE WEEK IN QUOTES



“At this moment of enormous national significance there should be unity here in Westminster, but instead there is division. The country is coming together but Westminster is not.”

*Theresa May stuns Westminster as she announces her intention to hold a general election on 8 June*



“[I told my constituents] turkeys will not vote for Christmas. I congratulate my Right Honourable Friend for having achieved the impossible and secured the fact that today those turkeys will indeed vote for that.”

*Tory MP Sir Desmond Swayne reveals that for the second time in just a few weeks he was led astray by the government line*



“If she’s so proud of her record, why won’t she debate it?”

*Jeremy Corbyn skewers Theresa May at PMQs for snubbing TV debates during the election campaign*



“I am stepping down from the House of Commons – for now”

*Former chancellor George Osborne bids adieu to life in Westminster, but tantalisingly leaves the door open to a return*



“Make no mistake, if the SNP wins this election in Scotland – and the Tories don’t – then Theresa May’s attempt to block our mandate to hold another referendum when the time is right, will crumble to dust.”

*Nicola Sturgeon has another warning for May over blocking a fresh vote on Scottish independence*



## TWEET OF THE WEEK



David Cameron  
@David\_Cameron

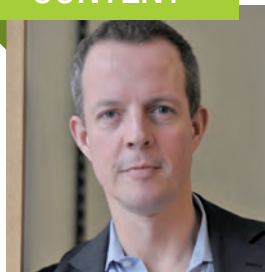
Brave - and right - decision by PM  
@Theresa\_May. My very best wishes to all  
Conservative candidates. @Conservatives

## THE BIG PICTURE



Theresa May stuns Westminster by announcing a snap election

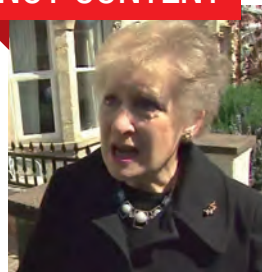
### CONTENT



#### NICK BOLES

The Grantham MP delights Westminster as he announces his cancer has been “eradicated”

### NOT CONTENT



#### BRENDA FROM BRISTOL

Becomes an unlikely star of the General Election after her ‘not another one!’ outburst at Theresa May’s shock announcement

## Campaigner of the week

BY DAVID SINGLETON

### DEBBIE ABRAHAMS



#### WHAT

Since 2011, Abrahams has been campaigning against late payments to small and medium-sized businesses. The shadow work and pensions secretary has won various awards for her Be Fair – Pay on Time and last week she was pleased to see Jeremy Corbyn announce that a Labour Government would “declare war” on late payment to small businesses.

#### HOW

The Labour MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth set up her campaign after a constituent told her how a household-name company was driving his business to the wall by consistently paying him late. “After a little research it was obvious that the issue wasn’t just a local one and it was costing small and medium enterprises £36bn a year across the UK,” she said. Initially, Abrahams struggled to find a local business who would talk openly for fear of upsetting their larger clients. But eventually

a small Oldham based plumbing business waived their anonymity and the campaign got off the ground.

#### OUTCOMES

Corbyn has called it “a national scandal” that companies are withholding more than £26bn from suppliers. He has said a Labour government would require any firm bidding for a public contract to pay its own suppliers within 30 days and would look at introducing for the private sector a system of binding arbitration with fines for persistent late payers.

#### RESPONSE

Abrahams said: “I’m delighted that Labour is making tackling late payments one of its policies as it’s one of the main problems faced by small and medium businesses across the UK. The majority of people in employment work in a small or medium sized business so the tactics of large companies who pay late affects the lives of many millions of working people.”

# COMMONS DIARY

From serving up policies for free school meals while the Conservatives 'cook the statistical books', **Angela Rayner** gives the government a grammar school grilling

Last week, I announced that the next Labour government will introduce free school meals for all primary school children, funded by levying VAT on private school fees.

I won't claim this idea is unique. It was recommended by the School Food Plan back in 2013 and Universal Infant Free School Meals were introduced in 2014 – but the entitlement extended only to Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.

Research by both the National Centre for Social Research and the Institute of Fiscal Studies has shown that universal access to free school meals would enhance a primary school pupil's performance by two months. Labour councils in Islington and Southwark, who already provide universal free school meals

“I want to take good ideas wherever I find them, even the Conservative benches”

for primary school children, have seen similar improvements. The improvements seen have been most marked amongst children from less affluent families.

I was a recipient of free school meals so I know what difference a healthy meal makes. We all know that through no fault of their own, some children can go a full day without a hot meal. Even among those already entitled, research shows that hundreds of thousands do not take up their free school meal, and there are millions more who in struggling families but are not eligible. And we know that the packed lunches



children take in tend to be less healthy.

Levying VAT on private school fees was of course controversial in some quarters. Some suggested it was a 'class war'. Of course, the idea was recently supported by that well-known dangerous Trotskyist, former Tory Education Secretary Michael Gove. Theresa May's door is now firmly closed to Gove. But I want to take good ideas wherever I find them, even the Conservative benches.

By the end of the week, not even Theresa May would condemn the idea. All she did was claim that we would bankrupt the country. I may not be an economist, but I don't think fully costed and funded policies are likely to bankrupt the world's sixth richest economy. On the contrary, the revenue from removing the VAT subsidy on private school fees is far higher than the cost of free school meals, so we would have money available for other worthwhile investments in our education system.

A week on and the government have made their own education announcement, a technical consultation on re-defining 'ordinary working families'. This now excludes children eligible for free school

meals or the pupil premium, or who are fostered or adopted.

This may seem strange but it's not hard to work out why they have done it. Less than one in ten pupils in existing grammar schools are 'disadvantaged' compared to more than one in six in conventional schools. But the government have carefully chosen a definition of 'ordinary working families' to show that these children do get in to grammars – so long as you ignore the poorest.

It is a transparent attempt to cook the books in an attempt to show that their vanity project of grammar schools will benefit the working class. There is just one problem with that idea. Even in redefining an 'ordinary working family', the government have been unable to provide any evidence that they do. Under their new definition, there are still fewer children from 'ordinary working families' in grammar schools than there are children from families with above median income.

This figure fiddling from the government will not be enough to convince people that grammar schools are not the preserve of the rich. No wonder the Secretary of State couldn't name one expert who backs up that idea.

While the government continue to get it wrong on education, I am determined that Labour will offer a real alternative. 🍴



**Angela Rayner** is Labour MP for Ashton under Lyne and shadow education secretary



Theresa May hopes the snap election will give her the strong mandate she needs to secure a Brexit deal. But her decision is not risk free, writes **George Parker**



# Snap to it



In the end, the opportunity was too good to waste. After months of insisting that a snap general election would be “self-serving” and create instability, Theresa May has thrown the political pack of cards up in the air.

Much has been made of how May took the decision in the fresh spring air of Snowdonia while walking with her husband, Philip – a man steeped in Tory politics and whose role as an adviser to the prime minister should not be underestimated.

But in the end, all the lights were flashing green. Even given May’s inherent



caution, was she going to be the Tory prime minister who made the same fatal mistake as Gordon Brown in 2007, dithering on the election threshold?

May has framed the election in terms of Brexit. "Every vote for the Conservatives will make me stronger when I negotiate for Britain with the European Union," she explained.

Brexit lay at the heart of her decision, but there were many other factors. Not least was a slew of opinion polls giving her a 20-point lead over Labour: no other Tory prime minister since 1945 has entered an election with such a lead.

Sir Lynton Crosby, who will run the Tory campaign, and Nick Timothy, her powerful co-chief of staff, were among those urging her to run now, to strengthen her position on Brexit and to win a fresh mandate.

May knew that policies including the reintroduction of grammar schools, tax reform and a social care revolution would be much easier to push through (especially in the House of Lords) if they were endorsed in a general election.

There was a nagging fear in No 10 that Jeremy Corbyn might quit after the 4 May elections, offering Labour the chance to appoint a more electorally potent leader.

And May also feared that the Crown Prosecution Service might bring charges over electoral irregularities in a number of Conservative seats at the 2015 election, triggering a series of byelections.

Even the Fixed-term Parliaments Act – cited by many commentators as a major obstacle to an early poll – proved to be no barrier at all, once Labour had reluctantly embraced an early election. In the end,

May's choice seemed a no-brainer.

May says that a big victory on 8 June will allow her to strike a tough bargain in Brexit talks: there is little doubt that the prime minister will campaign Britannia ready to take on all comers in Brussels.

But there are clues everywhere that May will use a strong mandate for another purpose: to allow her to manage Brexit in a smooth way, including presiding over a transition period in which EU rules may continue to apply to Britain for several years.

After the smooth activation of Article 50 in late March – and the measured reaction in Brussels – May took stock of

“ Given May's inherent caution, was she going to make the same fatal mistake as Gordon Brown in 2007, dithering on the election threshold? ”

the timetable ahead. She feared that in the final negotiations leading up to Brexit in March 2019 she might be “over a barrel”, as EU leaders used a looming 2020 British election as a weapon against her.

If May wins on 8 June, her electoral horizon will extend until June 2022. That will allow her to strike a tough bargain on Brexit, while also giving her a three-year window to oversee a transition deal leading up to the ratification of an EU/UK trade deal.

May has already hinted this transition deal might include continued free movement. It might also include continued EU budget contributions and a role for the European Court of Justice. So much easier to manage

if she does not have to hold an election until 2022. A strong personal mandate would also insulate her from criticism from the most hardline eurosceptics in her party.

The prime minister's motives have been hinted at since she called the snap election. She told *The Sun* that a new mandate would make her “freer” to negotiate the best deal for Britain. Amber Rudd, home secretary, said “potential compromises” with the EU might be easier after an election.

That is not to say that May is abandoning the key objectives of Brexit: control over borders, money and laws. Indeed the *Daily Mail* was briefed that the Tory manifesto would have a “triple lock” to guarantee those three points. But the election does give her more room to engineer a smooth departure.

One Tory MP speculated that May might also have wanted her own mandate to allow her to go head-to-head with a newly elected president of France and chancellor of Germany. “There may have been a case of mandate envy,” the MP said. “I wouldn't be surprised.”

Will May win that new mandate? Given the success of the journalistic profession (guided by the pollsters) in predicting the results of the general elections in 2010 and 2015, let alone the outcome of the 2016 Brexit referendum, it would be pointless to make predictions.

Of course we think we know the answer. But can Jeremy Corbyn somehow transfer his campaigning success in Labour internal elections on to the national stage, campaigning as the underdog taking on the mighty establishment? The US presidential election suggests it is not an entirely hopeless strategy.

What about the Liberal Democrats? People say that they might do well in Remain seats like Kingston and Twickenham, but I predict they will do well against the Tories in seats that were resolutely for Leave – including those in Somerset and Cornwall.

As May said herself: “In every election there is a risk.” The 2017 election might look straightforward, but such contests never are. 🇬🇧



George Parker is political editor of the *Financial Times*



# Undue influence

**Paul Flynn** believes the EU referendum was won by the side with the means to distribute the most plausible lies. And the Labour MP argues the 'opportunistic' snap election will ensure another free ride to those wishing to exploit it

**N**ot since the 1880 reforms have our systems for election and referendums been in greater peril. The single thunderous lesson from the EU Referendum is that new technology trumps long-established democratic safeguards. Clandestine artificial intelligence, algorithms, and invisible money sources can overwhelm surface democratic rules.

PACAC's report *Lessons learned from the EU referendum* gained considerable attention for highlighting the possibility that foreign governments interfered with the referendum.

The voter registration website crashed last June threatening disenfranchisement of thousands, forcing the government to extend the registration deadline. The committee reported that the crash had indications of a botnet attack on the voter registration website.

The crash may well have been the result of an attack designed to influence political outcome. Worryingly there is no chance to address these concerns before Theresa May's opportunistic snap election.

As we enter this election campaign period an alarming narrative is emerging of online voter targeting, calculated to cause mass interference and influence. An elite group is shaping world politics to suit their private beliefs, their behaviour having untold and unquantifiable effects. Whilst the plot reads like that of a comic book this cyber manipulation is no fiction and played a role in both the EU referendum

and President Trump's election.

Exceptional investigation work by journalist Carole Cadwalladr has exposed the wide reaching implications of the issue including the probity of June's General Election.

Billionaire Robert Mercer is Donald Trump's biggest donor. He is also reported to be an owner of Cambridge Analytica, a company specialising in



election strategies and involved in both the Trump and Brexit campaigns.

The company proved to be instrumental to Leave.EU and taught the campaign how to build profiles, target people and gain data from Facebook profiles.

When interviewed by Cadwalladr, Leave.EU's communications director, admitted, "Facebook was the key to the entire campaign. A Facebook 'like' was their most "potent weapon". Using artificial intelligence, as we did, tells you all sorts of things about that individual and how to convince them with what sort of advert. And you knew there would also be other

people in their network who liked what they liked, so you could spread. And then you follow them. The computer never stops learning and it never stops monitoring."

So worrying is Cambridge Analytica's actions that the Information Commissioners Office has launched an investigation into their reported use of personal data.

There is contempt for the electoral process they are manipulating. Leave.EU have not declared Cambridge Analytica's work as services in kind to the electoral commission. Arron Banks of Leave.EU has since declared "I don't give a monkey's about the Electoral Commission."

In June the Electoral Commission is expected to deal with tomorrow's problems. The referendum proved their outdated tools will ensure a free ride to those wishing to exploit it.

Broadcast advertising is subject to controls. Recent shifts have proved unfair advantages are now to be gained from online activity which lacks regulation.

Sir Tim Berners Lee has condemned the disgusting practice of selling private citizens online data. He summed up the problem best: "We've lost control of our personal data...it's too easy for misinformation to spread on the web" and "Political advertising online needs transparency and understanding."

Lobbyists and Billionaires are manipulating media and public opinion in defiance of transparency regulations.

We are in the disturbing era where lobbyists can weaponise fake news for the highest

bidder. They can track voters' personal data and manipulate public opinion. All of this they can do under cover of anonymity and without regulation or oversight.

The EU Referendum was a battle of dishonesty. It was won by the side with the means to distribute the most plausible lies. 🇬🇧



**Paul Flynn** is Labour MP for Newport West

# Out of the blue

Like most of Westminster, **Bernard Jenkin** was left stunned by the announcement of a snap election. He talks to **Agnes Chambre** about the ‘fiction’ of the Fixed Term Parliament Act and the dangers of foreign interference in elections

**A**t 10am on Tuesday morning, Bernard Jenkin received a text. ‘There’s a rumour going round that the PM is about to announce a general election,’ it read. Number 10 had just told the world Theresa May would be making a statement in just over an hour. Jenkin ran through the options of what it could be; a death in the Royal family? Military action? Direct rule for Northern Ireland? None of these seemed appropriate. “It had to be something personal or something to do with the Conservative party or a general election,” Jenkin reflects.

At 11:15am May stood on the steps of Downing Street in front of a podium without the government crest and told the country that it was her intention to go to the polls on 8 June.

Some 24 hours later, and just minutes before Jenkin sits down to talk to *The House*, MPs had voted 522-13 to set up the election before the 2020 date mandated by the Fixed Term Parliament Act (FTPA). The vote raised questions about the purpose of the Act, and Jenkin, who opposed its introduction, does not hold back in his criticism.

“I think it’s a terrible piece of legislation, it’s turned out to be a fiction anyway,” he says. “It was an Act created in order to reinforce the incumbency of the coalition. It was to cement in office a particular group of people and protect them from another general election.

“It’s easier to hold a prime minister to account if you know that she can call a general election at any time and I think that’s a democratic system. Get rid of it.”

Exactly a week before the election was called, Jenkin’s highly influential Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs

Committee published a report on the vulnerability of Britain’s electoral process to cyber-attacks during elections. ‘Lessons Learned from the EU Referendum’ did not rule out the possibility that there was foreign cyber interference in last June’s vote.

The committee, which Jenkin chairs, called on the government to ensure the same mistakes are not made again. Jenkin says it is important to keep Russia’s technical capabilities in perspective.

“The most impossible thing to hack is a polling station where people are going into a voting booth and voting. The only bit that was possibly knocked over in the referendum was a brand new central registration system which hadn’t been properly tested or protected.

“I think we need to understand the psychological intent behind these kinds of attacks,” he says. “Russia delights in everybody talking about how they may be interfering in the election of Trump or the French election. Whether they are succeeding or not is of secondary importance to them. Everyone is

advertising their power and influence.”

Although Jenkin is not concerned about the result of the general election being affected, he urges ministers to look at his committee’s recommendations before the country goes to the polls. The report called on the government to set up a new team to monitor, and contain, cyber-attacks on UK electoral processes.

Jenkin expects a full response to the report’s recommendations after the snap election, but says this problem should be addressed immediately. “We made a recommendation that the Cabinet Office should establish a cyber working group to monitor cyber interference in our electoral processes, in cooperation with GCHQ. It would probably be after the election that the government responds to this report, but they could implement this recommendation now and they should.”

The fact that the election came as such a shock to even the most senior of Conservatives – Jenkin described it as “out of the blue” – shows the extent to which the secret was kept. Since she became prime minister, May has repeatedly promised not to hold a snap poll.

But Jenkin backs the decision, saying it was “becoming clearer and clearer” that some Remain supporters – “particularly in the House of Lords” – were prepared to oppose the Brexit all the way. “They just

would not accept that the referendum result was what the British people had signed up to,” he says.

“Well the British people now have a choice, they can elect a Conservative government with a clear mandate to conduct Brexit in a certain way or they can choose another government but this will decide it and this will settle it.”

The Lords were at least partly responsible for the early election U-turn; May mentioned that the “unelected members of the House of Lords have vowed to fight us every step of the way” as she made her speech on Tuesday.





There has been speculation these comments could pave the way for a promise of reform in the Tory manifesto, but Jenkin denies this, claiming the prime minister was referring to the Salisbury convention; the understanding which dictates that the House of Lords can only reject laws if they were not in the governing party's manifesto.

"I think the government would be well advised to leave the House of Lords alone. The fact is the House of Lords does its job.

"The House of Lords is pretty deferential to the House of Commons. While we had a referendum on leaving the European Union, there was quite a lot of legitimate debate about how we should leave the EU. What I expect to see in our manifesto is a very clear commitment to how we will leave the EU and that will settle what will be in the Great Repeal Bill, how the legislation will be framed.

"It will settle to some extent the relationship between the four parts of the UK, though that debate may well

carry on in one way or another. And the Salisbury convention will mean that the Lords can interrogate and scrutinise it, but in the end they have to accept it and they can't delay it."

But Jenkin, who was a leading Leave voice in the Brexit campaign, does not believe the next six weeks will be a rerun of the EU referendum.

"The country is getting bored with Brexit. I think a re-run of the referendum

“The country is getting bored with Brexit. I think a re-run of the referendum would appal most people”

would appal most people. I think the Brexit horse has bolted from the stable and I think this is not going to decide whether or not we leave

the EU. Even this Parliament, which was predominantly against Brexit, voted for Brexit after the referendum. I don't think any party in this country has got a future if they are going to try and turn the clock back on the referendum result."

But what of those Conservative MPs, Nicky Morgan and Anna Soubry chief among them, who backed Remain in the EU referendum and have been

vocal since about their priorities for the country? Jenkin's advice is to "accept reality" when they are out campaigning.

"We live in a democracy where as an elected MP you are expected to use your judgement. I would not expect any of my colleagues to sell out on their principles and there will be one or two who will be irreconcilable. But they are a very, very small number. I would urge them to stick to their principles but accept reality."

As the conversation draws to a close Jenkin tells me he has "never been so optimistic about the future of this country".

"We have taken another great leap forward in our history. Some people will regret it but most people in this country will accept things are changing and want to change with them in order to continue to prosper."

Like every parliamentary candidate over the next six weeks, the Conservative MP will be pounding the pavement of his constituency to try and hold onto his seat. With a 15,000 majority, it shouldn't be hard, but who knows what the political landscape could look like in 49 days' time? Twenty-four hours before this interview, a general election looked impossible. 🇬🇧

## Upcoming Events...



THEHOUSE

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HOLYROOD



### Brexit Exchange London

Thursday 18th May  
Leadenhall Building

For information about Brexit Exchange, email: [info@brexit-exchange.com](mailto:info@brexit-exchange.com)

For further information on our upcoming events or to RSVP please email [events@dodsgroup.com](mailto:events@dodsgroup.com)



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The snap election will bring an end to the careers of some of the biggest beasts in Parliament – and could see the return of a few familiar faces. **Mark Leftly** reports

**E**very general election sees the retirement of some of the biggest beasts to prowl the three miles of corridors of power in the Palace of Westminster.

This week's shock snap general election announcement put at least a temporary end to one of the most significant political careers of the millennium thus far. Still only 45, former chancellor George Osborne announced he would be standing down from his Tatton seat to concentrate on his many business interests, most notably his forthcoming editorship of *The London*

*Evening Standard*. Unsurprisingly, *Standard* political editor Joe Murphy broke the story, revealing a letter to constituents that hinted at a future comeback by saying he was leaving Westminster "for now".

On the Opposition benches, lingering hopes among many Labour MPs that former home secretary Alan Johnson could ever be persuaded to stand for the party's leadership were finally extinguished. The 66-year-old announced he would be standing down from representing Hull West and Hessle, having made his decision in the minutes after Theresa May's election

call on the short walk from Waterstone's in Trafalgar Square to Parliament.

Many other MPs are considering their positions ahead of the dissolution of Parliament at one minute past midnight on 3 May. What makes this election all the more interesting is that – just two years after the last poll – some familiar faces, particularly among the Liberal Democrats, could be making a return to the House of Commons.

Others who had previously announced their retirement for 2020 are now going to stay on, given it is only likely to be an extension of two years to those original plans.







## GOING

**S**ir Simon Burns, the former transport and health services minister who has represented Chelmsford since 1987, has stuck to his promise to stand down at the next election. Renowned for his love of US politics – Burns campaigned for Hilary Clinton on several occasions – he is having a “trial run” at teaching British government on the East Coast later this year. He hopes to eventually become a visiting fellow. He tells *The House*: “The proudest thing I did in Parliament was in 1992, before that year’s general election. A defence contractor in my constituency wasn’t going to get a [government] contract for night vision equipment. It was going to a US contractor and that would have led to more than 200 redundancies. I persuaded the defence procurement minister, Alan Clark, to award the contract to them. It involved some straight talking.” Burns’ remaining days in Parliament will involve finding jobs with other MPs for his two members of staff. “They’re bloody good, so it should be easy,” he smiles.

Conservative backbencher Angela Watkinson stands down from Hornchurch and Upminster following a minor stroke last year, while the Lib Dems lose John Pugh.

But Labour has seen the biggest initial exodus. Some of these are practical moves. Two-time former leadership contender Andy Burnham is focusing on his Greater Manchester mayoral bid, for which he is a prohibitive betting favourite next month. Former chief secretary to the treasury Andrew Smith and ex-whip Jim Dowd believe that they will be too old to be in Parliament to 2022 when they will be in their seventies. Gisela Stuart, who edits *The House*, steps down from Edgbaston after fulfilling a career dream of Brexit. Iain Wright, who has risen to prominence over the past two years as a combative chairman of the business select committee, retires from his Hartlepool seat at the relatively tender age of 44 having “been an MP for nearly a third of my life”.

Others, though, seem to relate more directly to anger over Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership, reflecting earlier resignations this Parliament by former frontbenchers Tristram Hunt and Jamie Reed. Pat Glass, who infamously spent two days as Corbyn’s shadow education secretary before quitting, retired with perfunctory statement that included: “I’ve made my decision and that decision stands.” Tom Blenkinsop, the 36-year-old MP for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland, was more direct, citing “irreconcilable differences with the current Labour leadership” that meant he could not “in good faith” represent the party.



## STAYING

**L**ike Burns, several MPs had previously announced they would step down in 2020. An early election has caused many of them to rethink their plans.

Gossip focused on the thoughts of the Commons’ last remaining Conservative big beast of the Thatcher era, Ken Clarke, until he finally decided to defend Rushcliffe on Wednesday. The 76-year-old had previously stated this was his “last Parliament”.

Oliver Letwin, who was on a flight from a skiing holiday in Austria when May called the election, made an immediate decision to fight West Dorset. Famously dubbed David Cameron’s ‘minister for problems’, Letwin had rather taken to the backbenches because it had given him a little spare time to read his vast collection of books and concentrate on authoring more of his own. Letwin had announced a 2020 retirement, but had given himself leeway with his constituency association if an early poll was called. “I said I’d stand again in the unlikely circumstance of an early election, but I assumed there wouldn’t be a snap election,” Letwin tells us. “I rather enjoy being a backbencher and this means I will only go on a year or two longer than I thought I would.”

Indeed, Labour’s Ronnie Campbell, who was due to stand down in 2020 having represented Blyth Valley since 1987, now says that a successor as Labour candidate would have to be found at too short notice, with the possibility that his party members end up with someone they do not rate.

“I was going to stand down in 2020 because I would be too bloody old. But there’s no selection procedure and [Labour headquarters] would impose a candidate more than likely,” he says. “Then the finger would have been pointed at me and people would be saying, ‘If he hadn’t bloody retired then we wouldn’t have got so-and-so’. I’m not going to have that and I’ll probably end up only going on to 2021 if they get rid of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act.”

Campbell also reveals that Dennis Skinner, the 85-year-old ‘Beast of Bolsover’ was also considering stepping down in 2020 until the snap election was called.



## RETURNING?

**A**lthough the Lib Dems are still trailing badly in the national polls, they are optimistic for 8 June because of a resurgence at local level. Recent analysis by *The House* showed that in 117 of 156 council by-elections the party contested between the EU referendum and February this year, the Lib Dems increased their share of the vote.

Always suspecting an early national poll, the Lib Dems convinced a number of the former MPs who lost their seats in 2015 to stand again in the event of a snap election. These include former energy secretary Ed Davey, ex-justice minister Simon Hughes, and former employment minister Jo Swinson. It is understood this agreement was due to run out at the end of May.

Vince Cable, the former business secretary, had strongly hinted he would not fight Twickenham again

“I’ve won four times and lost once. The average is positive”

in 2020 but, after a series of immediate media appearances, he is clearly relishing the chance of becoming an MP again this year. In a huge shock, Cable lost Twickenham by a little more than 2,000 votes to the Conservatives’ Tania Mathis in 2015.

He tells *The House*: “I’ve won four times and lost once, the average is positive. This is a very strong Remain constituency and there are concerns over issues like the expansion of Heathrow. This is an excellent time for the Lib Dems to recapture the seat.”

John Hemming, who lost Birmingham Yardley to rising Labour star Jess Phillips, has spent the past two years honing his computer programming skills. He plans to capitalize on Phillips’ growing profile, which has included writing a book and appearing on political television programmes, to argue she is not “a full-time MP”.

Should some of these old hands mount successful comebacks, the 2017 intake could, then, end up being a curious concoction of the 2010 and 2015 Parliaments. 🍷

### MPs STANDING DOWN

#### Liberal Democrat

John Pugh

#### Independent

Douglas Carswell

#### Labour

Tom Blenkinsop

Andy Burnham

Jim Dowd

Patricia Glass

Alan Johnson

Fiona Mactaggart

Rob Marris

Andrew Smith

Gisela Stuart

Iain Wright

#### Conservatives

Simon Burns

George Osborne

Angela Watkinson

Sir Gerald Howarth

#### Correct as

of 20/04/17

# All to play for

Is the general election campaign in Scotland a 'straight fight' between the SNP and the Conservatives?

**James Millar** reports on how the debate is shaping up north of the Border

**B**renda from Bristol won the internet with her reaction to the news of another general election when she told a BBC reporter: "You're joking!"

Yet Scottish politicians, journalists and voters would be forgiven for rolling their eyes at her. She doesn't know she's born when it comes to trips to the polling station.

In the last three years, Scots have elected MEPs and voted on independence in 2014, then a general election in 2015, a Scottish parliament election and the EU referendum last year followed by council elections across the country next month and Theresa May's snap poll five weeks after that.

Imagine Brenda from Bristol's reaction to that.

And yet the coming contest has still thrown up something new.

For the first time in history, it's a face-off between the SNP and the Conservatives in Scotland. The SNP's Westminster leader and election supremo in previous years, Angus Robertson admitted as much at the first Prime Minister's Questions after the election was called. "We look forward to the straight fight between the Scottish National Party and the Tories," he said.

Though he might not be relishing the contest in his own Moray seat so much where he will face a genuine challenge from the Conservatives for the first time. Moray came closest to bucking the trend in Scotland at last year's EU referendum, the Remain side won there by just a few hundred votes. And the Tories will look to exploit the difference between an electorate open to Brexit and their MP who is enthusiastically pro-EU.

Scotland's north east – with its large fishing industry in particular fuelling support for

Brexit – sums up the Tories' change in fortunes. In 2015 they hoped to pick up some seats there, just two years later they expect to win in a clutch of constituencies. Resources are already being targeted at Stuart Donaldson's West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine seat and they are eyeing up Callum McCaig in Aberdeen South, too. McCaig's often talked up as a successor to Robertson as leader of the Westminster group. The Tories will be cock-a-hoop in the unlikely event they could unseat both Robertson and his heir apparent.





The other parties' big beasts in Scotland may be more vulnerable.

The SNP would love the symbolism of defeating Labour's last man standing in Scotland, Ian Murray in Edinburgh South, and they'll pick their candidate carefully as a result. Publicly, Murray is bullish about retaining his seat. In private, many in the party fear a wipeout.

They are going to get another pounding at the council elections taking place on 4 May, providing a narrative of decline it will be nigh impossible to turn around in the few weeks before the general election.

No one is talking about Scottish Labour winning back

seats. As the electoral tectonic plates have shifted in Scotland, the party has been crushed. Brexit has had a similar effect in tearing up the territory in England but Jeremy Corbyn has made little or no effort to tap up Murray for his expertise on surviving in the new landscape.

However, perversely, some in the SNP fear Labour. They are now an unknown enemy. The SNP knows to brand the Tories as Westminster rightwingers and the Conservatives know to hold up the prospect of another independence referendum to shepherd unionist voters their way.

As one SNP MP told me: "For the first time in my life we are not even thinking about attacking

Labour. If they could find some competent candidates they could exploit that."

Current Scottish secretary David Mundell and his immediate predecessor Lib Dem Alistair Carmichael both have majorities of under 1,000. Carmichael's

Orkney and Shetland seat is reliably Lib Dem and he'll be confident of growing a majority deflated by the 2015 "Nicileaks" scandal – when he had to confess to letting a special adviser leak a memo claiming Nicola Sturgeon wanted David Cameron to win – last time out.

The SNP will not be giving too much energy to the Northern Isles. As one senior figure told me: "Last time was our best shot and it showed that the rocks will melt into the sea before Orkney and Shetland stop voting Liberal."

Mundell's had an increased profile as Scottish secretary. He's known to be confident of getting elected for a fourth time but SNP sources say his seat is their best chance of increasing the party's tally in 2017.

It's the impact of the last independence referendum and Nicola Sturgeon's recent call for a new one that have altered the political landscape so in Scotland.

The 2015 result that saw Labour and

the Lib Dems hammered was driven partly by a desire among the two parties' previous voters to punish them for getting in bed with the Conservatives. But it was also a matter of simple numbers. While the unionist vote splintered, the 45% who'd backed independence in 2014 voted SNP in 2015.

The Tories have been most nimble in responding and now portray themselves as the party of the union, chasing tactical voters who want to stop the SNP.

Sources are cagey about expectations in Scotland – "somewhere between one and 10" is the best prediction I could garner. The local elections on 4 May might give an indication of where they could win but their confidence ahead of 8 June is driven by polls showing most Scots don't want a second independence referendum.

The question is what the 2017 result will mean for the battle between Nicola Sturgeon and Theresa May over holding what's become known as "indyref2".

Assuming May is still PM in June, will she be armed with a manifesto promise not to allow an independence referendum for the duration of the new parliament? If she can take the Tories past a grand total of one Scottish seat for the first time in 25 years, will she take that as an endorsement of her decision to stonewall Sturgeon? Perhaps the prime minister will go all proportional representation and tot up the number of votes cast for anti-independence parties as evidence she's listening to what Scots really want?

If the SNP wins even more seats, will that make Sturgeon's demand irrefutable? She's says May's opposition to indyref2 will "crumble to dust" if so. And if they lose seats, does that weaken Sturgeon's mandate to hold a new poll? The first minister's already looked to head off this last scenario by pointing to her Holyrood manifesto last year and the endorsement of the Scottish parliament for her plans in a vote last month.

While the overall result of the election looks a given – a Tory majority in Westminster, the SNP keeping the vast majority of seats in Scotland – there are so many complex factors at play in Scotland courtesy of the two referendums of 2014 and 2016 and the demands for another on independence that it is sure to be a fascinating campaign. 🇪🇺

“For the first time in my life we are not even thinking about attacking Labour”



As changes to freedom of movement rules loom, four parliamentarians reflect on the potential impact on key industries

# Moving targets



The UK creative sector is worth nearly £10m an hour — underestimate it at your peril, warns **Lord Clement-Jones**

**O**ur creative industries are of ever-growing importance to the UK economy, quite apart from their cultural value. Worth £87bn, they are growing three times as fast as other sectors and account for nearly 2 million jobs. They have massively benefited from our membership of the EU.

As witnesses from the creative services

sector recently underlined to the House of Lords EU Select Committee looking at the impact of Brexit on non-financial services, maintaining continued access to the EU's labour market to address skills shortages and to support continued growth is vital.

The Creative Industries Federation in its Brexit report last autumn said: "Talent and skills are fundamental to the UK's creative success. It is vital we continue to cultivate our own talent as well as to attract the best and brightest from around the world."

The UK is a creative hub, the free movement of people to work and travel across Europe, without the need for

visas, has both facilitated and fuelled the exchange of culture, creativity and expertise, and generated commercial and artistic opportunities. We have a generation of people working in the creative industries who have worked throughout their adult lives on the basis of EU freedom of movement.

Without the right deal, the creative industries will face big challenges if restrictions are placed on the movement of talent and skills.

For example, London is Europe's hub for start-ups and first jobs in fashion. To further their careers, fashion graduates need experience at a wide range of



international fashion houses. A lot of people who work in fashion are not British and many students, when they graduate, get jobs abroad. The music and advertising industries, too, work across international teams and rely heavily on the movement of national and international talent.

Although overall 6.1% of the creative industries workforce are EU (non-British) nationals, they are more heavily represented in particular sectors. It is estimated that 25% of the VFX (visual effects in film) workforce is from the EU, up to 30% in gaming is made up of EU (non-British) nationals and 10% of the design, publishing and advertising workforce are EU (non-British) nationals.

Of course we should aspire to more home-grown talent – and Sir Peter Bazalgette's review of industrial strategy for the creative industries should address this urgently to ensure that our education and training policies fully recognise the specific needs of the creative industries – but as it is there are currently 17 creative roles which are on the government's shortage occupation list (allowing recruitment from outside the EEA) from orchestral musicians to graphic designers. This shortage list will increase following Brexit if freedom of movement is ended and adequate visa arrangements are not put in place.

On Brexit, the ability to develop audiences by low cost touring within the EU, a significant earner for young talent, could end. One visa application

for a non-EU cultural organisation costs between £600 to £1,000. In line with the Arts Council sector survey of the arts and culture, the continued ability for people to move at short notice freely without form-filling between the UK and EU for creative activities such as television and film production, concerts and fashion events is vital.

Our immigration system must continue to enable easy access to critical skills and talent from both EU and non-EU

**“ Without the right Brexit deal, the creative industries will face big challenges ”**

countries. Above all we must ensure, as the Liberal Democrats insisted during the passing of the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act, that non-British EU citizens currently employed in the UK must have the right to stay.

Liberal Democrats have always been champions of creators and of their industries. The government must listen to these strong concerns when Brexit negotiations begin. ■



Lord Clement-Jones is a Liberal Democrat peer

It is sheer lunacy that international students are included in net migration stats. Let's remove them before trade talks begin, writes **Lord Bilimoria**

**T**he Brexit decision has subjected the UK to huge levels of uncertainty as we head into some of the most complex negotiations in living memory.

The Brexiteers' fantasy vision for Britain would see our nation become an enviable global brand, unrivalled in entrepreneurship and trading power. International trade secretary Liam Fox declared, ahead of an upcoming tour of south-east Asia, "We remain an outward-looking country, firing on all cylinders and a champion of global trade. We are most definitely open for business."

And yet, as a result of the Brexit vote, a huge shadow of uncertainty has been cast over the UK. The very question of starting up and doing business in Britain when there's a possibility of WTO trading tariffs is one that the Brexiteers have yet to answer. We have years of uncertainty ahead.

And generations to come will feel the effect of Brexit on our world-leading universities. If you look at the world ranking over the last decade, we are just 1% of the world's population and yet our universities always feature prominently, by comparison with European and other large nations, and are by far the best in the world along with the US.

I am proud to say that this year the University of Birmingham, of which I am chancellor, has taken its place squarely in the top 100 another year in a row, in addition to picking up three more Nobel prizes. This success is the result of the pursuit of excellence by our leading, hardworking academics from around the world. Yet there are many threats to our university sector as a result of triggering Article 50, let alone what could happen if we do end up leaving the European Union. ➤



Is London's position as a hub for fashion under threat from Brexit?



First there are issues around funding. The UK received the second highest of any EU nation. It's excellent that the government has promised similar levels of funding in the National Productivity Investment Fund. But even if we do match the funding – without raiding it from other parts of the universities' budgets – we still won't have the benefits of the European system.

Worse, we will lose out on major projects like Horizon 2020. Birmingham recently won £1.4m from this programme to collaborate with partners around Europe on designing and developing a robot that can handle nuclear waste. I do not see how

the bodies coordinating British funding will help our eager research teams to take part in these very attractive pan-European projects. Yet collaboration is at the heart of the scientific community; threatening the principle of collaboration might be enough to put off a large number of foreign academics from applying, never mind forcing some UK professors to leave.

Currently, 5.5% of undergraduates come from the EU and, as recent figures from Cambridge show, their applications are down 14% already. More worryingly, we may retain a much smaller percentage of those students once they graduate. We have a shortage of 40,000 engineers in the UK, and not enough domestic applicants to fill the vacancies.

In response, the cry goes up, "We shall train more British engineers". Yet it's not as simple as that, because we cannot train them out of nowhere; 16% of all our academics at our universities are from the EU and if the reported percentages of them (up to 75%) are considering leaving, we will before long have a critical shortage of staff to lead the skills revolution we are hoping for.

Second, while we are a great distance

from having a meaningful conversation about trading ties with our allies, the first step to starting that conversation is to put in place sensible, business-friendly immigration policies, starting with international students.

Theresa May's stubborn policy of counting students as immigrants encourages an unwelcoming environment

“ May's stubborn policy of counting students as immigrants encourages an unwelcoming environment to UK nationals studying here ”

to UK nationals studying here. On her recent trip to India, instead of aiming at encouraging Indian students to come here, she ignored universities and international students and, in doing so, sent out completely the wrong message.

We in Britain do not see international students as migrants. According to a recent ComRes poll commissioned by Universities UK, 73% of UK citizens want international students' numbers

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## We need a new Seasonal Agricultural Permit Scheme to safeguard British growers, says **Helen Whately**

**T**here's nothing like a British strawberry and, as summer approaches, the fields in my constituency will be full of glorious, ripening fruit.

As well as growing healthy food, fruit and vegetable, farmers are vital to the rural economy. They employ thousands of people, and the food and drink industry as a whole is worth £108bn to the economy.

Fruit-growing is a great British success story. The market has grown rapidly over the last five years as people are choosing healthier diets and berries have been recognised as a superfood. But with rising labour costs and supermarkets determined to keep prices stable, profits are being squeezed. Half of

“There are real fears that British fruit could go unpicked, left to rot on the branch, because of a shortage of labour”

fruit farms have a margin of 2% or less.

From speaking to local farmers, and as chair of the APPG for Fruit and Vegetable Farming, I know opinions were split over Brexit. However, all growers are worried about access to labour. The horticulture industry needs thousands of seasonal workers every year to pick and pack their produce.

The British Growers Association estimates that the horticulture industry employed 80,000 seasonal workers last year. They forecast this will increase to 95,000 by 2019. Currently, the vast majority come from EU countries.

Farmers in my constituency have tried to recruit locally, but it hasn't worked – not least because high employment rates mean there aren't enough people looking for work, let alone with the skills required. In my constituency, farmers employ

to rise or stay level, and 64% believe that international students benefit the local economies, with a further three-quarters stating that they should stay and work for a period of time after their studies have ended.

British people don't see international students as migrants, so it is sheer lunacy that they should continue to be included in the net migration figures.

By contrast, competitor countries such as Canada, Australia and the US have both seen increases in international students, classifying them as non-permanent or temporary residents, not as migrants.

In Britain, through our higher education sector, we are extremely fortunate to have the enormous benefits international students bring to this country, contributing £26bn to our economy.

If we want the Brexit negotiations to be successful, we need a radical change of tone with regard to immigration and education. 🇬🇧



**Lord Bilimoria** is a Crossbench peer, Chancellor of the University of Birmingham and President of the UK Council for International Student Affairs



around 10,000 seasonal workers, but fewer than 800 people are on JSA.

The days of students picking fruit as a holiday job are gone. Supermarkets demand quality, consistency and picking at a rate that requires workers who are experienced and physically fit. EU countries have provided a steady stream of skilled workers, but growers tell me they are now struggling to recruit.

The lower value of the pound means wages are worth less to workers from abroad than before, and some EU migrants are feeling less welcome following the referendum. Fruit pickers are skilled workers, in demand across the EU, so some farmers are paying more than the national living wage to compete.

There are real fears that British fruit could go unpicked, left to rot on the branch, because of a shortage of labour. Some British fruit farmers could go out of business, and the cost of fruit that does reach the shops could go up. In a sector where we are arguably the best in the world, and at a time when we want to improve our balance of trade, we face British produce being replaced by imports.

The referendum result was decisive. Rightly, the government plans to negotiate a deal which controls free movement. However, this does create a challenge for an industry which relies on seasonal migrant labour. This is why we need a Seasonal Agricultural Permit Scheme [SAPS].

I recently invited Andrea Leadsom, secretary of state for the environment, food and rural affairs, to meet farmers in my constituency. They made the case strongly for such a scheme to be introduced as soon as possible. They can't afford to wait until we leave the EU.

We used to have a Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme [SAWS] until it was abolished in 2013. Similar schemes exist in other OECD countries including New Zealand, Canada, the US and Australia. SAWS had entry and exit checks which meant that over 98% of those who came to work in the UK returned home afterwards, so did not count towards immigration figures.

A new SAPS scheme could include all the positives of the old scheme: Home Office oversight, checks on arrival and departure, restrictions on the length of placement and independently accredited standards. And permits should be extended to agricultural workers from beyond the EU.

Farmers need to know they will have access to the workers they need: SAPS would provide that security – it should be introduced sooner rather than later. 🇬🇧



**Helen Whately** is Conservative MP for Faversham and Mid Kent and chair of the Fruit and Vegetable Farming APPG

It is essential that we continue to recruit and retain veterinarians from the EU, says **Lord Trees**

**Y**ou probably know your vet as the person to whom you take your pet when it has a problem. Most likely, you were given an appointment the day you telephoned; you had diagnostic tests such as blood tests and x-rays done almost immediately and, if surgery was necessary, that was done there and then for an emergency or within a few days if non-urgent. You may also have noticed that the vet was a non-UK EU national (in recent years some 40% of vets registering to work in the UK qualified in continental Europe).

What you may not know is that, of the vets on the academic staff in our world-leading UK vet schools (four of the eight vet schools in the UK are ranked in the world's top 10), nearly a quarter are non-UK EU nationals. They teach our future vets and contribute to the research

“ Our international trade in livestock products, our indigenous food chain and everyday animal healthcare could face an existential crisis ”

excellence of our vet schools. And you probably didn't realise that of the hundreds of vets who ensure the safety of the meat we eat from abattoirs and through the subsequent food chain, some 90% are non-UK European nationals.

In fact, in the UK today, in every activity in which vets are involved – safeguarding the health and welfare of both our pets and our livestock, public health, research, government service, wildlife medicine and, critically, trade in livestock products (where veterinary certification is the essential passport to trade) – a large proportion of these highly trained professionals have come from continental Europe to live and work here.

It hardly needs saying that, without them, our international trade in livestock products, our indigenous food chain which delivers wholesome animal-derived



food to our shops and supermarkets, to say nothing of everyday animal healthcare, would face an existential crisis.

It takes a minimum of five years of intensive university education to produce a veterinary graduate who can qualify to be a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) – the essential qualification to practise as a vet in the UK. So it is essential that we retain, and can continue to recruit, a substantial number of suitably qualified vets from overseas. It is simply not feasible to replace them in any realistic timeframe with home-produced professionals. But more than that, this contribution of an international cadre of graduates enriches the expertise, experience and innovative potential of our veterinary profession.

Of course, this particular issue is not unique to veterinary science. It is mirrored in many other activities, notably human health and social care, scientific research and development and many other skilled occupations. But our relatively small veterinary profession makes a particularly critical contribution to our society. We need, as soon as possible, to give assurances to those already here that they have a valuable and necessary role. It is essential that, in the



forthcoming evolution of our relationship with Europe, we ensure appropriate mutual recognition of professional qualifications – under the aegis of the RCVS – together with the ability to attract and keep such valuable overseas-trained personnel. 🐾



**Professor the Lord Trees** is a Crossbench peer and veterinarian

## RCVS publishes its framework for meeting the challenges and maximising opportunities of Brexit

**The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) – the regulator of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses in the UK - has published its three ‘Brexit Principles’ which will guide the College’s approach to navigating the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union.**

The first Principle, that **‘vital veterinary work continues to get done’**, reflects concerns that changes to immigration rules could cause significant labour shortages in the UK. Specific policies attached to this Principle are designed to ensure consistent labour supply, while upskilling and extending the role of veterinary nurses.

To promote the second Principle, ensuring that

**‘high standards of animal health and welfare remain and improve’**, the College will work towards advancing standards of global accreditation, and for those schools with European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education accreditation to be given priority in the event of restrictions being placed on EU graduates registering in the UK.

Further to the third Principle, that **‘the RCVS is a global force for good’**, the College will seek to preserve the working rights of UK vets in the EU, and work with countries to improve the accreditation of veterinary schools, both bilaterally and through overseas regulators and agencies, all while growing global membership.

Find out more at [www.rcvs.org.uk/brexit](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/brexit)

**RCVS** | SETTING  
VETERINARY  
STANDARDS

# Borderline insecurity

**Sabine Tyldesley**

examines the impact of Brexit on the UK's future role in European security and law enforcement cooperation

**S**ince last year's referendum several select committees have been examining the effect of Brexit and calls for "safety first" have become louder.

In the Lords the EU Committee concluded that the "safety of the people of the UK should be the overriding consideration" during negotiations – and the chair of the EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee Baroness Prashar warned against "complacency" as a positive outcome was not inevitable despite a strong mutual interest.

Likewise – following suggestions the PM might use security cooperation as a "bargaining chip" to force an advantageous trade deal – the Commons Justice Select Committee also stressed this aspect of negotiations was "too precious to be left vulnerable to tactical bargaining". The PM's veiled threats were made more stark by comments from the Home Secretary Amber Rudd when she stated: "We are the largest contributor to Europol. If we left, we'd take our information with us."

Dods Research asked MPs in August 2016 and again in March 2017 whether they felt leaving the EU would make the UK stronger, or more vulnerable. Conservative MPs have become less certain during this time frame with regards to the threat from terrorists and cross border crime – but were

more confident about the impact on border controls with over 50% of Conservatives believing the UK will be much stronger.

Last year 41% of Labour MPs responded that Brexit would make the UK 'much weaker'. By March – although 26% still opted for the 'much weaker' category – Labour MPs appeared to be cautiously less pessimistic with the majority (36.6%) now opting for 'neither stronger nor weaker' (up from 19% in August).

Various witnesses giving evidence to the parliamentary inquiries over the last six months – including the director of Europol, Rob Wainwright, and the EU Commissioner for Security Union at the European Commission, Sir Julian King – were not nearly as sanguine.

The overarching consensus was that established agencies and coordination tools – data sharing facilities in particular – are vital to security and their work. Additionally, none of the currently known options for the UK outside of the EU match their effectiveness – and negotiations will be complex in the absence of any

precedent for the kind of relationship and agreement the UK seeks – and cooperation would have to continue for the sake of citizens' security and justice.

The government made clear it would "not seek to adopt a model currently enjoyed by another country" looking for a bespoke deal, but what are the current considerations?

Some elements of cooperation fall within the EU framework via agencies, which the UK would automatically exit when leaving the EU. Others are established multi- or bilaterally, including information sharing and cooperation via intelligence services.

At the heart of the former category lies Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency and its communication network SIENA (Secure Information Exchange Network Application) which allows the swift exchange of information between Europol and member state authorities.

Since 2000, the UK government has enhanced cooperation in justice and home affairs, and in November announced







its intention to opt in to new Europol regulations to remain a full member of Europol throughout the Brexit process. To continue to participate in Europol thereafter, multiple scenarios are possible.

One such scenario is the Denmark model: from 1 May Denmark will no longer be a full member of Europol but take on a hybrid position, between a full member and a third party. A new agreement will grant Denmark observer status on the management board, allow liaison officers but will not allow direct access to SIENA. Further Denmark is a full member of Schengen, and currently there are no precedents for third countries outside of non-EU Schengen countries locking into information-sharing platforms.

Third-party access is an option, currently exercised by the United States among others, which allows some access to SIENA but does not grant the same decision making powers within Europol. Further any operational agreement would require the UK to comply with data protection adequacy requirements.

Data protection standards are set by the General Data Protection Regulations

(GDPR) due to be transposed in 2018, with a specific directive for police and judicial authorities. Data protection is a contentious point since the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling last December that “general and indiscriminate retention” of emails and electronic communications was illegal, throwing into question whether the Investigatory Powers Act and other legislation will need amending – or hinder access to Europol.

Additionally, there is the Norwegian-Icelandic model: Norway has liaison officers at Europol and access to SISii, the Schengen Information System (second generation) but in return accepts ECJ jurisdiction, submits to data security standards and accepts an extensive body of rules as part of a Schengen Association Agreement. There are further limitations on any automatic application of extradition agreements, such as the European Arrest Warrant (EAW).

And with a 25% increase in the rate of EAW extraditions from the UK in the past year, the Lords EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee launched an inquiry into European Arrest Warrant in March.

There is uncertainty whether the UK would be willing to submit to continued jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice but currently extradition agreements require the acceptance of the ECJ as final arbiter in the event of a dispute. Two former presidents of Eurojust agreed alternative arrangements would be lengthy and difficult to negotiate and any fall back on the 1957 Council of Europe Convention on extradition was inferior on several counts.

This mood of uncertainty as to whether access to the EAW would make the UK stronger or more vulnerable seems to be reflected by some in the Conservative party. While the majority of Tory MPs who believe there will be ‘no change’ after Brexit has remained fairly constant (polling 61% in August, rising slightly to 66.6% by March) those who were most confident in August – declaring that the UK would actually be ‘much stronger’ (18%) – were less assured by March with their number falling to 6%. Both Labour and SNP members however agree that the UK will be significantly weakened with the loss of this tool.

As to tools outside of Europol, the National Crime Agency, National Police Chiefs Council and the

Metropolitan Police Service have made clear that, for counter-terrorism and cybercrime activities, access to other intelligence sharing platforms would constitute the greatest loss – especially the use of passenger name records and financial intelligence.

They further highlighted the sheer volume of information accessed via SISii. This pan-European database – which allows the real-time sharing of information and alerts between relevant authorities – has seen the UK upload 430,000 alerts since April 2015 and send 37,000 messages to Europol member states on SIENA in 2016 – relating primarily to UK high-priority threats like child sexual exploitation, firearms, cybercrime and organised immigration crime.

Additionally, ECRIS (European

“ The EU trajectory is to increase Europol capacity and join up systems – making the position of being a third-party country less and less favourable ”

Criminal Records Information System) processed 173,000 requests last year and the Prüm framework (outlining rules for operational police cooperation) enabled biometric data sharing, DNA, fingerprints and vehicle registration data at speed and at significant volumes.

Both SISii and ECRIS are currently used by Schengen or EU members only, so the UK would need to negotiate special access agreements.

The overall EU trajectory is to further increase the capacity of Europol, joining up systems and rooting out fragmentation – making the position of being a third-party country less and less favourable.

Tricky negotiations lie ahead not just with the EU on Europol but also bilaterally with 27 individual member states on access to the other tools.

If the government puts safety first, negotiators better buckle up. 🚧

**Sabine Tyldesley** is the Dods UK Monitoring Consultant for Home Affairs and Justice

# In Command

Photos Louise Haywood-Schiefer

The defence secretary, **Sir Michael Fallon**, talks to Alan Mak MP about fighting Daesh, dealing with President Trump and his plan to modernise the Armed Forces

**R**eplacing the sofas in her office with a table and chairs is often held up as symbolising the shift in approach from David Cameron's style of government to Theresa May's.

More formal meetings, less sofa government. If any Cabinet minister reflects this serious, methodical approach it's Sir Michael Fallon. Having served in the Thatcher, Major and Cameron governments – and re-appointed as defence secretary last July – he has become the epitome of calmness and continuity amidst unprecedented tumult at home and abroad. A safe pair of hands who has stood firm through unprecedented tumult at home and abroad, from coalition to the aftermath of the EU referendum all whilst Russia, Syria, Daesh and North Korea have become increasingly potent challenges.

Fittingly, Sir Michael and I sit opposite each other across his solid oak office table. "For the last two-and-a-half years round this table I have in effect been running a war," he says, describing the fight against Daesh. "That has included approving rules of engagement, approving individual targets and making sure our servicemen and women have the resources they need.

It has involved all three services." He tells me the RAF is mounting its biggest air campaign since the first Gulf War, with around 1,200 sorties and counting.

While a large portrait of Winston Churchill watches over Fallon's office war room, huge maps on easels mark out the Iraqi and Kurdish advance towards Mosul and Raqqa, strongholds of the so-called Islamic State, which Fallon refers to by its pejorative Arabic acronym "Daesh". Britain has been at the forefront of operations not only in the air but on the ground, with the Army helping to train 45,000 Iraqi troops, and at sea with Royal Navy ships protecting French and American carrier groups.

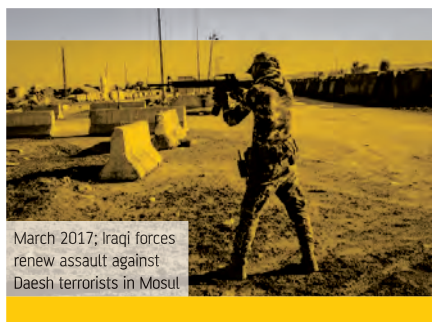
"I arrived here [at the Ministry of Defence] when Daesh were almost at the gates of Baghdad on 14 July 2014, and military action commenced in September

14," Fallon recalls. "This has been a huge military effort over the past two-and-a-half years and it is not over yet. We hope this summer we will see Daesh driven out of the last city they hold [in Iraq] which is Mosul. They lost 12 cities last year and now there is work to do to push Daesh out of Syria. Slowly we are winning, supporting a very fragile democracy in Iraq, but we are making our own streets safer as a result."

Fallon knows the problems in the Middle East will not be resolved by Britain alone, and he places his trust in our traditional alliances: Nato and America. In fact, the new US defence secretary James "Mad Dog" Mattis has already struck-up a warm relationship with Fallon, providing a vital link between London and the new Trump administration. Fallon shows me a warm letter Mattis has sent him from the Pentagon.

The retired four-star general who was previously Commander of the United States Central Command, is revered in military circles, and known for slogans such as "marines don't know how to spell the word 'defeat'", and "be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everyone you meet."

Mattis visited the UK for the first time in his new role at the end of March, hosted



March 2017; Iraqi forces renew assault against Daesh terrorists in Mosul









at least commit to increasing annual defence spending. We need to modernise Nato, it needs to be fitter and faster, dealing not just with Russian aggression but with threats to cyber security. Trump is a wake-up call for the alliance.”

Pointing out that post-Brexit, 80% of Nato spending will come from outside the EU, and that three of the four battalions defending the three Baltics states and Poland will be led by non-EU countries – the US, UK and Canada – the driving force of the

by Fallon, and both share a common ambition to reform Nato. “The special relationship is a source of strength for our two nations, standing together in defence of our freedoms,” Mattis said after the meeting, as he and Fallon announce a new £90m investment to support the UK’s new F-35 Lightning aircraft. Britain has been chosen as a global repair hub for the new fighters, helping create hundreds of high-end jobs and safeguard thousands more.

Fallon backs President Trump’s dramatic intervention in Syria, and says he is relaxed about the impact of the change in administration, pointing out

Whitehall has seen transitions before, from Democrat to Republican and vice versa.

But he predicts the biggest effect will be felt by Nato and the “very clear American demand for European allies to do more and to modernise”. That includes asking more members to ramp up their defence spending to match Nato’s target of 2% of GDP. “19 of the 28 don’t spend even spend 1.5%, whilst five of the 19 don’t even spend 1% and they are by no means the poorest,” Fallon says they need to step up.

“Trump’s call needs to be heeded,” he adds. “We would like to see Nato allies, if they can’t get to 2% right away,

alliance has fundamentally changed. “Who is defending Europe here?” Fallon asks.

Nonetheless, Fallon is clear that plans for an EU Army are off the table, with the UK blocking the idea for both an EU Military Headquarters and an EU General. Saying other EU countries supported the government’s stance, he firmly believes that “Britain is not alone in wanting to avoid duplication with Nato”. However, when the UK leaves the EU it will no longer have a blocking vote, and that prediction may well be tested.

Still, security co-operation will be key negotiating priorities when talks on Britain’s future relationship with the EU begin in earnest. Particularly, Fallon made clear that the future of Gibraltar and military bases on Cyprus were non-negotiable.

“You see references to security partnership throughout the Article 50 letter and in [Theresa May’s] Lancaster House speech,” he continues. “That means not just co-operation on intelligence sharing and the fight against terrorism but it also means continuing a broader security relationship. We already participate in some EU operations, for example tackling people smuggling in

“Slowly we are defeating Daesh, and making our own streets safer as a result”





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the Mediterranean. We will look to see if it's in Britain's national interest to continue in some of those operations."

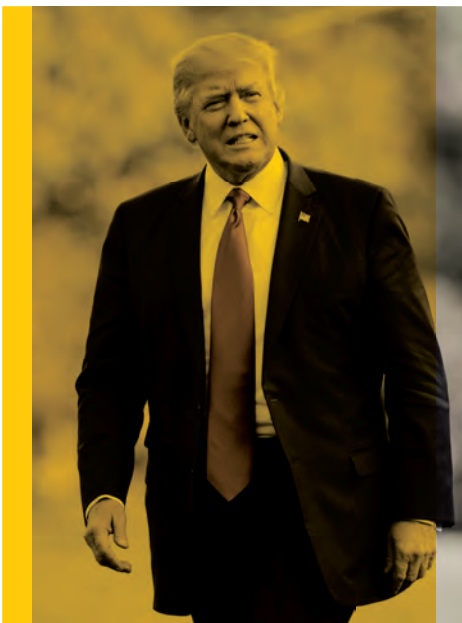
But as well as maintaining current security arrangements, opportunities also exist, with Fallon quick to point out that freedom from EU rules on procurement could mean more opportunities for UK defence businesses.

This will boost UK innovation and bolster the Industrial Strategy, especially as new technologies such as drones, lasers and automated weaponry begin to revolutionise the battlefield. Fallon goes into detail on his Armed Forces modernisation plans, including the use of advanced technologies.

He picks up the prototype for a miniature Dragonfly spy drone from his desk. Developed by a scientist with experience at Oxford University's Zoology department, who noticed that dragonflies can fly in high winds, this tiny spy drone could operate in the future behind enemy lines virtually unnoticed in all weathers. It comes after Fallon launched the Defence Innovation Fund last year, an £800m project designed to find the best new technology from both inside and outside the military.

"We have been missing out on some

"Trump is a wake-up call for Nato. It needs to modernise"



of the best of British technology," he says. "Some of the things we take for granted today are spin-offs from military applications. I want to turn that on its head. I want high-tech companies who are developing something for daily life to consider how they might help us in the military.

"So for innovation what we are doing is putting £800m on the table, and running a series of competitions designed to say to the smallest, whizziest, high-tech companies: come talk to us in defence about how your application might help us."

Another part of Fallon's modernisation plan is to train "thinking servicemen or women". His idea is that the Armed Forces should create a flexible career structure to train and retain the highly skilled modern soldier, sailor and pilot. "We need the skills – IT, coding, logistics – that the rest of the economy needs. So we need to improve the way we recruit and retain." In recruitment Fallon points out that the MoD is increasingly "competing for the brightest of each generation" and future personnel must master a wider range of skills.

Another part of making the military an attractive career will be the implementation of the Flexible Engagements System, an almost halfway house between reservist and full-time roles, being rolled out from 2020. It will offer part time working and protection from deployment for regular service personnel, as well as the opportunity for reservists to volunteer

for higher commitment roles. "There should be something in-between for people in different stages of their careers, especially women returning after children," he says. "It should be possible for people to have a more flexible contract with us and we are also exploring that."

When it comes to running the Armed Forces, Fallon sees parallels with running a business, delivering efficiencies and putting in place the right people, structures and processes. This business approach was honed during his five years outside Parliament after losing his seat at the 1992 General Election. Away from Westminster, he became a director of three companies run by Duncan Bannatyne, the Glaswegian entrepreneurs who became a regular on television show *Dragons' Den*.

He remembers Bannatyne teaching him about cost control, an important competency as Fallon continues balancing the books whilst delivering one of the biggest equipment investment programmes in MoD history – including two new, state-of-the-art aircraft carriers. A "huge moment for Portsmouth" and the rest of the country he says.

These will help Britain deal with global threats, from Islamic terrorism to growing Russian aggression in the Middle East. And echoing Trump's sentiments, he is steadfast that Assad must go.

"We have to persuade everyone in Syria that there is no future without democratic consent and support," Fallon contends. "Assad clearly does not have the support of the Syrian people. Six years of civil war has proved that beyond doubt. We have to lead Syria to a new political settlement which gives all factions a proper voice. We will continue to work with all of the parties in Syria to that end and indeed Russia."

Throughout the interview it is clear that Fallon views his number one priority as defeating Daesh, yet in a fractured picture with many warring sides, the solution will likely need agreement from multiple parties, including Russia.

But Fallon's message to Moscow is he wants to engage not antagonise: "Engage but beware is our policy." A delicate balance to strike, but one ideally suited to a man clearly in command of his brief. 🇬🇧





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# Local and vocal

**B**efore the snap general election in June, local polls will be held for county councils across England. But while the Westminster campaign will be dominated by Brexit, the economy and Scottish independence, the county council campaign will also involve some extraordinary battles by tiny, local parties who rarely, if ever, grace the national stage. Here, The House profiles five of the UK's least-known success stories of local party politics.

## Residents Associations of Epsom & Ewell (RAEE)

This RAEE has an electoral record of which the major parties can only dream: it has gone undefeated since it formed in 1937, boasting majority control of the borough council for eight straight decades. In recent elections, RAEE has started making strides at county level, too. In 2013 it won three of the five Epsom & Ewell seats on Surrey County Council, a success members hope to build on at next month's election.

Eber Kington, a 66-year-old councillor at both borough and county level, says: "We've

contested against Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, usually Ukip now, and very occasionally the Greens, so no one can say we're a 'closet' party for anyone else.

"We believe in keeping party politics out of local government. We don't approach everything from a party political point of view. I've been asked during local elections what my views are on Europe and gay marriage, but I don't answer

**“** We believe in keeping party politics out of local government. I've been asked my views on Europe and gay marriage, but I don't answer” **”**

and just say I stand for local issues and I hope you vote for me based on those."

In 2015, RAEE withstood the Conservatives' surge in the national polls and tightened its control of the local seats with a net gain of five to 31. The other borough seats are split between the Conservatives with four and

Labour with three, while the Lib Dems were wiped out here two years ago.

## Llais Gwynedd (LG)

Translated, this North Wales-based party is the Voice of Gwynedd. It was formed in 2008, partly in anger at Plaid Cymru proposals to close primary schools.

"When you close a school, you close a community, but it [setting up LG] was about more than just that row," says LG leader Owain Williams. "Plaid Cymru was the first to shout in the valleys that Labour was corrupt. Then they followed the old adage – 'power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely'.

"It's good to be a small party, because big parties become about having a career. We're for the people."

LG was an immediate success, taking 13 seats, just short of 20% of the county council. Williams says the party clashed with Plaid over a council tax rise. Plaid argued for a 2.8%, Llais Gwynedd 2%.

"That might not sound like a hell of a lot difference, but when you're a family paying for kids' school dinners £3 a





week less is a big amount,” he sighs.

LG lost that argument and the party has been cut down to seven seats. “We’ve had a very tough two years, a defection back into the bosom of Plaid Cymru, another tragically died, another guy very ill,” sighs Williams. But he is hopeful of two or three gains in the upcoming poll.

### **Shoreham Beach Residents’ Association (SBRA)**

Journalist Joss Loader, 53, is a feature of West Sussex’s Shoreham Beach, where residents live on a narrow shingle spit that includes 44 houseboats. She is often seen with Archie the dog here, where people joke of being “a people’s republic”.

Loader is also the leader of the SBRA, one of the most enduringly successful parties in British history. It has taken the two seats on Shoreham Beach since the 1950s.

“It’s a hell of an achievement,” says Loader. “But we know what the community issues are, we live within our community. There’s a very proud tradition of independence

on the beach that goes back well over half a century. Shoreham Beach prides itself on being very distinct. It’s quite bohemian.”

Indeed. There’s a 150ft German

minesweeper that has been turned into a houseboat. Another houseboat has been painted to look like an aeroplane. This was also Britain’s Tinseltown from 1914-23. Adaptations of The Mayor of Casterbridge

and Little Dorrit were filmed in Shoreham.

After all these years, though, the SBRA is starting to dream a little bigger. Loader admits to having “thought about” standing a candidate in the county council elections, but would not run herself until she has the time “to do justice” to the role.

### **East Devon Alliance (EDA)**

In the autumn of 2012, nearly 4,000 people took part in a protest march against council development plans in Sidmouth, a town with a population of just over 12,500.

“For a small town, that’s obviously quite a lot,” smiles Cathy Gardner, the

“It’s good to be a small party, because big parties become about having a career. We’re for the people”

East Devon Alliance’s leader. “That march led to the formation of the EDA. We all felt the council was not accountable, the decision-making processes were opaque, so we formed as a protest group.”

This group became a registered party in 2015 to comply with electoral law. Aged only three months, the EDA fielded 30 candidates and took 10 seats from the otherwise dominant Conservatives. It joined forces with independents to become the official opposition on East Devon District Council.

This time around the EDA is putting up three candidates for county council elections. Gardner knows these will be tough fights, with the major parties’ resources naturally dwarfing her party’s.

“We have to manage with what [money] we can find,” laughs Gardner. “Our membership fee is only £10 a year and we get the odd donations of a couple of hundred pounds here and there.”

### **Residents for Uttlesford (R4U)**

Although it was not formally launched until 2014, the seeds for R4U were planted around 2011. The local council had irritated residents of this district in Essex with a traffic light that no one seemed to want and there was anger over housebuilding plans.

“We had a residents’ movement that morphed into a political party,” explains John Lodge, R4U’s 71-year-old leader. “We soon pushed the Lib Dems into third place.”

Lodge and his colleagues took advice from another politically successful community group nearby, Loughton Residents Association, which has 13 seats on Epping Forest District Council. “They’d been going for 30 years,” chuckles Lodge. “They are our heroes.”

Lodge said his group needed “a coherent image” – a party identity to put next to the names of their candidates on the ballot paper. There are currently 10 R4U councillors at district level, six more than the Lib Dems but 14 behind the Conservatives. However, some of those R4U seats had been held by the Conservatives since the second world war.

As well as sitting at district level, Lodge was elected to Essex County Council in 2013. He is standing down next month to concentrate on developing a new Local Plan as part of his work on the Uttlesford planning committee, but the party hopes to retain a presence on the council. ■



# Pivotal procedure

This week marks the 200th anniversary of a small but significant parliamentary information revolution, reports **Martyn Atkins**

**T**wo years ago Parliament celebrated the 750th anniversary of its first summoning to Westminster. This year the Commons will mark 470 years since it was given a permanent home in the Palace of Westminster. This week we also mark the step change in publication of the House's records pushed through by a reforming Speaker and a highly capable Clerk Assistant in 1817.

The House treated reports of its debates as a contempt up until the 1770s: those who published entirely accurate reports of what had been discussed in the Commons risked prosecution and imprisonment. Records of the business transacted in the House were nevertheless made in the Commons Journal, initially the personal notebook kept by the Clerk of the House when sitting at the Table. Thanks to the Journal books – which somehow survived the disastrous fire of 1834 — we have



As Speaker, Charles Abbot (above) 'led an information revolution in the Commons' aided by the statistician John Rickman (right)



a near-complete record of Commons proceedings stretching back to 1547. But journals for each session were not printed and published until the 1750s.

In the febrile political and propagandising atmosphere around the Popish Plot which prevailed from 1678 to 1681, the House authorities found it expedient to publish a daily summary of the proceedings in the House, for the better information of Members and of the public. Compiled from the clerk's records, and printed commercially under the Speaker's authority, the *Votes of the House of Commons* first appeared in 1680. As the sole authoritative record of House proceedings,

the *Vote* was in very high demand: only in 1780, and in face of competition from reports of debates, was its production eventually financed from the public purse rather than out of printers' profits.

By the early 19th century the *Vote* had become bloated and of little practical use, stuffed with long recitals of petitions and verbatim accounts of procedural exchanges. Union with Ireland in 1801 only increased the amount of business to be recorded. A daily issue could take as long as four days to publish, defeating the object of an instant and authoritative record.

In 1802 the advent of Charles Abbot as Speaker led to an information revolution



in the Commons. In government, Abbot had already set up a Records Commission and had pushed through a bill to establish a national census. Aided by the statistician John Rickman, who he appointed his secretary, he embarked on a project to systematise the House's collection of published papers — the foundation of today's House of Commons Library.

Abbot was deeply vexed by the inefficiencies in the *Vote* and fretted over a replacement. The solution he and Rickman devised was to establish a new paper — the *Votes and Proceedings* — summarising the business transacted each day over far fewer pages. Rickman—appointed as a Clerk Assistant in 1814—estimated that the change, together with commercial sale of the new publication, could defray the entire cost to the Treasury

“Those who published entirely accurate reports of what had been discussed in the Commons risked prosecution and imprisonment”

of producing the *Vote*. Attached to this new paper would be a list of the orders of the day and notices of motion to be taken in the House on the next sitting day — a prototype Order Paper.

Abbot announced his grand plan to the House on 26 March 1817, no doubt following a great deal of advance preparation. The proposal sailed through: and following a false start on 14 April—when the House did not sit because of the Speaker's illness—the first sitting day to be recorded under then new arrangements was 24 April 1817.

The *Votes and Proceedings* has been produced for every sitting day since, and is invariably distributed with the next day's *Vote Bundle*. It is compiled in a manner which John Rickman would have recognised — in an office above the chamber, from the manuscript books kept by the Table Clerks — but over the last two centuries its production has been transformed. Camera-ready copy is now available as soon as the House rises, for a final check through by the senior clerk on duty before publication. Speed and accuracy

## VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE House of Commons.

*Lunæ, 14<sup>o</sup> die Aprilis, 1817.*

1. THE House met,—pursuant to adjournment.
2. The Deputy Clerk read a Letter from Mr. Speaker,—excusing himself for not attending, on account of Indisposition.
3. Motion made for further adjournment to Thursday 24th April,—and agreed to *Nem. Con.*  
Adjourned accordingly at a quarter after four o'clock.

*Jovis, 24<sup>o</sup> die Aprilis, 1817.*

1. New Members take the Oaths;  
Lord Robert Spencer - - - for Tavistock.  
Henry Charles Sturt, esq. - - - Bridport.  
Honble Alexander Abercromby - - - Clackmannanshire.
2. Mr. Speaker returned his Thanks to the House for their Indulgence to him, during his Indisposition.
3. Committees,—all *revived*.
4. Private Bills,—Resolution of 29th January limiting the time for receiving Reports to the 12th of May next, *rescinded*; and Monday the 19th of May appointed; Resolution to be *printed*.
5. Macclesfield Roads Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
6. Leeds and Bradford Roads,—Petition for leave to present a Petition for a Bill; referred to a Committee.
7. Burton Salmon (York) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
8. Elmley (York) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
9. Kirkby in Kendal (Westmorland) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
10. Brough-under-Stainmoor Roads Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
11. Hollington (Derby) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
12. Belfast Waterworks Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
13. Belfast Waterworks Bill,—Petition for additional Provision; referred to a Committee.
14. Orleton (Hereford) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
15. Willey (Hereford) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
16. Clackmannan Roads Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
17. Fornham, &c. (Suffolk) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
18. Worsbrough (York) Inclosure Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
19. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Bill,—*reported*, and to be ingrossed.
20. Norwich Union Life Insurance Bill,—*reported*, and to be ingrossed.
21. Birmingham Poor Rates Bill,—Petition of General Richard Vyse, and others, *against*.
22. Blakeney Harbour Bill,—read 2<sup>o</sup>, and *committed*.
23. Westminster Coal Meters Bill,—Petition of Thomas Bradfield, *against*; to lie on the Table till Bill read 3<sup>o</sup>; and Counsel ordered.
24. Ramsdown (Devon) Inclosure Bill,—Petition for additional Provision; referred to a Committee.

remain vital, as the House of Commons Journal — the legal record of the House's proceedings — is now compiled directly from the V&P. From next month the V&P is to be produced under a new system which will enable even greater integration with the House's digital data. This further advance

in the provision of swift, accessible and authoritative data is one which Rickman and Abbot would surely applaud. 🏰

Martyn Atkins is clerk of the Procedure Committee

# UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**Agnes Chambre** talks to **Black Rod** about 'awkward' peers, a close call with a crocodile and why he'll soon be standing down

## What is your earliest childhood memory?

Living in Jordan, when I was about three or four. My father, mother and brother were away most of the time. We lived in a rather volatile situation

and so I had a permanent escort guard of two Bedouin Arab soldiers who were essentially my personal protection. My first language was Arabic, I was brought up speaking it. I loved that time in my life and I wasn't aware I was in any danger, but occasionally there would be bullets flying over the house. That was my first childhood memory.

## When did you leave Jordan?

All the Brits were all thrown in the early 1950s. We literally, overnight, packed our bags and left early the next morning. I can remember the first really big upset of my life was being taken away from those Bedouin Arabs who had been my childhood friends. It was a very happy time, but it was rather traumatic being taken away from them.

## What were you like at school?

I was a very anxious child. I was a very slow learner and I had a lot of trouble with language, because I hadn't been brought up with English as my first language. When I arrived at primary school my command of English was pretty poor, and it pretty well has been ever since. I'm a very slow reader and a very slow writer. That was my biggest handicap at school.

## Do you still speak Arabic?

No, it's disappeared. It's probably somewhere on the hard drive but it's disappeared. When I hear the language, I hear the music of it but I don't recognise the words.

## Do you regret not being able to speak it?

I have no regrets in my life about anything. My life has been so varied, I have made so many mistakes, I don't forget them but I don't regret them. If you regret those things you

get stuck. It would be lovely to speak Arabic, if I had some time perhaps I'd go and learn it.

## When you were young, what did you want to be?

I always wanted to be really outstanding at something in the sporting world or something in the musical world.

## What is a hobby or a talent you have?

I don't think I have any talents at all, otherwise I would have been a sporting or musical champion.

## What's an interesting fact your colleagues don't know about you?

If there is an interesting fact my colleagues don't know about me, it's probably best they don't. I would say, and it's a typical of this House, that there are lots of things my colleagues don't know. I find colleagues here are very focused on what they do. I've found none of my colleagues have taken any interest in each other in their private or personal or social lives. Some are good friends. But there isn't the spirit of people knowing each other as there have been in other parts of my career. They are really focused on the House and they don't have time for what I call the froth of life.

## What habit annoys you in other people?

Discourtesy, above all.

## What's the best advice you've been given?

Sleep on it overnight. We all live life at 100mph and we all get tired and frenetic and at the end of the day, you sit down and you do your emails and you get irked. But the best advice is 'draft it, sleep on it overnight, see how it looks when you're fresh and in the morning and you've got your perspective back'.

## Have you ever woken up and been glad you didn't send something?

Probably every day.

“  
I will leave  
within the next  
year because I  
want to go and  
do some other  
things before  
I get too old





### What's the worst piece of advice you've been given?

Goodness me. That I should become a lawyer. I read law at Cambridge and at the end of my course, there were a number of reasons that I didn't go into the law, one was I was fed up with studying and couldn't face more exams. Another thing was I managed to get a criminal conviction and although the Law society and the Bar council were very understanding and were prepared to make an exception, I thought it would be more helpful if I went and did something else in life before going back to the law. For those reasons I went and joined the army instead and I thought I would just do a short service commission for three years but three years turned into 39 years.

### What was your criminal conviction?

I was poaching pheasants and partridges.

### How would your friends describe you in three words?

Loyal, committed and a fool.

### When was the last time you made someone laugh?

About ten minutes ago in the outer office.

### What did you say?

I reported what one of my staff was provoked to say over a little office drinks party last night – which was very uncharacteristic and exceedingly unusual and very obscene. I recalled it and it cracked everybody up.

### What would the title of your autobiography be?

A Quiet Life.

### Who would play you in the movie of your life?

Nigel Havers, because apparently he resembles me a bit. Or Hugh Grant because his life is chaotic and I think my life has been quite chaotic quite a lot of the time.

### What is the most embarrassing thing you've done?

Appear on BBC television putting on my stockings. That was quite embarrassing. It's going to take a little bit of living down.

### What's something you've done once that you'll never do again?

Been chased by a crocodile when I was waterskiing.

### When was that?

On the river Zambezi in Rhodesia, as it was.

### Were you scared?

Yes. We were water-skiing on a bit of a bit of the Zambezi where we were fairly sure no crocodiles had been seen there for a while. I dropped in and zoomed up along the river. The boat went past these crocodiles on the bank under the shade of a tree, and the crocodile just went like a rocket into the river and I suppose I was probably 20 yards away. They move very, very quickly when they're frightened or when they're chasing something. The trouble was I had to get over the water ski and into the boat. I managed to get into the boat very quickly and there was a guy on the boat with a rifle so if the croc had caught up, he could shoot it. Anyway it was fine but I wouldn't want to do that again.

### Have you water-skied since?

Yes, but I don't think I've ever done it in crocodile risky waters.

### What have you most recently dressed up as?

Worzel Gummidge, at the Black Rod Christmas party.

### What's surprised you most since you've worked in Parliament?

The thing that didn't surprise me most was the humbling modesty and kindness and thoughtfulness of some of the most eminent people in the land who are here. What surprised me much more than I expected was that the House of Lords is a reflection of society and therefore there are some members who are difficult, awkward, accursed, some who may even be a bit on the spectrum, and I suppose that did surprise me. But it shouldn't have done, because the House of Lords is surprisingly much more representative of society than I'd ever imagined before I came here.



### What has been your lowest point?

When the House agreed to security measures which I proposed and then a very vocal cross section of members then took against my proposals. They expressed their displeasure and criticism of me on the floor of the Chambers and in the newspapers. That was a pretty low point.

### When was that?

That was in my first year, very shortly after I arrived. Have

I got over it? Yes, you have disappointments in life, you're let down by people in life and this is a reflection of society. I suppose the turning point of that was when one of the most senior pugnacious, notorious figures in that group who expressed their distaste for me and for what I was proposing came and saw me about three years later and sat down. He said "you were right and everybody now accepts what you did and what you proposed and what's been implemented." He then said: "I admire you for the balls for seeing it through". A lot of members have acknowledged that without ever saying it, so that was a bad point in my first year and about three years later the damage was finally healed.

### Have you ever considered giving up Parliament?

Oh, yes. Usually about 9 o'clock on a Monday morning. I have considered giving up and I will give up. I will leave within the next year because I want to go and do some other things before I get too old.

### If you could give your 15 year old self some advice, what would it be?

Eat well, sleep well and set yourself priorities in life. 🍷



# REVIEWS



## Everywoman: One Woman's Truth About Speaking the Truth

By Jess Phillips  
Hutchinson

For all the humour, Jess Phillips's *Everywoman* manages the delicate balancing act of weaving the personal into the political., writes **Tracy Brabin**

Jess Phillips' *Everywoman* is naughty, frank and a sizzling celebration of how being ordinary can change the world. Authentic, wise and honest, I found so many resonances; there were moments I had to put it down to draw breath. How could Jess's experience as a young women hanging out with men in Birmingham be so like my own in Batley? How could she know about my own internal contradictions that make me my own worst critic? And how did she make the writing so effortless it feels like we're having a chat over a large Sauvignon?

Disarmingly honest, Jess the person comes across as real, flawed, a good laugh and loyal mate. Her pride in being 'normal'

“ Her feminism isn't academic, it's real, earned from years working at the coalface of Women's Aid ”

is something she wears as a badge of honour, celebrating her Brummy accent, determined to carry on speaking in her own voice because 'if we don't start sounding like the public, ordinary people will disengage and we'll be left with the Establishment holding court and we can't have that!' Candid about being a young mum – 'most of the time – if I'm completely honest – it's unremarkable, tedious and frankly a bit meh..' – she challenges the idea that having a child is the be all and end all.

For all the humour, Jess manages the delicate balancing act of weaving the



Jess Phillips with Yvette Cooper at Stanville Primary School in Birmingham

personal into the political. Thoughts about family segue into analytical policy on flexible parental leave, the gender pay gap, the merits of a universal basic income and the shocking amount of unpaid work done by women (£1,019 trillion 2014).

A passionate advocate for equality, her feminism isn't academic, it's real, earned from years working at the coalface of Women's Aid. Knowing two women a week die at the hands of their partners or ex's, it's galling to hear the number of emails she received lobbying for women's services was 6 whilst in the same period she'd had '90 emails about bees, 324 about foxes and 25 about dog fighting.' A brilliant, witty troll-slayer, she's supportive of other women telling them to 'drop me a tweet. I've got your back.'

Politically you can tell she's a grafter. Door knocking and campaigning she's not afraid to get her hands dirty. Unguarded in her criticism of those she disagrees with, her anger at Jeremy Corbyn is clear

– 'while we're fighting and struggling with a lackluster leadership, the people are the ones who're suffering'.

Throughout, Jo Cox, my predecessor, is referenced with love and admiration. Jess talks of Jo's 'truly tangible and unguarded normality and humanity' and how 'it was her humanity not some special gift or magic knowledge that made her so exquisite' and it's obvious the friendship was genuine and the loss profound.

I will never be Jo, but having read *Everywoman*, I feel encouraged to be a more opinionated and courageous version of myself, unafraid to be authentic, 'gobby', disruptive and real. My own version of *Everywoman*. 🇬🇧



**Tracy Brabin** is Labour MP for Batley and Spen





## Maggie May!

The Political Cartoon Gallery & Cafe,  
Putney, London

30 March – 30 June 2017

### David Singleton visits The Political Cartoon Gallery to view their new exhibition, *MaggieMay!*

A new cartoon exhibition in London shows how prime ministers can expect a rougher ride from political cartoonists than was the case 30 years ago.

The Political Cartoon Gallery is putting on a new exhibition of artwork featuring Margaret Thatcher from when she was in Number 10 – and more recent depictions of the only female to follow in her footsteps, Theresa May.

“It’s a nice contrast between the gentler material from the 70s and 80s to the slightly coarser, rougher stuff that we have now,” says the man behind the

exhibition, gallery owner Tim Benson.

On display is artwork featuring Thatcher from the 1970s and 1980s by the leading British cartoonists of the day, such as Paul Rigby, Stanley Franklin, Michael Cummings, Nick Garland, John Kent and Trog.

These cartoons are juxtaposed with contemporary work depicting May by Steve Bell, Christian Adams, Bob Moran, Martin Rowson, Dave Brown and others.

It is not yet clear what May thinks of the cartoonists, but Thatcher is said to have been quite a fan – especially when she was in opposition and the cartoonists were looking elsewhere.

“I’ve heard she didn’t get irony. So she was quite unaffected by the poison pens of the cartoonists,” says Benson.

It is a rather different story as far as Thatcher’s four successors are concerned.

John Major is said to have been quite thin skinned, believing cartoons

were there to destabilise him

Tony Blair is also said to have hated cartoons. “He was an incredibly vain man by all accounts and especially disliked cartoons that show him with a receding hairline,” claims Benson.

According to Benson, Gordon Brown and David Cameron both had the same gripe with the cartoonists – namely that they were portrayed as being fat.

But for Cameron, there was an additional grievance with one particular artist.

Benson says: “He also very much disliked the way that Steve Bell portrayed him with a condom on his head. Even to the point where he told Steve personally: you can only push the condom too far.”

May’s feelings about cartoonists may well leak out over the coming months and years. For now, we can rest assured that at least one female member of her cabinet is a fan of the genre.

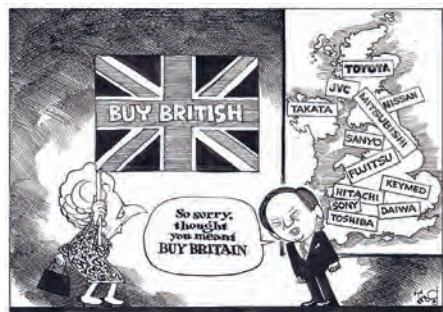
Speaking at the *Maggie May!* launch, education secretary Justine Greening lauded the “incredibly clever” work done by cartoonists.

The cabinet minister and MP for Putney was speaking as she stood next a not-so-kind portrayal of herself by Martin Rowson. The *Guardian* cartoonist had imagined May sending a terrified Greening into the Colosseum to fight to the death for her grammar schools policy.

Without directly referring to the cartoon beside her, Greening added: “I’ve no doubt

the reason they get under the skin of lots of politicians is because they needle away at the concerns that politicians have... But you know what – they absolutely do capture the moment.”

David Singleton is the editor of TotalPolitics.com. *Maggie May!* is on until 30 June 2017 at The Political Cartoon Gallery in Putney, London







### Emperor of the Five Rivers: The Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

By Lord Sheikh  
I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd

**Lord Lexden** enjoys Lord Shiekh's account of the extraordinary life of the man known as the Lion of the Punjab

**A**s the British increased their power in northern India in the early nineteenth century, they encountered a remarkable figure, the Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), known widely as the Lion of the Punjab. They came to admire his brilliance as a military commander, his astuteness as a politician and his dissipation as an individual.

Ranjit Singh subdued an array of warring chieftains to become the dictator of human affairs between the Indus and the Afghan passes, creating a stability the region had never previously known. He was recognised as the head of a mighty Sikh empire in

which other religions were accorded full equality. Prosperity grew as industries – textiles, mines and armaments – became established with the autocratic ruler's benign support. The fabulous 190-carat Koh-i-Noor diamond came into his possession, a glittering symbol of his power.

The British regarded him as a valued and effective ally. In 1838, the Governor-General, Lord Auckland, paid him a state visit, accompanied by his sister, Emily Eden. In a letter home she described the great Indian prince disrespectfully as 'an old mouse with grey whiskers and one eye' (he had lost the other as a result of severe smallpox in youth).

She was diverted rather than shocked by his colourful harem of lively women and graceful painted boys. She observed without censure his addiction to a lethal concoction consisting of opium, raw spirit, meat juice and powdered pearls. He sank slowly into a stupor while discussing a joint expedition against Afghanistan with her brother.

Ranjit Singh's formidable achievements, and unconcealed vices, have been much discussed by British and Indian historians. Mohamed Sheikh, a Conservative peer with wide-ranging business, academic and philanthropic interests, has now joined their number. His beautifully illustrated volume provides a full account of a remarkable life.

Lord Sheikh will not hear a word against Punjab's Lion. 'He was, quite simply, a very great man', this study concludes. Much stress is placed on his humane and generous instincts. He opposed capital punishment (while sometimes permitting mutilations). The author tells us that 'the Maharaja was benevolent to his subjects, no matter what their ethnicity or religion and sought to promote interfaith unity through policies of equality and non-discrimination'. In this account, the ferocious warrior-prince

“ In this account, Ranjit Singh emerges as a pioneer of reconciliation between the world's religions ”

emerges perhaps surprisingly as a pioneer of reconciliation between the world's religions.

Ranjit Singh died in 1839; his Sikh empire collapsed ten years later. A very young son, Duleep Singh, who inherited the extensive territories, surrendered them to the British after military defeat. A brief outline of his extraordinary story is given in a postscript to the book. A fuller account would have provided further bizarre details.

After presenting the Koh-i-Noor to Queen Victoria ('he is so handsome', she gushed), Duleep Singh set himself up as a landowner in Norfolk. He joined the Carlton Club where a copy of a portrait of him, presented by Lord Sheikh, now hangs. He tried unsuccessfully to become a Tory candidate against one of Gladstone's sons. One of his daughters became a prominent suffragette. What on earth would the Lion of Punjab have made of his descendants? 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿



**Lord Lexden** is a Conservative peer and historian



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