

The End Of The Party



Second Edition

Glasgow North East By-Election

The Jury Team

"A jury is the lamp that shows that freedom lives"

~ Lord Devlin

During 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. There is no reason why similar people cannot choose between political alternatives.

The philosophy of the "wisdom of crowds" demonstrates that a group of independent people can usually make a sensible decision through combining their independent assessments. In contrast, people in a like minded group tend to amplify extremes.

The concept of proper representation of the community is at the core of the proposals by the Jury Team which links this basic concept of fairness with a practical way of achieving significant change through the established UK constitution. In the same way that people can form effective juries, they can be elected to Parliament as a much more diverse and yet more local group than is the current case with career MPs. They can also be trusted to decide major issues through referendums.

The Jury Team therefore proposes that, in the same way as a jury, people from a wide range of backgrounds should be encouraged to become MPs and on major issues it should be the people and not the politicians who decide. Gilbert and Sullivan described this in their 1875 opera *Trial by Jury*:

Now, Jurymen, hear my advice--

All kinds of vulgar prejudice

I pray you set aside:

With stern, judicial frame of mind

From bias free of every kind,

This trial must be tried.

The End Of The Party

Proposal and Handbook

Second Edition

By The

**JURY
TEAM**





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The Jury Team Principles

Members of Parliament should be independent and Parliament should be strengthened to stand up to the Government

Government should be run for the benefit of the people and not for the benefit of any political party.

The electorate should be asked their views in referendums on major issues and should be able to call for a referendum

Politics without Parties

Politics with Principles

Politics for the People

**This Proposal and Handbook is designed for everyone involved with the Jury Team,
especially its candidates and members.**

Preface to the Second Edition

The jury is our oldest established institution which stands up for the individual. In a jury, 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. This is the basis for the name of the Jury Team.

The Jury Team was founded to "clean up" politics. It has three sets of principles:

- Encouraging and facilitating people to become independent MPs who will commit to strengthening and cleaning up Parliament so that it can properly decide whether to approve new legislation and can actively hold the Government to account
- Legislating so that Government is run in the national rather than party political interest by a Prime Minister elected by the House of Commons by secret ballot but with less power for individual politicians in administering current laws and proper independent statistics on government activities
- Defining questions on which the Jury Team will hold referendums and allowing the people to be able to call for referendums on major issues.

The Preface to the First Edition, published in March 2009 for the European Parliament Election, presciently began as follows:

The Jury Team, launched in mid March 2009, was founded for those people who believe in democracy but who have observed how the current party political system has turned the United Kingdom's Parliament and Government into the creatures of a small and increasingly distant group of oligarchical politicians.

The arrogance that has developed in these party cultures has led to personal behaviours and attitudes on issues such as expenses and conflicts of interest which would be unacceptable in any other walk of life. Politicians are seen as more interested in winning elections than in improving the lot of the people or the state of the nation. Many manipulate rather than respect their electorate. MPs are now largely in Parliament as their primary career rather than to provide objective oversight of the Government.

The Parliamentary expenses scandal started in April with the publication by the Daily Telegraph of MPs' claimed expenditure. This showed the truth of the above comments and generated even greater public resentment of the political system than previously existed.

The First Edition Preface continued:

The party whipping system has generally reduced the House of Commons to a talking shop which overwhelmingly accepts the Government's proposals with little scrutiny. The UK Government is run by ministers appointed for party political reasons who have little background in their subject or in management and are anyway moved elsewhere before they can implement their proposals.

The expenses scandal also illuminated these statements as it showed that the majority of MPs, the backbenchers, have very little direct responsibility for policy and are essentially "lobby fodder". The ministerial and shadow ministerial resignations that took place as a result of the scandal again showed how appointment decisions are made for party political reasons.

These problems are linked by the common thread of the self-destructing nature of party politics and have been identified previously by many observers. This document brings them together to provide all those who want to work towards change at Westminster with the necessary information about how they can make a difference.

This is however not simply a work of analysis. The distinguishing feature of an entrepreneur is that he or she does not just have a good idea but also expends effort and resources in actually implementing it. This Proposal and Handbook therefore not only sets out the key issues facing the UK and its

governance but also how we can now restore proper democracy and integrity to our democratic institutions.

The Jury Team used the European parliamentary elections held in June 2009 as a form of "test market" for its ideas. The Jury Team supported 59 candidates in all 11 electoral regions of Great Britain. This meant that, for the first time, independent candidates were able to benefit from the Jury Team co-ordination which resulted in the country's first nationally televised Party Election Broadcast, the first national poster campaign and the first national email and mobile phone messaging programme for independent candidates. The advantages of providing a national platform for independent candidates were therefore endorsed and the Jury Team was able to build up a national network of supporters. In 10 weeks from launch it achieved considerable support, gained 80,000 voters and was more successful than the other main new party, Libertas.

This Second Edition is designed to support the Jury Team in the forthcoming Glasgow North East by-election where its candidate is John Smeaton, the baggage handler supervisor who confronted the terrorists in the 2007 Glasgow Airport attack. It does however also relate to the general election which has to take place by June 2010.

The Westminster Parliament differs from the European Parliament in many ways but perhaps most importantly because a government emerges directly as a result of the composition of the House of Commons whereas the European Commission and Council are appointed separately from the European Parliament.

Jury Team candidates will be selected as potential MPs for whenever the next general election is held in 2009/10. They will all stand on a platform of "cleaning up politics", of improving the operation of government and of giving the people a greater say in major decisions.

The Jury Team has the three principles described above of:

- championing independent MPs
- improving the selection of the Prime Minister and the running of government
- allowing the people to decide major issues through referendums.

The first of these principles is designed to get more independent MPs into the House of Commons to provide proper debate in the same way as is achieved by having the non-party crossbench members of the House of Lords. The expenses scandal has accelerated the idea of a new style of politicians going into parliament. Esther Rantzen has confirmed her candidature for Luton South. In Totnes the Conservatives used an open selection process which chose the politically inexperienced Dr Sarah Wollaston as their candidate.

The second principle will give back to the House of Commons its right to become an electoral college which explicitly chooses the Prime Minister rather than having that choice based on a narrow party political system. This would change the focus of future general elections from being based on little-read national party manifestos and shallow promises being marketed for floating voters to the priority being for each constituency to elect the best person to represent their views and contribute to the election of the head of the government. Departments would be run by boards, in a similar way to charities and companies, with proper governance procedures and much less scope for ministers to grandstand.

The third proposal recognises that Parliament as a system of representatives grew up when communications were difficult and there were huge differences in people's educational and practical knowledge. However nowadays Parliament often fails to respond well to the people's concerns about major issues where a clear national policy is required rather than a fudge. The Jury Team will therefore commit to putting forward for decision a number of key referendum questions. In addition, on the basis that more than 70% of people believe that a sufficient group, probably 5% of the electorate, should be able to require the holding of a referendum, the Jury Team will also pass legislation to provide a procedure for citizen inspired referendums.

The Jury Team will co-operate with other non-traditional but non-discriminatory parties for the general election as this is the only way in which many common objectives are likely to be achieved. Fragmented parties will not be able to achieve sufficient votes to win in the current "first-past-the-post" (FPTP) electoral system. For instance, following the July 2009 Norwich North by-election The Times commented in an Editorial:

"The final cause of the large Conservative majority was the failure of the defectors from two-party politics — particularly those enraged by the allowances scandal — to coalesce around a single alternative. The Greens missed their moment by choosing too militant a candidate, UKIP did well but has limited appeal, and none of the independents who were so vocal a few weeks ago was ready to try his luck. This was a stroke of good fortune for the Tories. As they celebrate a good result, they should remember that there is still public anger that they need to address and many that they still need to convince."

Many parties and political groupings and their supporters want to see real change which needs a referendum before its implementation. They should therefore promote the Jury Team's objective of pledging that there will be a referendum on each of the eight issues it has identified within the first three years of the new Parliament. These questions are where the current political system does not seem able either to deliver what the electorate wants or remains paralysed in accepting the views of its electorate.

The Jury Team pledges to have a referendum to decide *whether* the electorate agree with the following eight policies:

- Giving courts the ability to sentence violent criminals to "army style" punishment and training courses.
- Preventing banks that are benefiting from government guarantees from using depositors' funds to support their own market trading.
- Limiting the number of British troops sent to Afghanistan to the average number sent by other NATO countries (relative to their size).
- Setting up an English Parliament to decide matters that relate solely to England.
- Changing the voting system in the House of Commons to direct proportional representation.
- Limiting the amount the government can borrow each year to no more than 10% of its total expenditure.
- 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.
- Complete withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

Current polling data shows that the electorate strongly supports the first six of these propositions. The one relating to the school system is endorsed by English voters but not by Scottish ones (who have a devolved system). In relation to the question on EU membership where the position is broadly neutral there are a considerable number who say currently Don't Know/Wouldn't Vote but who would become more knowledgeable following a referendum campaign.

The Jury Team will not centrally support a particular side of these questions, although individual candidates may, but will absolutely support the right of the people to be asked these questions in order to give clear directions on public policy.

The Jury Team will work within the established constitution which however, without asking the people, has been changed over the last two centuries to give a concentration of power to self-serving and elite political parties. This has led to institutional corruption as the original checks and balances have been eroded. In this respect the Jury Team has the same approach as did Martin Luther to the church of the 15th Century. He revered the ecclesiastical philosophy but was determined to remove what he saw as the modern corruptions of what had once been a noble calling.

The need for reform of our political system is now seen as urgent by the public and by the political class. However just changing one group of career politicians for another group is unlikely to transform our country.

We now have the opportunity to rebuild our Parliament with people whose prime responsibility is to their constituents and to the country and not to themselves or to their party political leadership. Combined with the other Jury Team changes there is a real possibility of the UK again leading the world in the way in which parliament and government operate. We must all seize this opportunity now or otherwise wait another five years during which the situation is likely further to deteriorate.

The Jury Team therefore has three over-riding principles:

Members of Parliament should be independent and Parliament should be strengthened to stand up to the Government

Government should be run for the benefit of the people and not for the benefit of any political party.

The electorate should be asked their views in referendums on major issues and should be able to call for a referendum

The next few months will be the time for real change shown firstly in the by-election in the former Speaker's constituency of Glasgow North East and then in the general election which has to be held by June 2010.

Sir Paul Judge

30th September 2009