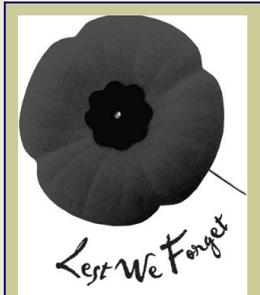


# THE CAERULEAN



In Memory of those  
who gave their lives in the  
Great War 1914-1918...

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## The Tory Party: A Man's World?

'In the beginning God created man' Genesis tells us. 'Woman' came to be thanks to Adam's rib, thus women's dependency on men began. History backs this up further with countless examples, both cultural and religious, yet history also provides us with another side to the coin. Although we weren't around in 1979 this date rings a bell for us all; the year Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister of Great Britain. This monumental date in British history marked victory for women's rights groups and all woman-kind. However, Thatcher was far from a feminist sympathizer: 'I owe nothing to Women's Lib'.

Women in the Party, and indeed politics itself, can be looked at as symbols to the electorate that they are being included. When considering this we must weigh up these two arguments: does the value of more diverse and feminine parliaments encourage public debate and stimulate the public view of the British political system, or, alternatively, does it encourage apathy among those whom the party is trying to relate to? When talking to a close friend I was surprised to hear that if women hadn't fought for the vote, she wouldn't bother voting! When Thatcher was elected, it was widely believed by feminists on the far left that if there was going to be any radical change it would effect women. Another way of looking at this is to determine whether or not Thatcher's breakthrough made it easier for women to be accepted as holding positions of power or not.

Given the political context of Thatcher's triumph, some say she acted as a man in order to get her proposals through the party yet alone Parliament. This is backed up by her portrayal by journalists (and the Soviet Defence Minister) of the day as the 'Iron Lady'. No doubt, some of Thatcher's proposals were very hard lined, for example

her treatment of paramilitaries in Northern Ireland and Iran, and controversial, for instance the Falklands (not to mention socially divisive economic policy). In many respects, Thatcher broke the conventional mould of a Conservative (or indeed any) female politician; her tough handling of crises and uncompromising economic and European policy ensured that she lived up to her reputation. No longer, it seemed, would women take a back seat and step aside from the prospect of becoming leader of the party.

Today, more and more women are getting involved in the Party at various levels. Nevertheless the number of women actually holding a Conservative seat in the Commons has dropped from 44 in 1992 to 32 in 2005. Whatever your views are, in order to win an election the Party must engage with the electorate. Thanks to Cameron's 'Five point positive action plan' among other proposals, the issue of the lack of women is being addressed. Take our society for example, for this academic year, there have been many enthusiastic first years signing up and Laura-Rose was appointed to the committee.

While discussing this with a few people, the phrase 'token female Tory' materialised from our debate. Is this the message we are putting across to the female electorate? When researching this I found Conservative Women's Organisation, a positive step or positively discriminatory? Don't run to read Margaret Atwood, or be converted to the feminist cause, but open up the debate - what can we do to endorse and encourage? Perhaps by taking a look at other parties approaches we might learn from their mistakes. For example, New Labour's approach to promoting women included a campaign directed at the media but was it successful or superficial?

(Continued Overleaf...)

From a personal point of view, I always thought of the 'smoke filled rooms' (now outlawed in public places) when considering what politics actually involved. My opinion was changed when studying politics as a subject at school, where Mr. P would occasionally let us watch Question Time (where Blair was booed most of the time regardless of the fact that our lessons were unequivocal!) After getting involved in things such as our society, I have realized it's not who you are but what you can bring regardless of gender, race or sexuality.

Many political issues are looked at as feminine, for example family, education and health. Although in recent times politics has taken a different stance. David Cameron has done a lot to encourage marriage among cohabiting couples and promoted the importance of the role of the family in modern society. In a sense, these aspects of private and family life have become apolitical.

So what next? Thatcher is a hard act to follow and one can strongly doubt whether somebody (or some woman) would successfully take up the challenge of adopting her approach to the Party and British politics in this day and age. With more women getting involved in grass root activities such as with the CWO and also through local clubs and societies such as our own, the future looks promising. Although apathy may have triumphed over feminism in some cases perhaps a balance between the two could be a winning formula. With Cameron's appeal to women and ethnic minorities to get involved and run as candidates, we can only give our support and look to the future.

"Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't." - Margaret Thatcher

Hannah-Ruth Bysouth

## Scotland: Deal or No Deal?

The West Lothian question was largely academic when first posed by Tam Dalyell thirty years ago. He was the first Member of Parliament to make the observation that if devolution should go ahead, an imbalance between English and Scottish MP's voting rights would be created.

Since the creation of the Scottish parliament in 1999 not only has this question been addressed half heartedly, but the powers possessed by the Scottish parliament have steadily increased. These powers have been cynically exploited by the Labour government to pass several bills which only take effect in England, using their unchecked power base in Scotland.

The latest solution to the West Lothian question which has been proposed by Sir Malcolm Rifkind seems on the face of things to be a sensible and just solution. However if the implications are extrapolated it is possible to see that extra layers of political infrastructure may be required. If an English grand committee were to be created, Excluding Scottish MP's from decisions which only affect constituencies south of the border, surely an upper chamber for British and foreign policy would have to be created. This would be an unnecessary extra cost at the expense of the British tax payer, and may cause further voter disaffection as the distance between local government and national government increases.

However while this proposal solves the West Lothian question, albeit in an undesirable way, at least the willingness of the Conservative party to address serious issues such as this one shows that we now control the political agenda. This is in comparison to a Labour government who could have redressed the balance

between Scottish and English MP's at any time during the last ten years but has remained remarkably quiet on this issue.

I believe that while having an asymmetry in the voting rights between MP's which hold Scottish and English seats respectively, irritates many English voters, the main source of irritation comes from the Barnett formula which results in an extra £1500 per capita funding for public services in Scotland. Brownites argue that a so called "Barnett squeeze" brought about by a falling Scottish population will slowly redress this imbalance. Perhaps they have either not seen or neglected a recent demographic study which states that the UK population will top 70 million by the year 2050, while the population of Scotland will rise more slowly when compared to the rise in England, this does not suggest a falling population. So the problem caused by the Barnett formula will not just magically disappear. In the back drop of continuing incompetence from this Labour government, Alex Salmond is stoking the flames of nationalism by announcing plans to scrap prescription charges and introduce free school meals for all. This is quite a clear intention to keep the unfair Barnett formula at the forefront of English minds, I have no doubt this is being done as a precursor to his objective of an independent Scotland and hence a break-up of the union.

For this very reason 'We' as a Conservative and a Unionist party simply cannot allow for this to happen and as such must strive to reform the Barnett formula for the sake of the United Kingdom.

Stuart Turner

# 'Let's Steer Clear of the Inheritance Tax Debate!'

Like most people I view tax very much like I view misfortune; the less I encounter the better. Some misfortune can be accepted whereas other forms can be infuriating and again a parallel can be drawn with taxation. The Conference season seems to have ignited a debate not about the level of taxation but the form; both sides, in picking Inheritance Tax as their *bête noire*, have taken the wrong direction.

If we accept the premise that some taxation is necessary to allow Government to function then we need to assess whether the behaviour inspired by different taxes is beneficial. Levying a tax on the success of a business and its subsequent saleable worth could be viewed as stifling entrepreneurialism that is the motor of economic development. Taxing an individual for receiving an unearned bequest could be seen as preventing people from receiving money or property that would reduce the incentive to remain economically active.

That all major political parties currently see Inheritance Tax as a vote winner is predominantly because of the last decade's property boom. Economic growth and low interest rates have been responsible for this, not an heir's drive or success. To put it another way, inheritance tax praises the past success of the UK economy rather than encouraging future personal ambition.

The irony of the current predicament is that John Major, who led the Government which began the current period of economic growth and low interest rates, was he who based his Premiership on promising to "make the whole of this country a genuinely classless society" <sup>(1)</sup>. Such a society cannot be built in the recent economic conditions without a robust tax on inherited wealth because the build up of wealth over only a few generations can quickly lead to segregated society. Inheritance tax is a key tool in the maintenance of the socially mobile state that Margaret Thatcher worked to achieve. Being "for the workers not the shirkers" <sup>(2)</sup> could easily equate to an endorsement of inheritance tax as a fair one.

In the developing debate over inheritance tax figures get quoted that aren't an accurate representation of the situation. In the 2007/2008-tax year the IHT allowance is £300,000. The October pre-budget report doesn't alter this; it just allows the transference of your allowance to a spouse. It isn't until an estate reaches and exceeds that figure that a penny is paid to the Exchequer. This along with the stark statistic that 96% <sup>(3)</sup> of estates are not eligible to pay the tax shows that it really is a tax that only hits the super wealthy. What is

unfortunate for the good health of the British economy is that quite a proportion of those who do pay some IHT live in the key swing seats that will dictate an election result.

Since his appointment as Shadow Chancellor in 2005, George Osborne has migrated from the sensible position as a proponent of the flat tax he admitted "might enhance incentives to work while improving the position of the worst-off" <sup>(4)</sup> to a position which unashamedly supports the already wealthy. This move leaves him open to the charge that the Conservative party is an elitist institution, a charge that Gordon Brown has already started to exploit. In making this rushed policy announcement will George Osborne be a long-term victim of the botched autumn poll?

Footnotes:

(1) 24 November 1990

(2) Attributed

(3) Treasury, October 2007

(4) 5 September 2005

Cllr. Stuart Davenport

(UCL Conservatives Alumnus)



Above: Cllr Davenport celebrates after his successful election with his fellow Warwickshire Tories

# 'The Free Market will Improve Education'

The last decade's management of educational policy, achievements and standards has been a disastrous crash. Teachers are demoralised, pupils are lacking basic skills and public opinion is ranging from despondent to desperate. This Government has been weak, out-of-touch and utterly misguided in allowing the nonsensical academies to be established, resisting the introduction of school-vouchers and lying about falling standards.

Even though our great institution, UCL, is now in the top ten of the world's universities, I would still argue that further education has moved in the wrong direction. Too many ill-prepared, unsuitable candidates are put forward for exams and courses they don't need merely to fulfil targets concocted to grab headlines. I actually believe charging for tertiary education is a good thing as we currently have too many students, too many courses and too many universities.

The present way in which tuition/ top-up fees are re-paid is a joke. Why don't the Conservative Party present something radical? Why not allow all income tax to be paid directly towards students loans on graduation, for as long as the chosen course lasts? Many of our generation will be paying back students loans when we start having children of our own! The attitude to education in this country needs to change. In terms of funding, expectation and attainment we cannot carry on with the system we have now, we are doing unimaginable damage to our children and, in their hands, our country.

The recent Conservative announcement of supporting an independent Conservative Co-operative Movement is hopefully a step in the right direction. Headed by Jesse Norman, Conservative PPC for Hereford and a former director of a co-operative enterprise, this kind of movement will ensure we get the two things that will make the vital difference to educational standards: more independence and competition.

Schools need more independence to better cater for their pupils, choosing subjects, qualifications and streaming to provide the best scholastic basis for every individual pupil. Alongside greater freedom for schools must come more competition between schools, which will happen once there is a meaningful choice for parents to make. The only way we can expect wholesale improvement is to incentivise locally and encourage better adaptation by institutions to their target audience. I have enough faith in market forces to believe that standards will rise if we free our schools.

Modern exams appear to be more focussed on the development of skills and one of those skills is the ability to pass exams, not truly educating pupils but pushing them through a process. This is not acceptable and is not helping anyone, particularly those students who get exceptional results only to find the reputation and standing of those qualifications to be publicly slated.

The entire education system needs to be re-assessed in terms of what the desired outcomes are or should be. We need to re-evaluate the worth of teaching irrelevant topics to disinterested pupils. I have yet to be convinced that distinguishing between natural ability and academic is a negative, stigmatising process. I will never be a singer because I can't sing, it really is as simple as that. Of course, the key to success in any field is the ability to motivate oneself to achieve and that is something that needs to be taught in the home. I don't think it is too much to expect that pupils and students should, hangovers permitting(!), actually want to learn!

We need to allow more freedom of choice within our school system: the average annual expenditure on state education for every single child is somewhere in the region of £5,500. This is almost on a par with good, fee paying day schools. It is a scandal that parents do not have a choice in choosing the school for their own child. The same principle applies to universities: I would pay more to attend UCL than most other universities because it provides one of the best educations in the country (and a fine crowd of Conservatives too!)

Free market solutions will be the only way to encourage more active participation, competition and a better education for all.



Michael Rock

(Candidate for Chairman of CF and UCL Alumnus)

# Cameron's Immigration Policy: Too Narrow in Scope?

With the Office for National Statistics predicting our population set to rise by over 10 million to 71 million in 2031, many rightly have worries about how we will be able to cope with an ever-increasing population size.

As it is, our prisons are overcrowded, not helped by the many with foreign criminals our inept government seems unable to deport. We have a lack of houses. Even if we build more houses and flats in our crowded cities (increasing the demand for cheap European labour no doubt), there will be a lack of resources to them. We have more traffic and congestion on many overwhelmed roads. There are often summer hosepipe bans in the South East in particular due to lower reserves of drinking water. Elsewhere, there is increased incidence of flooding – a problem made so much worse by building on flood plains. There is increased strain on schools and a lack of beds and other resources in the NHS. However, these issues are all down to population growth, not immigration per se, as Cameron was clear to point out in a recent speech.

He is right to make this distinction, as many label any mention of immigration by a right-leaning politician as xenophobia, but he was very clear that this is not the case. However, one cannot simply try to avoid mentioning immigration for fear of offence, like an apologetic Basil Fawley on the topic of war. The fact is; the major cause of this population growth is immigration, which accounts for 200,000 extra people a year at present according to Government estimates.

Of course, immigration can, to an extent, be beneficial to Britain. For example, there are many who seek work here, and can fill deficits in some job sectors, contributing to the economy. However, when we see immigration in such vast numbers as we have seen recently, and see that this trend is projected to continue, problems can occur. These are mainly in the form of population growth, but with high levels of migration, there can

be other issues, especially due to a lack of integration into British society. This leads to the formation of isolated 'ghettos', in particular in large cities. By very definition, in these areas there is a lack of camaraderie between this new influx and the host population. If you add to that feeling of disparity peoples fears of numerous non English-speaking children attending the local schools, further strains on NHS resources, and worries about migrants 'scrimping off benefits' or 'stealing jobs', it is easy to see how racial tensions are formed. As these ghettos grow, I imagine in the situation will only worsen.

Of course, this tension is not simply between Britons and migrants, as was evident in the riots in Birmingham two years ago. I think this illustrates the need for all immigrants to be absorbed into British society to a greater extent, and not segregated in ghettos. However, the current levels of immigration make this nigh-impossible. So, while I do not yet see the Tiber 'foaming with much blood' (unlike the unfortunate scapegoat Nigel Hastilow), we need to act now before this problem escalates beyond our control. A recent Populus poll found 77% of people want a limit on immigration, and so it seems Cameron's talk of caps on population has struck a chord once again.

But simply putting an overall limit on immigration is only half of the solution. Doubtless, much migration to the UK is because we have the rather unsavoury reputation of being a soft touch when it comes to benefits. So when people hear of hand outs, housing and health care all thrown about like confetti and an abundance of well-paid work for those who actually want it, who can blame then for wanting to come here? We need to try to discourage the idea of Britain being the land where milk and honey flows. This is why tightening the benefits system, and getting those on benefits who are able back into work will reduce the demand for cheap migrant labour. This is another of Cameron's policies, and one that is long overdue.

Stuart Barfield

## Miniature Tory Scrapbook



## Coming events



### An evening with Greg Hands MP

Tuesday November 13th @7.30pm  
Venue: UCL Garden Room

Greg Hands, MP for Hammersmith and Fulham will be coming to visit us and give us his perspective of the current political scene. These events always prove interesting - great focus is always placed on the very senior MPs and this may well offer us a fascinating insight into life behind the scenes.

A Q&A will follow the speech and there will also be plenty of wine and nibbles to go around too.



### Question Time

Tuesday November 27th @7.30pm  
Venue: UCL Garden Room

Every year the Society has our own Question Time event, based on the BBC show. A panel will take questions and give you their views on the current political climate.



Speakers: Mark Coote (PPC for Cheltenham) , Nick Webb (Gloucestershire and Bristol CF Area Chairman) , Michael Rock (Candidate for CF Chairman) and mystery guest.



### Christmas Reception with Dr Liam Fox MP

Tuesday October 11th@7.30pm  
Venue: Gustav Tuck Lecture Theatre

Dr Liam Fox will help us round off the term as the highest profile MP we've had since Boris last year. With the party currently riding high in the polls we may well see a very positive performance and a front bench opposition MP never disappoints.

**Tickets for each event:** Members: FREE. Non-members: £5. Includes wine and canapés.

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