

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

*"The old order changeth, giving way to new."
~ Tennyson*

*"If the turkeys won't vote for our Christmas,
we need to change the turkeys."*

1. The Consequences of our Party Political System

In contrast to the deliberations of a jury, the strident "yah-boo" party political nature of modern UK politics has led to the country facing serious problems. The unchecked and unscrutinised concentration of party political power results in decisions being made for the benefit of a political party rather than in the national interest throughout Parliament and Government in areas including:

- the approval of legislation
- taxation, spending and investment
- public services such as health, education and transport
- departmental announcements and use of statistics
- regulation and enforcement
- appointments

Lord (Robin) Butler, who served as Cabinet Secretary from 1988 to 1998 with Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair, and who therefore observed the process as closely as anyone, stated in a 2004 interview in The Spectator:

"I think we are a country where we suffer very badly from Parliament not having sufficient control over the executive and that is a very grave flaw. We should be breaking away from the party whip. The executive is much too free to bring in a huge number of extremely bad Bills, a huge amount of regulation and to do whatever it likes — and whatever it likes is what will get the best headlines tomorrow. All that is part of what is bad Government in this country."

Professor Anthony King, the political scientist, wrote in the Daily Telegraph in December 2008:

"However, the truth is that the deepest divide in British politics today is not between Labour and the Tories; or between Speaker Michael Martin and irate backbench MPs; or between members of Gordon Brown's Cabinet and each other. It is between Britain's whole political class and the great majority of the British people. On the far side of a chasm stand politicians of all parties and their hangers-on. On the near side is almost everyone else."

Part of the answer lies in a crucial fact that almost everyone in Britain is dimly aware of but that has yet to find full expression. It is that our system of government is failing to perform adequately. Governments of both major parties blunder and fail far more often than they used to."

The past three decades have given us the BSE debacle; the poll tax; the Child Support Agency; Britain's ignominious expulsion from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism; the Millennium Dome; the massive cost-overruns and the partial or total failure of IT projects across the public sector; the failure to control immigration; the bungled introduction of home information packs (Hips); the abandonment of supercasinos; the fiasco of the cost-ineffective Assets Recovery Agency; the collapse of Metronet; GPs' and dentists' ill-drafted contracts; Northern Rock; the failure of government regulation across the financial sector; the botched marking of last summer's SATS exams; the mishandling of Post Office card accounts; the shambolic arrest of Damian Green, and a great deal else besides."

In an Editorial in November 2008, The Times said:

"Britain has more children leaving school at 16 than any comparable nation. A tiny fraction of crimes are seen all the way through to prosecution. The incapacity benefit bill is still huge. So are the unfunded pension liabilities. There has been a decade-long experiment in the social democratic idea

that money and a modicum of efficiency saving will lead to drastic improvement. It has failed to do so and there is now no option other than fundamental reform of the State."

Another Editorial in The Times in July 2009 described how the Government had tried to hide "bad news" by releasing a wide range of information immediately before the Parliamentary summer recess and then went on to describe the content of some of the reports:

"Twenty-six ministerial statements were released a day before MPs went on holiday. It is very likely that most of these reports have been ready to go for some time. Holding them back was a deliberate choice.

Politics is not a disinterested search for truth. It is a competition and every government — past, present and future — selects the material that best makes its case and releases it at the most opportune moment.

The most conspicuously bad news was that the tax take fell by £32 billion last year. Income tax, national insurance, VAT, stamp duty and corporation tax fell by £21 billion. Other debts and legal liabilities had cut income by a further £10 billion.

The National Audit Office (NAO) refused to sign off six sets of Whitehall accounts.

The Treasury accounts revealed that it had spent £24 billion bailing out banks last autumn without parliamentary approval.

The Treasury also failed to stem fraud and error in the tax credit system, which rose from 7.8 to 8.6 per cent last year.

Policy failures were swept under the carpet. A report was released that told us that the Government's Train to Gain scheme, which cost £1.5 billion, was a waste of money.

A faulty IT system handling army payroll had resulted in £140 million of errors, according to the Ministry of Defence accounts.

The audit office also pointed out that the MoD had been unable to account for £155 million of secure radio sets that had been issued to troops fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq."

2. Trust in Parliament and Government

The UK political system has lost the respect of its citizens. This is evidenced by:

- the low turnout at elections:
 - only two-fifths of registered electors voted at both of the 2001 and 2005 general elections and only three-fifths of registered electors voted at each
 - only one-third of registered electors voted at the 2009 European Parliamentary election
- continuing criticism of MPs' lifestyles, of Government initiatives and of the delivery of public services

Politicians have become separate from the electorate. In the *Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, Roger Scruton defines the Political Class as:

"The class, increasingly important in modern democratic politics, of people who have made a career in political and administrative institutions, but who have not had any experience of the ordinary workplace."

Peter Osborne, the experienced political journalist, says in his book *The Triumph of the Political Class*:

"The Political Class has come to acquire one of the defining characteristics of a social class: a common economic base. Politicians are now fundamentally dependent for funding and prestige upon the British state. Indeed many members of the Political Class abuse their financial and other privileges, then collaborate with each other, even across traditional party lines, to prevent themselves being found out.

The techniques of manipulation, deception, smear and institutional capture have taken power away from ordinary voters and placed it in the hands of the Political Class. But this means that democratic

politics in Britain no longer does the job most people want it to do. Rather than resolve conflict, it suppresses it. Rather than inform voters, it deceives them. Rather than place a check on the power of the executive, it celebrates it. This is a fantastically dangerous structure.

Voters put their MPs into parliament to represent their interests, and to articulate their anger, not to form part of a comfortable club, or to collude with opposition parties"

The particularly serious issues with the UK party political system are confirmed by the *Eurobarometer* survey published by the European Commission in June 2008. This was based on over 30,000 interviews across the EU with a minimum of 1,000 interviewees in each country, including 1,306 in the UK. One of the sections was: *"I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it."*

The results of the survey fully support the thesis of the Jury Team. Only 27% of UK citizens said that they trusted the UK Parliament and only 24% said that they trusted the UK Government. This result was the lowest of any part of the EU and demonstrates that the UK electorate has a much deeper suspicion about its political system than exists in other broadly comparable countries. This is a very sad position and should be a wake-up call for all of those who believe that the UK deserves a better system of Government and that the *"Mother of Parliaments"* should be reformed in order to gain greater respect:

	<u>Tend to trust the National Parliament</u>		<u>Tend to trust the National Government</u>
Denmark	76%	Finland	61%
Finland	66%	Malta	56%
Sweden	60%	Spain	55%
Netherlands	56%	Denmark	55%
Spain	54%	Netherlands	51%
Malta	54%	Sweden	45%
Greece	49%	Austria	42%
Belgium	48%	Belgium	40%
Austria	46%	Ireland	37%
Ireland	42%	Germany	36%
Germany	41%	Greece	34%
Portugal	39%	Portugal	32%
France	35%	France	28%
UK	27%	UK	24%

65% of the UK respondents specifically said that they did not trust Parliament and 72% said they did not trust the Government.

Similarly, UK surveys in 2000 and 2004 showed that 54% and 55% of voters thought that *"this country is getting less democratic"* with only 22% and 24% having the opposite view.

63% of people polled in 2004 said they thought *"the present system of governing Britain"* *"could be improved quite a lot"* or *"needs a great deal of improvement"*.

The IPSOS/Mori poll of trust in professions published in February 2009 showed that only 21% of the public think that *"politicians generally"* tell the truth:

	<u>%</u>
Doctors	92
Teachers	87
Professors	79
Judges	78
Clergyman	74
Scientists	72
TV news readers	66
The Police	65
Ordinary man/ woman	60
Pollsters	48

Civil Servants	48
Trade Union officials	45
Business Leaders	30
Government Ministers	24
Politicians generally	21
Journalists	19

The public is very concerned about the backgrounds, lifestyles and expenses of current MPs. On the 3rd July 2008, MPs threw out a series of modest proposed reforms to their expenses by 172 to 144. This not only prevented the necessary reforms but showed that 325, over half, of the eligible 641 MPs (excluding the Speaker and four tellers) actually failed to vote. The abstentions were made up 42% of all Labour MPs, 43% of all Liberal Democrats, 61% of all Conservatives and 83% of all the other parties. This was a clear sign of the distance between MPs and their constituents in terms of their view of their own worth and importance.

Respect for politicians has however deteriorated even further following the revelations about MPs expenses from April 2009. There is now little confidence at all in the political class and politicians are even less trusted than they were previously.

Despite the issues in Parliament and Government, the UK has a very well developed civil society. This is especially so in the charitable sector where 170,000 organisations, with a total income of £46 billion, have over half a million paid staff and millions of volunteers supporting them. Some, such as the National Trust, have memberships many times greater than all political parties combined. They also have a strong tradition of independence and integrity which contrasts greatly with the image of Parliament and Government. The experience of our civil society can undoubtedly contribute to reforming our key political institutions and to providing Jury Team Parliamentary candidates.

3. The Purpose of Westminster and Whitehall

Westminster and Whitehall have distinct functions:

- **Westminster:** Parliament decides on whether to agree to a proposed new law and holds the government to account for its actions in administering the law

Prime Minister Gladstone made clear the function of Westminster when he said to the House of Commons:

"Your business is not to govern the country, but it is, if you think fit, to call to account those who do govern it."

- **Whitehall:** Government administers existing laws and as necessary can propose new laws to Parliament.

Unfortunately these two sets of activities have become blurred and coalesced in the modern UK Constitution (unlike in the US which essentially adopted our 1780 Constitution with its then separation of powers, although replacing a hereditary head of state with an elected one). The legislature, our Parliament, and the executive, our Government, have now merged under the Prime Minister who commands his or her majority in Parliament though the whips and the administration of existing laws by Government though the ministers. His or her appointments of both whips and ministers are made in the interests of the governing party and not of the people of the United Kingdom. There are no proper checks and balances against the actions of these appointees either in Parliament or in the major departments of state.

Our "first past the post" (FPTP) Westminster election system inevitably leads to the dominance of an oligarchy of only two major parties in which an increasingly small number of individuals have the media access to dominate politics. Career MPs become chained to the platform of their chosen party for their advancement. The biographies of many of the front bench members of the main political parties are almost indistinguishable on their well-trodden path from college to party worker to Westminster and they hope eventually to Whitehall. Their entire working life requires obedience to their party leadership who promulgate changing policies with some of which they may well strongly disagree.

Political parties demand a loyalty which is completely alien to the proper role of a democratic politician's prime responsibility to his or her constituents or to the country as a whole. Political parties are now seen as being more concerned with winning elections than with actually improving the lives of the people they represent. The key objective of modern political parties is to gain and keep power for

themselves rather than to ensure that Government is properly scrutinised by Parliament and that the Government is run for the benefit of the people.

Given the very poor public perception of our political system and its many publicised failings, the Jury Team has researched a wide range of sources which over the last few years have looked at the governance of the UK including:

- Electoral Reform Society
- Hansard Society
- Power Inquiry
- Better Government Initiative
- Democratic Audit
- Unlock Democracy/Charter 88
- Open Democracy/Our Kingdom
- Electoral Commission
- Committee on Standards in Public Life (Nolan)
- Commons Home Affairs Select Committee
- Commons Public Administration Select Committee
- Lords Constitution Select Committee
- Hayden Phillips Report on Party Funding

In addition the results of many public opinion polls have been reviewed to determine the governance issues which most concern the electorate together with the appropriate solutions.

The results of this analysis and resultant proposals are set out below for Parliament, Government and Public Involvement.

4. Issues with Parliament

For 500 years after Magna Carta, Parliament had no political parties. Each MP voted according to their own conscience, just as in a jury. Even during the 19th Century, many of the most important initiatives, such as the abolition of the slave trade or the development of the railway system, were the result of private members' bills. However as the electoral franchise was extended in the last two centuries, and the secret ballot introduced, the central party political organisations became more powerful. They now have a stranglehold not only on the selection of Members of Parliament but also through the whipping system on the way in which they must vote once elected.

Graham Allen, the Labour MP, says in his book *The Last Prime Minister*:

"Political legitimacy became synonymous with directly elected representation and as the franchise got wider electoral legitimacy was monopolised by the Commons, who in order to execute their parties' objectives, in turn ceded their political sovereignty to their leaderships. The more the MP's electability depended upon the public perception of the Prime Minister, the more exclusive became his power. Thus was completed the vacuous circle which characterizes British politics today."

In his speech at the Haltemprice & Howden by-election in July 2008, Bob Geldof identified that Parliament is no longer standing up to the executive:

"Let us be grand for once then, for we talk of great subjects. Let us ask 'what is the point of England' now that Parliament, whose primary purpose is to defend the liberties of the people, have so gratuitously, so wantonly, so casually betrayed that trust and taken from us that same liberty which above all else defines this country and its constitution, and that which has been its greatest gift to the world: its freedom, its tolerances, its civilisation which William Wilberforce so forcefully argued from this town so many centuries ago."

The Jury Team organized a national survey to determine voter attitudes. Fieldwork was undertaken between the 30th January and 2nd February 2009. All figures are from YouGov Plc which conducted the poll. YouGov is a member of the British Polling Council and is registered with the Information Commissioner. The total sample size was 2161 adults. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

The public graphically demonstrated that they believe that politicians currently act overwhelmingly in the interests of their political party and themselves rather than of the country or their constituents:

When acting in a political capacity which ONE of the following BEST describes whose interests you think politicians generally put first?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Their party's	44%	42%	45%
Their own	42%	44%	41%
The country's	8%	8%	8%
Their constituents'	5%	5%	4%
Other	2%	1%	2%

44% of all respondents therefore stated that politicians generally put their party's interests first. 86% of all respondents, and of both male and female respondents, stated that politicians generally put either their party's or their own interests first. Only 13% of respondents stated that politicians generally put first the interest of the country (8%) or their constituents (5%).

Commenting on the August 2009 selection of Dr Sarah Wollaston, who has minimal political experience, as the Conservative candidate in an open primary in Totnes, Nick Bye wrote in The Times:

"The victory of Dr Wollaston, despite the news headlines, was not a victory for anti-politicians or anti-politics. Rather, it was a victory for a different style of politics. Voters clearly want their MPs to be much less partisan, much more open-minded and pragmatic in the way they deal with issues. Certainly, the yah-boo politics that flourishes in the chamber of the Commons and many council chambers across the country is unappealing and won't work for any aspiring MP in a primary system."

The lessons from the Totnes selection process were described by William Garman from Devon in a letter to The Times:

"For too long voters have had to suffer the limitations of being presented with a list of candidates chosen for them by these small groups of party workers. Often the candidates are "parachuted" in from outside a constituency, and have minimal empathy with its voters. As a result voters are left with no choice at an election other than to vote for a political party, as opposed to specifically voting for a stranger representing that party."

For Westminster elections, over three quarters of Parliamentary seats are safe under any likely political balance between the two main parties. The FPTP electoral system therefore results in most votes not counting. This means that the political parties only have to concentrate on the 20% of seats, about 130, which are likely to change hands. Within these seats only about 10% of the electorate are targetable floating voters and therefore campaigning is heavily concentrated on the 10% of 20%, being 2%, of the 45 million registered voters. These 900,000 people have their views carefully canvassed and are the focus of all of the centrally directed campaign activity.

An example of this was described in a September 2009 Editorial in the Sunday Telegraph:

"In the interview which we publish today, the Prime Minister goes out of his way to insist that he is a friend, not a foe, of what he has termed "the squeezed middle class".

We are willing to accept the sincerity of the Prime Minister's expression of concern. We wonder, however, what motivates him: is it a genuine acceptance of the intrinsic virtues of the bourgeoisie? Or is it merely the realisation, as Ed Miliband, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, has noted, that Labour cannot win an election without it?"

The active membership of political parties has dropped to less than 1% of the UK population. In many parts of the UK the Labour or Conservative parties no longer have any effective local representation. Party members are much older than the electorate in total and they are atypical on a number of other measures. The great majority of MPs have had little association with their constituencies before they were elected.

Three fifths of the public no longer perceive that the main political parties have any substantially different policies and they feel that political debate is shallow. The two main parties adjust their policies, candidates and leaders to try to win the election by influencing the 900,000 floating voters.

General elections using the FPTP system lead to substantial differences between the share of votes and share of seats and therefore do not lead to a Parliament reflecting the will of the people. Major parties normally do better in terms of seats and minor parties worse. Similarly there are geographical

distortions with, for example, the largest number of voters in England supporting the Conservative Party in the 2005 general election but with Labour getting 90 more English seats.

Parliament also does not represent the population proportionately. Compared with their share of the population, women currently have only about 40% of their proper representation as MPs and ethnic minorities only about 30%.

5. Reintroducing the Jury Principle into Parliament

Bill Cash, the Conservative MP, wrote in October 2008 about the 150th anniversary of the launch by John Bright of his historic campaign for working men to get the vote. Cash said:

"Bright, with Richard Cobden, his fellow believer in free trade, had in 1846 saved the masses from starvation by forcing Peel to repeal the Corn Laws.

So if Bright were alive today what would he be fighting for? His absolute priority would be to restore respect and authority to the Commons. The man who coined the phrase "the Mother of Parliaments" believed that the most precious thing that a person possessed was the right to vote for the laws that governed him and his country.

Bright's first allegiance was to his conscience. He would have no truck with the modern whips system and the surrender of parliamentary business to the executive, nor the fixing of timetables to prevent debate - such as the mere nine minutes given to the third reading of the Embryology Bill last week."

Through the last eight centuries we have developed and kept faith in the jury system. This is based on the view that regular people are able to make decisions about complex problems and that the integrity and lack of vested interests of those involved is more important than the experience of members of an establishment.

In a jury system lay people are selected to come to a decision on behalf of the community, choosing between two competing arguments. People in juries are trusted to make decisions which can have profound impacts on people's lives and there is no reason why similar people cannot choose between political alternatives.

The philosophy of the "wisdom of crowds" also demonstrates that a group of people can usually find a remarkably accurate solution to a problem through combining their independent assessments. It is known as "common sense".

The alternative to independent people deciding on an issue is for groups of concurring people to come together to make a decision. This is what happens in a political party but has been shown to lead to extremes. When like-minded people talk to one another, they tend to become more polarised in their views than they were before. This applies to such diverse groups as religious organizations, corporate boards, investment clubs, and political and elected officials.

The concept of proper representation of the community by independent rather than loyalty driven party political people is therefore at the core of the proposals by the Jury Team. This links the basic concept of fair representation with a practical way of achieving significant change through the established UK constitution. In the same way that jurors are selected from their communities to decide cases, independent MPs can be drawn from a much wider and yet more local group than is the current case with career MPs.

There are those such as the author Keith Sutherland who believe that we would be best served if Parliament was filled, like a jury, on an entirely random basis. However those who propose this recognise that it cannot be achieved within the current constitution.

The Jury Team seeks the election of independent MPs. These will better tend to reflect the electorate and to have a close relationship with their local community with their attitudes being more likely to be compatible with their electorate. In the same way as a jury, they can go back to being independent people exercising their best judgment and not just delegates of a political party leadership.

At an October 2008 conference, Martin Bell, the former Independent MP, spoke about the growing need for people who are free of political sway, and "only want to serve the people who voted them in". He said:

"Negative 'Punch and Judy' politics are not working anymore. Independents practice a different kind of politics, gentler and closer to the people, and we need that now more than ever before."

It is for instance most unlikely that independent MPs would have voted for the Iraq War, for identity cards or for many of the more than one thousand new criminal offences which have been enacted in the past decade.

People have become empowered by communication and by the availability of information. These trends provide the opportunity to remove the representation of the people by oligarchical political parties and reinstate that representation by people of independent integrity and goodwill.

Independent candidates such as Martin Bell, Richard Taylor and Peter Law have shown that Independents can be elected as MPs even if they operate alone with no national representation. The Jury Team will give Independent candidates an even better chance by providing them with a national platform and publicity.

The Jury Team will bring back the independence of MPs so that they are no longer beholden to a party political machine. This will allow voters to go back to being able to choose a person who they believe will best serve their country. As the 18th Century political philosopher John Stuart Mill said about electors:

"His vote is not a thing in which he has an option. He is bound to give it according to his best and his most conscientious opinion of the public good. The voter is under an absolute moral obligation to consider the interest of the public, not his private advantage, and give his vote to the best of his judgment exactly as he would be bound to do if he were the sole voter and the election depended upon him alone."

Once the Jury Team candidates have been selected then the Jury Team will put all of its efforts into getting those candidates elected. The candidates will stand in the actual elections against the candidates of the traditional parties and will be shown on the ballot paper as Jury Team candidates.

In the February 2009 YouGov poll described above, the Jury Team also asked questions about attitudes to voting for independent candidates. People responded that they mainly did not vote for independent candidates because they did not think they would win rather than because the elector was wedded to a particular party.

Thinking about times you have voted in general elections, if you have generally not voted for independent candidates which (if any) of the following is the MAIN reason for this?

	Total	Male	Female
They stand little chance of being elected	21%	20%	21%
Elected councillors and other politicians can seldom achieve anything unless they are part of a bigger group or party	12%	13%	11%
They are unlikely to become part of the Government	10%	11%	10%
I have never had the opportunity to vote for an independent candidate	10%	11%	9%
I actively support an established political party	10%	11%	9%

43% of people (the first three categories) therefore have generally not voted for an independent candidate because they feel they are unlikely to succeed or to form the government. A further 10% have not had the opportunity to vote for an independent candidate, to give a total of 53%.

Only 10% would not vote for an independent candidate because they "actively support an established political party". The position is remarkably similar for male and female voters.

The opportunity for Jury Team candidates is also shown clearly by the response to a question asking if people would vote for a credible independent candidate.

I would consider voting for an Independent candidate if they stood a reasonably good chance of being elected.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Strongly agree	17%	19%	15%
Agree	38%	38%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%	19%	22%
Disagree	13%	14%	13%
Strongly disagree	6%	8%	4%
Don't know	6%	4%	8%

55% of people agree with the statement (17% strongly agree and 38% agree). Only 19% disagree. This shows the potential of the Jury Team. The 55% figure is similar to the 60%/58%/58% support achieved by independents Martin Bell, Richard Taylor and Peter Law at the 1997, 2001 and 2005 general elections respectively.

In order to improve the governance of Parliament the Jury Team will introduce eight Proposals (see Chapter 3):

- (a) MPs should be free to vote in line with their best judgment and should not be required to obey any party whips.**
- (b) MPs, ministers and their political staff should be paid according to civil service pay scales, should have any expenses approved only in line with established civil service guidelines and must act according to the Nolan Principles that apply to all public bodies.**
- (c) An Independent Politicians Complaints Commission, modeled on the Independent Police Complaints Commission, with its Board appointed by a panel of designated NGOs, should be established to investigate accusations about national and local politicians, basing its judgments on the Nolan Principles that apply to all public bodies.**
- (d) The Hayden Phillips Report recommendations on capping donations to political parties should be accepted and enforced.**
- (e) Members of Select Committees, which hold the executive to account, should be elected by all MPs and not appointed by party whips, and should scrutinise all departmental proposals for legislation.**
- (f) No European directive should be enacted or enforced by secondary legislation in a stricter way than is the practice in any other European country deemed compliant for that directive by the European Commission.**
- (g) MPs should normally serve for no more than three full terms of five years.**
- (h) General elections should take place every five years unless a resolution of the House of Commons decides otherwise to reduce this period for particular circumstances.**

The Jury Team will challenge other political parties to accept these Proposals.

An article by Michael Portillo in the Sunday Times in August 2009 was in line with this thinking:

"The corruption in the Commons that matters most is that almost the single route to preferment and higher pay is through the patronage of the prime minister. Ideally, we should separate the legislature and executive completely. Our prime ministers have become presidential and we would do better to elect them directly to the office. Candidates for the Commons would then seek election not in the hope of entering No 10 but to draw up laws and keep the government in check. Ministers would be drawn from outside parliament.

If we do not go so far as to separate the legislature from the executive, then at least the number of MPs should be slashed and the money and space saved should be used to make the committees more powerful, with well-paid chairmen and permanent staffs, so they can truly make the government quake."

6. Issues with Government

The central Government machine has changed little in its structure of ministers and civil servants for over 150 years despite the massive increases in its scope and reach. Departments are now led by politicians with short-term political aspirations, minimal management experience and fast career changes who generate initiatives more for media consumption than for the benefit of the public.

In the last 35 years since 1974, the UK has had six Prime Ministers. Labour held power from 1974 to 1979 (Wilson and Callaghan), the Conservatives from 1979 to 1997 (Thatcher and Major) and New Labour from 1997 to probably 2010 (Blair and Brown). In each case the Prime Minister elected at the beginning of the Government resigned under a serious cloud and the successor, not elected by the voters, lost (or in the case of Brown may well lose) a general election. These six people came from very different backgrounds with markedly diverse political philosophies and personal character traits but none of them has been able effectively to run the current system of political parties and Government for the long-term benefit of the country and its people.

The inevitable conclusion of these more than three decades of political frustration is that it is very unlikely that whoever is elected at the next general election will be able to deal with the key issues facing the country within the current confrontational party political system. Given the huge ramifications for millions of people it is clearly not sensible just to wait for a "Master or Mistress of the Universe" to appear who can operate this system effectively. A better approach must be to review what is wrong with the current party political system and to see how it can be improved so that the issues facing voters can be better resolved.

Turnout decreased to around 60% in the 2001 and 2005 general elections. The 40% abstaining therefore form the largest voting group. Governments have been put in power by a decreasing share of the votes of the total electorate: from 33.5% in 1992, to 30.9% in 1987, to 24.8% in 2001 and to only 21.6% in 2005. The current Government's legitimacy is therefore based on the endorsement of only slightly more than a fifth of the electorate.

The search for a stance and image which will lead to a political party being elected, requiring it to move towards the centre, means that all major parties have to have policies which pander to and do not upset the floating voters.

Governments based on political parties inevitably choose the soft option for the floating voters, whether in relation to infrastructure, pensions, education or health.

These can take the form for instance of government having excessive borrowing in order to entice its current electorate but the inevitable cost will be borne by future generations. Similarly environmental issues need to be tackled appropriately as otherwise they leave a legacy for the children and grandchildren of those who cause the problems. Likewise investment in education will always be under pressure but ignorance is usually even more costly to a society in the longer term.

Decisions made by politicians with their eye constantly on their electoral prospects now lead to the party leaders offering continual verbal bribes to the electorate in the same way as Roman emperors used to try to stay in power by offering "bread and circuses" to their citizens.

For instance, following the publication in September 2009 of the report into the collapse of the Rover car company, Rod Liddle wrote in The Sunday Times about the support which two Secretaries of State for Industry had given to the management consortium which bought the company from BMW in 2000:

"Patricia Hewitt bunged the new company £6.5m of public money, a sum considered at the time "a waste" by the National Audit Office. But the 2005 election was only weeks away — what are you going to do, let the company go bust with all those votes up for grabs in the West Midlands? Even the administrators told Hewitt that there was little or no chance that the company could be successfully sold off. But both Byers and Hewitt were motivated by selfish, party political concerns — and so to hell with the public's money."

Similarly, Stephen Byers, the former Labour minister mentioned above, wrote in The Sunday Times in May 2008:

"In the past year far too many decisions about tax have been taken to try to secure a tactical advantage. This has led to some damaging mistakes. Whether in relation to the changes to inheritance tax, capital gains tax, the treatment of non-doms or the abolition of the 10p income tax band, the whole approach has been about political positioning. What has been lacking is a strategic and principled view of how we should change our tax regime."

It is now clear that the economic growth of the last 15 years has been built on too much debt. However because they needed to compete in the minds of voters to say that they could improve living standards, no major party proposed any measures to restrict banks and building societies from providing loans and other credit instruments, such as 125% mortgages, which clearly could not be sustainable.

The politicians have tried to blame the bankers for the financial crisis but in fact it is the political system, especially in the US and the UK, which encouraged reckless growth by allowing regulation to condone practices which could not be sustainable (championing lending to the disadvantaged, permitting low capital ratios to increase bank lending, no proper control of the use of depositors' money for trading activities, minimal restrictions on off balance sheet financing, etc). This was acknowledged by Lord Adair Turner, Chairman of the UK Financial Services Authority, in his speech at Mansion House in the City of London in September 2009:

"For regulators, the key long-term issue is not the level of pay but the structure of payments and the incentives they produce. And it is possible to overstate the importance of bonus structures in the origins of the crisis: they were, I believe, much less important than huge failures in capital adequacy and liquidity regulation."

In their pandering to the voters, the political parties have been guilty of setting the scene for regulation which allowed financial institutions to take risks that were unjustified in the wider economy. For example in his Budget speeches to the House of Commons, Gordon Brown said:

2005: *"Those in this House who have forecast recession and those who have called our spending unaffordable have been consistently wrong and with the most recent figures published today for both economic growth and receipts, they are wrong again."*

2006: *"As I have said before Mr Deputy Speaker: No return to boom and bust."*

In August 2007, just a month before Northern Rock had to seek government support, George Osborne launched the *Final Report of the Conservative Party Economic Competitiveness Policy Group* which advocated the complete deregulation of the mortgage industry and stated:

"Mortgage regulation. We see no need to continue to regulate the provision of mortgage finance, as it is the lending institutions rather than the client taking the risk."

As a result of the recession, in the government's budget for the current financial year more than a quarter of all expenditure is being financed by borrowing (rather than by taxation). It is now recognised by all parties that this cannot continue as the resulting interest payments and the need to pay back the borrowings quite unfairly push the cost of current spending onto future generations.

All major parties have therefore said that there will have to be major cuts after the general election. However as reported by Joe Murphy in the Evening Standard in September 2009:

"None of Britain's political parties has yet shown how they will fill a £90 billion gap in public finances, a leading think tank said today. Carl Emmerson, of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, said far bigger spending cuts or tax rises would be needed than any of the parties had admitted. "It is going to be very dramatic and involve very difficult decisions," he warned. "The total gap that the Treasury is trying to address is worth £90billion.""

The dire state of Britain's public finances was recently shown by the public sector increasing its net borrowing by £16.1 billion in August 2009, up from £9.8 billion a year ago. This is the largest increase in the amount of new debt held by the UK Government since records began. The increase meant that new net borrowing for the first five months of the current financial year was £65.3 billion, more than £1,000 per person in the UK and twice the £26.1 billion seen at the same stage in 2008. Howard Archer, Chief UK Economist at IHS Global Insight, said that the "dismal" figures provided fresh evidence of the need for massive cuts in government spending:

"There is no getting away from the fact that major, extended public spending cuts will have to occur to get the public finances back to a sustainable state. It also seems inevitable that some tax increases will be needed. It is hard not to feel some pity for whoever is Chancellor after the next election, as he is going to have to take a lot of difficult and unpopular decisions."

The potential magnitude of the necessary cuts and tax rises will probably make the next Prime Minister one of the most unpopular ever. It will therefore be vital to have a group of MPs who, rather than trying to score points on a party political basis, are trying to seek consensus.

Sir Ken Macdonald, Director of Public Prosecutions from 2003-08, wrote in The Times in February 2009:

"How did we get here? Well, financial deregulation undoubtedly released great energy and wealth into the markets and did so in part by giving bankers and financiers more space. But this space had another effect. It created a growing distance between wealthy and powerful individuals and the agencies designed to police their behaviour.

Not sensing the danger in this, our two main political parties supported looser regulation over many years. Now, apparently tainted by past misjudgments, they are deeply compromised in trying to find solutions."

In the light of the unprecedented issues in the financial markets and increasingly in the rest of the economy, Frank Field, the Labour MP, wrote in the Guardian in December 2008 that we now need to start preparing for a national Government:

"If the Government fails to survive the economic catastrophe beginning to engulf practically all of us, its inability to finance record-breaking debt is what will probably bring it down. Any such end is likely to come unexpectedly, so we need to start planning what to do.

If the debt can't be sold, it will be impossible for the Government to continue. The only options then will be to print money, with all the dangers for a country of going along with such a policy; or for the political parties to come together - in a national Government - to try to convince the gilt market that the country is serious about bringing under control the gap between projected Government expenditure and its falling tax revenue base.

It is crucial that we begin to plan for this scenario for, once in this totally uncharted territory, we may not then have that long to convince the markets that Britain's political class really means business in trying to get the nation's accounts into some sort of order. If we fail to convince at this point, then the outlook for the country is truly unimaginable."

In a December 2008 article in the Mail on Sunday, Vince Cable, the Liberal Democrat MP and Treasury Spokesman, wrote:

"I believe the public will see the need to 'stick together' and, in particular, will expect the political parties to rise above the usual petty, tribal bickering. There will be calls for a 'government of national unity', to get political adversaries round a table working together rather than pointing fingers at each other. There must, of course, be vigorous debate and public accountability, as well as unity, but I think the public senses that this is not what they are getting at the moment.

I see the personal and party animosities played out every week at Westminster and wonder if the political classes are capable of grasping the enormity of the crisis we are in and the challenge to us to behave differently. If we do not, the public will become seriously angry. We know from history that such anger can lead to extremes.

It will no longer be acceptable for Ministers and mandarins (or MPs and peers) to have a feather-bedded existence, with large, protected pension pots, like First World War generals enjoying the comforts of a chateau at the rear while their men are fighting in the trenches."

In the February 2009 YouGov poll described above, it was clear that the public fully understand the need to make government more accountable:

Below are some areas that could be priorities for politicians to have. It is not a full list but please select up to 3 options from those shown which you would like to be your elected representative's main priorities.

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Strengthening the economy	71%	70%	72%
Reducing crime and vandalism	66%	67%	66%
Improving the management of immigration	53%	51%	55%
Making government more accountable	42%	46%	37%

Investing in public services	38%	38%	39%
Enhancing Britain's diplomatic standing in the world	7%	8%	6%
Other	3%	3%	3%
Don't know	3%	2%	4%

Over two-fifths of people (42%) rated "Making government more accountable" as one of their top three issues. This was higher than the 38% who stated "Investing in public services" as one of their top three issues.

7. Achieving Government in the National Interest

"Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."
 ~ Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 1863

Government's prime responsibility is the management and administration of the laws which have been passed by Parliament. The 6+ million people employed in the public sector have the task of implementing this legislation whether in health, education, the armed forces, the emergency services, tax collection, social security or the many other tasks given to Government by Parliament.

It is essential that we have a steady but responsive system for running the Government machine which is led by the 20+ departments of state. Their administration oversees, allows or limits all of the administrative tasks which impact citizens such as the school choice available to a child, the health provision for an elderly relative, the combat equipment protection for those on active service, the management of immigration, investment in infrastructure or the way in which subsidies are allocated.

It is said that *"To every complex problem there is a simple solution....., but it is usually wrong"*. The simple solutions of party political philosophy are insufficient for the complex problems now faced by the developed world. The *"devil is in the detail"* both of policy and especially of delivery as is known by anyone who has run a complex organisation. Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover famously said *"retail is detail"*.

Expect the best, Prepare for the worst.
 ~ Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Government is run by the Prime Minister and the appointment of that person by the monarch is the fundamental decision to be made in our political system. However despite its importance, half of our last six Prime Ministers have been recommended to the monarch following highly politicised and often unclear processes within political parties to decide on their leader. They have had no democratic mandate either from the electorate or even from a true majority of the House of Commons.

This has resulted from the increasing strength of the party political system which now allows the majority party in the House of Commons to use its whipping power to get its MPs to vote for the person who had been elected as its leader.

This means that all the MPs from parties other than the government party (typically over two-fifths of the total) have no say in who will become the Prime Minister. They are disenfranchised in that vital decision as are all those members of the electorate in the constituencies they represent, many millions of people. With the government party and its majority of MPs now only securing votes from just over one-fifth of the electorate in a general election, this is even more graphic than it used to be.

The Prime Minister is meant to be the person who commands the support of the majority of members of the House of Commons. However this can only be achieved if the Prime Minister is elected by a secret vote of all MPs rather than by a clouded mechanism within a particular party.

Departments do not have as their prime purpose the development of ideology. They are there to administer the current laws. Butler said of Gaitskell (who served as Chancellor immediately before him): *"We both spoke the language of Keynes, but with different accents"*.

Governments are largely judged on their managerial competence but short political timescales prevent the long term development of effective organisations. This was commented on by Peter Riddell in The Times in May 2008:

"He noted the analysis of Sir Antony Jay, co-author of Yes Minister, about how companies in trouble engage in selective panic and produce lots of little measures that result in chaos. This 'displacement

activity for the disturbed', as Professor Hennessy calls it, has clearly been visible in Whitehall for the past six months, as Mr Brown has believed that the vitality of his Government is shown by unveiling masses of new initiatives, often to little effect."

The world changes so quickly that no party political manifesto can hope to cover all of the issues which are likely to arise even in the term of a five year Government. Indeed it is clear that most votes are anyway cast in a general election by people who have not read the main party manifestos and have only a very limited knowledge of their contents. The claim of a political party to have a mandate for each of its policy proposals is therefore of little merit.

Anatole Kaletsky wrote in The Times in August 2008:

"Manifestos are rarely worth the paper they are written on. This is not just because politicians are dishonest but because unexpected events intervene. Dealing with the unexpected is a much more important function of government than implementing manifestos."

In order to be able to lead and/or manage any organisation it is first necessary to get right both the people and the structures in which they operate and then there must be an independent system for measuring their progress. These three elements are considered below.

Firstly, properly qualified people must be in place and able to use their best unbiased judgment in deciding how to progress all of the issues which do arise.

Secondly, they need to do this in organisational structures which encourage sensible debate and decision making. A failure to reform its governance structures will condemn the UK to the continuing failure of so many of its government related activities as outlined above.

Only when these two elements are in place is it likely that there will be any proper, reasonable and judicious discussion about the particular way forward. This principle is well described by Professor Jim Collins in his seminal book on leadership, *From Good to Great*, in which he describes his concept of "First Who, Then What". The main point of this is not just about assembling the right team. The key is to get the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) before you decide where and how to drive it. He says:

- First Who: Get the right people on the bus. Build a superior team
- Then What: Once you have the right people in place, figure out the best path

The third element required is to be able properly to measure the effectiveness of policy and its administration. Companies and charities have to obey strict requirements on financial, risk and other reporting and their trustees or directors are guilty of a criminal offence if they knowingly mislead the public. In contrast there is currently great mistrust of government statistics and statements by ministers and this needs to be much improved.

Running the country properly is a matter of good judgement in a proper structure in order to make pragmatic decisions in line with the principles of ethics, effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

The Jury Team therefore proposes that (see Chapter4):

- (a) After each future general election the House of Commons would meet to elect by secret ballot a person who would be recommended to the monarch to be Prime Minister**
- (b) The Prime Minister would then appoint the senior minister to run each department who would in turn agree with the Prime Minister the appointment of the junior ministers for that department and would have to agree to their being moved elsewhere**
- (c) Departments should be run by a Board chaired by the senior departmental minister and attended by the other ministers but on which at least half of the directors would be appointed by a panel of designated NGOs and other stakeholders relevant to producer and consumer interests in that sector.**
- (d) All Government statistics should be published by an independent body whose Board is appointed by a panel of designated NGOs and other stakeholders associated with the collection and use of statistics.**

8. Issues with Public Involvement in Politics

In a December 2008 debate in the House of Lords, the Conservative peer Lord Norton of Louth, Chair of the Lords Constitution Select Committee from 2001-04, stated:

"There are significant changes in the very nature of politics. Some people are losing interest in politics; others are not losing interest but rather diverting their attention away from political parties to interest groups. There has been a phenomenal growth in the number of interest groups over the past 40 years. The membership of political parties has seen a major decline as the membership of interest groups has increased. We need to be in a position to engage both with those who come together to form particular groups and those individuals who believe that politics, and what Parliament does, is not for them. There have also been major changes in the means available for communication, especially electronic means."

The low membership of political parties and declining turnout at elections shows voters' distaste for the existing way of doing politics. They have much less party allegiance and express the wish to have politicians who do not have the prejudices and arrogance of political parties.

While the vast majority of the electorate remains interested in national and local issues, most people in the UK feel that they do not have a say in how the country is run. Three fifths of the public can no longer see any real difference between the main political parties. Political debate is seen as hollowed out. For instance in September 2009, Tom Baldwin and Philip Webster reported in The Times:

"Polls by Downing Street suggest many former Labour voters are reluctant to switch to the Tories and are backing fringe parties."

Patrick Dunleavy, the political scientist, has said:

"These modern party systems reflect the exhaustion of previous main party and governing elite strategies of attempting to suppress some issues and sublimate others into a limited part of the left-right spectrum. That approach can no longer accommodate what voters want to talk about and vote about."

Many people therefore see little benefit in being involved with politics because of the entrenched party systems. A 2005 YouGov poll showed that 24% of the electorate would vote for "none of the above" without even knowing what might be the alternatives. There are in addition an estimated 7% of eligible adults who are not currently signed up to vote who might be inspired to do so in a similar way to what happened in the US with Barack Obama.

Political loyalties which used to be handed down from generation to generation are no longer strong. Society has changed as citizens have become much more aware than a few decades ago of the complexity of life and of political issues. The reasons for this reduction in political allegiance include better education and more travel, the lessening importance of family networks, fewer locational ties, the reduction in class-based inequalities and greater suspicion of politicians themselves. People have a wide range of views and will not slavishly follow the policies of one political party.

For instance a YouGov poll for the TaxPayers Alliance in January 2009 showed that 45% of the public feel that none of the main parties adequately represent their views on Britain's future relationship with the EU, whilst only 29% believe that any of the main parties represent their view. Among Conservative supporters, only 35% feel that any of the main parties adequately represents their view on Britain's relationship with the EU.

In her introduction to the Power Inquiry report Baroness Helena Kennedy stated:

"The politicians have no idea of the extent of the alienation that is out there"

There has been a particular reduction in interest by young people who have generally grown up in better conditions than previous generations. Although around three-quarters of them are interested in political issues, only two-fifths have any interest in party politics.

This failure of the main political system has led to the growth of pressure groups and other ways for people to express their views (90% of the public agree that if Governments do not listen, peaceful protest, blockades and demonstrations are a legitimate way of expressing people's concerns).

9. Introducing Referendums

"The instant the people allows itself to be represented, it loses its freedom".

~ Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Even if there is a powerful group of independent MPs, a rounded political system requires that the people can directly express their view on particular issues between elections. This also limits the power of the Government.

In 1910 in the House of Commons, approving of the idea for a referendum about Irish Home Rule, Arthur Balfour, a former Conservative Prime Minister, said:

"The referendum, at all events, has this enormous advantage that it does isolate one problem from the complex questions connected with keeping a Government in office, and with other measures which it wants to carry out and with other questions of foreign and domestic policy. It asks the country not 'do you say that this or that body of men should hold the reins of office?' but, 'do you approve of this or that way of dealing with a great question in which you are interested?' "

The Economist magazine clearly described this in 1993 when it stated:

"As the old differences of wealth, education and social condition blur, it will be increasingly hard to go on persuading people that most of them are fit only to put a tick on the ballot paper every few years, and that the handful of men and women they thereby send to Parliament must be left to take all the other decisions"

This right to a referendum is referred to by the use of the word "*directly*" in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

*Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, **directly** or through freely chosen representatives.*

The Jury Team will suggest specific questions that it will pledge to put in a referendum to the people. The Jury Team will not centrally support a particular side of the question, although individual candidates may, but does support the right of the people to be asked important questions which if unresolved then lead to potential paralysis in public policy. The referendums would be held each May/June at the time of the local elections and there would be no more than five referendum questions every year.

The following eight referendum questions on policy have been identified as being suitable to be proposed by the Government in the first three years of the next Parliament, based on key interests expressed by the UK public. The Government would produce a White Paper (a parliamentary paper enunciating government policy) on each issue defining all of the relevant factors together with draft legislation to be enacted if the referendum is agreed.

The Jury Team organised a poll with YouGov Plc to research the suggested questions. Total sample size was 2058 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16th - 18th September 2009. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). The majority from that poll of those who say YES compared with those saying NO is shown in brackets after the question:

- Giving courts the ability to sentence violent criminals to "army style" punishment and training courses (67%)
- Preventing banks that are benefiting from government guarantees from using depositors' funds to support their own market trading (64%)
- Limiting the number of British troops sent to Afghanistan to the average number sent by other NATO countries (relative to their size) (53%)
- Setting up an English Parliament to decide matters that relate solely to England (38%)
- Changing the voting system in the House of Commons to direct proportional representation (38%)
- Limiting the amount the government can borrow each year to no more than 10% of its total expenditure (28%)
- Allowing state schools the option of becoming independent state funded charities outside the control of the local education authority if a majority of parents agree (0%)
- Complete withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (minus 4%)

The results of these referendums would have to be translated into law by parliament within six months. The law implementing a successful proposition could be challenged in the courts by any group which believed that the legislation did not properly and reasonably implement the referendum proposition, such action to be given priority in the High Court timetable.

In addition to referendums being proposed by the Government, the Jury Team believes that referendums should also be called if requested by sufficient members of the electorate, a "Citizens' Initiative". This use of a Citizens' Initiative to implement a referendum is now accepted in about half of the states in the US and both at the canton level and nationally in Switzerland and many other countries.

It is also strongly supported in recent research organised by the Jury Team as part of its January-February 2009 YouGov poll.

Respondents were asked: "Please imagine that there was a proposal that British people could force the government to hold a referendum on a particular issue by raising a petition with signatures from, say, a million people. Do you think this proposal is?":

	Total	Male	Female
A good idea	70%	69%	71%
A bad idea	15%	20%	10%
Don't know	8%	5%	11%
Neither	7%	7%	8%

These results show that 70% think that a Citizens' Initiative for a referendum is a good idea.

The Jury Team proposes that the threshold for calling a referendum should be 5% of the Westminster electorate, about 2¼ million people, a number which should be achievable for issues of importance to a substantial part of the electorate.

The introduction of referendums to be called by citizens is a significant constitutional change and requires a cautious introduction. The Jury Team therefore propose that this would include the proposers getting the agreement of the Electoral Commission to the question which could not:

- be discriminatory among UK citizens
- require significant government expenditure or tax reductions
- demand the breaking of any international treaty obligation (although it could require the UK to negotiate an exit from a treaty).

The proposers would require 55% of those voting to be in favour of it and, as with government mandated referendums, the government would have six months in which to get appropriate implementing legislation through Parliament, which could be challenged in the courts. If a proposition was not passed by 55%, no substantially similar Citizens' Initiative could be put to a referendum for a period of five years.

There is little doubt that Citizens' Initiatives would rekindle interest in politics. They would lead to the formation of a wide range of civil society groups interested in the particular issues. In the Introduction to his book *How to win Campaigns*, Chris Rose, who has worked for Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and WWF International, describes how campaigning can provide an enhanced level of political involvement:

Campaigning is an expression of popular democracy; it creates new channels of influence for the public in the public interest. Campaigns work in the public interest by borrowing power from the people for good causes. In a world where politics are increasingly professionalized and lean increasingly towards promotion of private economic interests, campaigning has often become the common politics of the people.

He describes some of the reasons why campaigning works:

(a) *It creates gearing – multiplies the impact of efforts at change by enlisting the help of many people, thereby making it possible to achieve particular changes more quickly, or bigger changes altogether*

(b) *It sets agendas – it aligns the public about what needs to be done*

- (c) *It can remedy a democratic deficit, compensating for the corporatisation and professionalisation of politics and the consequent spiraling lack of trust in the formal political system*
- (d) *For the time being, NGOs – and this includes many campaign groups – are generally more trusted than most other elements of society, such as businesses, politicians and paid-for scientists*
- (e) *It creates a community and ecology of action – it means people are ‘not alone’.*

The Jury Team therefore proposes that at the next general election it will (see Chapter 5):

- (a) Set out a list of eight questions that it will be pledged to put to a referendum within the first three years of the Parliament**
- (b) Pass legislation to enable national referendums to be called annually whenever requested by 5% of the electorate.**

10. Glasgow North East By-Election

Political

The constituency of Glasgow North East (GNE), comprising the previous Glasgow Springburn constituency plus three wards from the old Glasgow Maryhill seat, has been a traditional Labour bastion where there will now be a by-election following the resignation of the Speaker, Michael Martin.

The result of the by-election is wide open as the Labour Party is suffering nationally and its organisation in the constituency is defunct. The main challenger, the SNP, only achieved 18% of the vote at the last general election. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have minimal support and the far left is divided.

The 23rd July Norwich North by-election showed the disillusion with Labour, whose vote dropped by 70%, and with the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats whose vote also dropped by 13% and 37% respectively. The independents and non-traditional parties increased their vote by 162% to a 28% share from a 7% share in 2005.

The by-election will be on the 12th November.

Candidates

The Jury Team announced John Smeaton as its candidate on the 25th September 2009 following an extensive survey exercise in the constituency. John is extremely well known in Scotland as the person who tackled the terrorists in the raid on Glasgow Airport in 2007. The incident has been described as inspiring others to take a personal initiative. He was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his actions. In one of his interviews, when asked what was his message to terrorists, he said: "Glasgow doesn't accept this. This is Glasgow; we'll set about ye". He is also known for the phrase: "No messing".

He was born in Glasgow, a few hundred yards from the constituency, and his mother worked in the constituency for many years. He still lives in Glasgow and was a baggage handler supervisor at the airport when the attack occurred, having previously trained as a joiner. He takes a keen interest in politics and since the incident has retrained in fisheries management.

The Labour Party candidate is Willie Bain, the secretary of the GNE Labour Party. He is locally born but is now a law lecturer who works at London South Bank University and mainly lives in London. He is a party loyalist who has not stood in any previous election but is portrayed as an intellectual and as classic "lobby fodder".

The SNP have selected David Kerr, a former producer and occasional reporter for the BBC and a member of Opus Dei. He was their fourth formal choice of candidate who was selected following the resignation of James Dornan over financial issues.

The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats candidates are respectively Ruth Davidson, a former radio journalist, and Eileen Baxendale, a social worker.

There are possible candidates from the Scottish Socialist Party, Kevin McVey, and from Solidarity, Tommy Sheridan (who is facing perjury proceedings), who will splinter the far left vote. The BNP, Charlie Baillie, has little chance as there is minimal immigration in the constituency and the Scottish

Senior Citizens Unity Party, John Swinburne, will find it hard to gain support as there are few older people there.

Social Background

The constituency, with a population of 88,000, is one of the most deprived in the UK. There are 42,000 households of which 18,000 are of single persons. Adult unemployment is 18%. More than half of all adults have no qualifications and more than half of the families are headed by lone parents. 55% of the entire adult population, 33,000 people, live on benefits, each collecting an average of 1.8 different benefits.

The constituency's deprivation is shown by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation prepared by the Scottish government. Over one third of the constituency is among the 5% most deprived areas of Scotland. Hospital admission rates for alcohol and drugs are more than double the Scottish average.

Key Issues

The main national level political issues in the constituency campaign are likely to be:

- the economy (linked with unemployment)
- crime
- defence (Afghanistan)
- NHS/healthcare
- education

Local issues include:

- The closure of Diageo's Port Dundas brewery and office with the loss of 220 jobs
- The closure of six schools in the constituency
- The cancellation by the SNP Scottish Government of the Glasgow Airport rail link

A Jury Team survey of 400 people in the constituency showed that the main concerns of local people are: Unemployment, Gangs, Crime, Youth Facilities, Drugs, Vandalism, Housing, Public Transport, Under-age Alcohol, Economy and Immigration.

11. The General Election

As the Prime Minister still continues to have the right to use the Royal Prerogative to determine the date for the dissolution of Parliament, it is not possible to predict when the next general election will take place other than to say it will be on or before 25 days after when Parliament has to be dissolved. Parliaments can only run for five years. The current Parliament was first summoned on the 11th May 2005 and so will cease to exist at midnight on the 10th May 2010. A general election to elect the new Parliament must be held by no later than 3rd June 2010.

Bookmakers in September 2009 are giving odds of 7 to 1 that the general election will occur in 2009 but show it as ninety eight times more likely to be held in 2010 with odds of only 1/14. The most likely 2010 date is to coincide with the local elections on the 6th May 2010.

As independent candidates in the Jury Team will appeal across traditional party positions they will be able to take votes from all of the traditional parties. If an independent candidate draws votes from all parties on a uniform basis, the arithmetic of elections means that to win a seat he or she only needs to get a proportion of votes substantially lower than the incumbent previously achieved as that incumbent will themselves lose votes.

In order to overturn a typical incumbent with a 40% share of the vote at the last general election, the Jury Team would have to take only 28.7% of the votes of that incumbent and of all the other parties to win as this would reduce the incumbent's share to only 28.5% of the total vote. There are 56 seats where the winning share of the vote was 40% or less.

The mid-point of the 646 seats in terms of the share of vote of the winner at number 323 is a share of vote of 47.3%. This would require Jury Team support by 32.1% of the electorate to win a majority of seats in the House of Commons.

The last major national party launch in the UK was that of the SDP in 1981. Their stance was similar to that of the Jury Team with their appeal to *"those from outside politics who believe that the country cannot be saved without changing the sterile and rigid framework into which the British political system*

has increasingly fallen in the last two decades". Even though their communications were largely limited to the print media, as the Internet did not then exist, and by choice did not appeal across the political spectrum, they nevertheless achieved 25.3% of the vote in the 1983 general election.

Recent Independent candidates who have supported a platform against sleaze or against what they saw as improper actions by representatives of the party leaderships have done even better. In the 1997 general election Martin Bell gained 60.2% of the vote in Tatton (in protest about the actions of the Conservative Neil Hamilton), in the 2001 general election Dr Richard Taylor gained 58.1% of the vote in Wyre Forest (against the failed health service promises of a Labour minister) and in the 2005 general election Dr Peter Law gained 58.2% in Blaenau Gwent (against Labour forcing an external candidate on the constituency).

It should also be noted that the next general election will be taking place in the context of the retirement of an unprecedented number of MPs and the possibility of a hung Parliament:

- it is estimated that given the large number of MPs resigning as a result of the expenses scandal and the current opinion poll projections, there are likely to be at least 300 new MPs in the next Parliament. This substantial turnover removes any argument about the Jury Team bringing inexperienced people into Parliament as this is what is expected to happen anyway, the difference being that Jury Team candidates will have wider life experience and will not be lobby fodder for a party leadership
- The Labour Party is expected to lose some seats but could still get a majority with just 34% of the vote if the Liberal Democrats did very well. This is perhaps unlikely but as a result of the electoral discrepancies on size of constituency, turnout and share of vote between the two major parties it will also still be difficult for the Conservative Party to get a majority in the House of Commons. The best estimate is that the Conservative Party now needs to have a lead of around 9% over Labour in order to achieve an absolute majority. In these circumstances the people elected for the Jury Team will at the very least have substantial influence in the balance of power between the traditional parties.

The Jury Team believes that even in a single five year Parliamentary term it would be able to clean up the current political system and to introduce a better framework of governance for Parliament. This would then provide a robust framework of governance for whichever MPs might be elected in the Parliamentary term from 2014/5.

12. Conclusion

The Jury Team has a clear plan to open up and clean up politics. All of its candidates will be committed to Parliament providing proper scrutiny of new legislation and to Government operating ethically, efficiently, effectively and economically. They will all subscribe to the seven Nolan Principles in relation to their own conduct.

When elected as MPs all Jury Team members will be expected to vote in favour of all proposals in line with the three Governance Principles which they will have endorsed on their application form to become a Jury Team candidate.

However on all other issues they will be able to vote in line with their best judgment as they will not be bound by any whipping system which forces them to be loyal to their party leaders rather than to their constituents and to the general population. New legislation will therefore only become law if a majority of such independent people supports it after proper scrutiny.

It is time for a real change, not just an exchange of one group of career politicians for another. In an Editorial in August 2009, The Financial Times stated:

"Britain looks as ready for change and new ideas as it was after 1979 and in 1997. Margaret Thatcher's Tories and Tony Blair's "modernisers" certainly agglomerated in the centre, but evolved a distinctive ethos: respectively, of shrinking the state and privatising the economy; and using market-friendly means to pursue traditional Labour ends such as social justice.

Now, both major parties evince an extremism of the centre. The Tories are repositioning themselves roughly where Blairism was ("progressive ends by conservative means"). Labour, recovering from its fulsome conversion to being "intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich", is scrabbling.

Neither party is grappling with the challenges facing the UK. The next government will have to balance poverty, for example, against fiscal penury. How will it redimension the state? We need a vision of the future. We are not getting it."

The Jury Team is based on the clear expression of the concerns and aspirations of the UK electorate as shown in many polls and discussions. As Gordon Brown said in his acceptance speech in May 2007 on becoming leader of the Labour Party:

"The last 10 years have taught me that the best preparation for governing is not meetings in Whitehall. The best preparation for governing is listening to the British people."

The intention of the Jury Team is not only to listen to the British people but also to involve them much more directly in the political system. This will lead to their Parliament having the capacity and structures properly to represent their interests and to their Government operating in a way in which the needs of the people are given greater priority than the needs of any political party.

"A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."

~ Jawaharlal Nehru