

Bah, Poo & Piffle (*working title*)

An examination of politics and politicians but written for people who hate both.

A manifesto for a political future based on philosophy and wisdom.

Which, *of course*, means goodbye to **party** politics...

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Introduction: The Emperor's New Clothes

This book sums up, in an entirely legal way¹, my feelings and views on politics, politicians, journalists and the whole 24/7 piffle factory which forms most of the news verbiage today.

I will demonstrate **how** and **why** our *party* political system is outdated and totally inappropriate for the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

I will explain **how** and **why** *party* politicians are demonstrably rubbish at decision making and provide many examples of their criminal incompetence and short sightedness.

I will make a few suggestions as to what we could, and should, do about the whole system of government from which we currently suffer.

It is a shame that the *grumpy and old* cliché has arisen, because, in my experience, the views expressed by those who *are* grumpy and old, simply reflect a wisdom and frustration gained from the perspective of a full life lived.

Such a view is not often *perceived* as wisdom by the young (those less than 50) is because they increasingly have less and less time to think about what's happening in the world around them and just cannot see what many older people see quite clearly.

Perhaps 'twas ever thus and will continue so to be.

Wisdom and perspective gained by age, in my view, should *demand* respect which it is now seen as uncool to give. Trouble is that many of those "older" people, who have a media presence and therefore a voice, have lost their credibility because *we* are too well informed.

If you are reading this and consider yourself young, do you **not** think that when you are older you will have gained a clearer view of the world?

I am concentrating my analysis of politics and politicians on the period covering my own life experience as I am all too aware that I am not a trained historian and can only therefore give an uneducated colour to the events through which I have lived.

So then who am I, and how can anything I write possibly be worth anything to you?

Before 31, I was a Maths & Computer Science student, a rock star, well almost (OK, nowhere even close!) had one failed 45rpm single, but had a lot of fun; was then an accountant working in the overland tour business until Ayatollah Khomeini blew up our tour buses on their way to India; then an insolvency practitioner (but not for long) and finally a student again learning about these newfangled personal computer thingies, just two years before the IBM PC went to market.

I am now a retired, moderately successful bloke who, at the age of 31 found a business partner and developed a successful, but boring, business selling accounting solutions to other boring, but successful, small to medium sized businesses in the West Midlands.

So, yes, I was lucky to be young but ready for action at the birth of the personal computer revolution. The perspective and life skills I gained from starting a business from nothing, then running and growing that small business are worth more than all the degrees you can ever take. It was the school of hard

¹ I have a tendency to use Chaucerian epithets a bit too much, according to those close to me and who have read drafts of the book. I have therefore had to remove quite a few 'bollocks' from the text ;-)

knocks, having to learn from our many mistakes, but most importantly just learning how to get the job done with gritted teeth and many, many hours of sweat and tears.

I would love you to see what I can plainly see. After many years of having a mere passing interest in world affairs and the mysterious world of politics and politicians, the scales of casual ignorance began to fall from my eyes as I read more history and philosophy, when I retired. That is why I am pretty sure that many of you, of a certain age, will find a resonance in what I am saying and that younger people might find something of real value here too, because much of what lies herein is not taught in schools, but should be.

This book and the facts in it, and opinions formed from it, are the result of that reading and I hope to pass this on in an occasionally humorous yet deadly serious manner.

Those of us who care deeply about the “United Kingdom of Great Britain²” but are perhaps just that bit too comfortable to take action, just want to leave it to the younger *others*, those with a longer future than me and a bit more energy too!

That's you! And *you* are so lucky to be living in the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

You live in a stable, largely safe country and you do not walk in daily fear for your life.

According to a list called “The Global Peace index³” of 162 countries, we are the 47th safest but, for me, Great Britain wins hands down. It wins for many reasons that cannot be quantified or digitised and I don't really want to live in Iceland, which *is the safest* place in the world in which to live!

Your hard won freedoms are protected by a largely functioning legal system although I argue that various governments have done their very best to remove it, from all but the very wealthy, by closing so many local magistrates courts. Much more on this later.

Your armed forces and a police service are probably amongst the least corrupt of any in the world. The government of the day is doing its very best to mess up those too. Much more on all of that later.

Having said all that, something is rotten at the core of our country, and it is getting worse and **You** will need to do something about it!

You might eventually disagree with me and my conclusions, but at least I will have tried my best to convince you that where we are now is a place that needs radical change and furthermore, what that change might look like!

I have always had an active interest in political philosophy and religion from the time I became self aware when I was about 14. I suppose I may be a bit unusual in that respect, certainly it is unusual in my experience.

When I discovered secularism⁴, some 40 years later, the ideas encapsulated by it, summed

2 As quoted from Churchill; sounds pompous but less so if we look at our democracy rather than colonialism, one might also add “and Northern Ireland”

3 <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/our-gpi-findings>

4 Secularism is a principle that involves two basic propositions. The first is the strict separation of the state from religious institutions. The second is that people of different religions and beliefs are equal before one law of the land, and this really matters when, for example, Sharia law is allowed to be practised because of alien religious and cultural sensitivities (of which, much more later ...)

More here @ <http://www.secularism.org.uk/what-is-secularism.html>

up my views and gave me a philosophical home!

In this book, whenever I use the word philosophy I usually mean *political* philosophy which discusses the questions first asked by Socrates 2,500 years ago.

Questions like:

1. How should we best live together?
2. How should the people be ruled / managed / administered?
3. Who should and why should *they*, and so on

Most politicians who freely *use* the word change never seem to be able actually *implement* any, but I will spell out all too clearly why that is the case and what needs to be done and by whom.

Since all these topics regularly get me all fired up, it's a chance to vent my spleen and hopefully get *you* excited by and engaged with *politics*.

Not the *politics* you hear about ad nauseam in the media, but the *other* politics, the original definition of politics, which is actually quite exciting and useful to you and me.

OK, let's have a definition or two, the first of many throughout this book:

politics: (defined, as it appears to be currently): The truly irrelevant discussion of how what *someone* said might be perceived by *others* and whether or not this will damage their *credibility*.

politics: (defined by the Oxford English Dictionary) “*of, belonging to, or pertaining to the state or its body of citizens*”, i.e. the things that *are* actually important to *you* and *me*.

politics: (as defined by Prince Otto von Bismarck⁵) “*...is the art of the possible*”, in other words, for the sake of achieving an action which can be written about *now*, a politician will accept almost any compromise so as to *be seen* to be moving forward an inch. Most considered and probably better decisions are far more difficult to make, take longer and therefore seldom are!

I have one more definition for the word *politics*. This from the *Urban dictionary*⁶, which you might find a little more amusing and accurate in the light of recent events:

politics: derived from the words *poly* meaning many, and *tics* meaning blood-sucking parasites.

The word *politics* comes from the ancient Greeks who, some 2,500 years ago, gave us the basis for a rational philosophy, a logical moral code and the fundamentals of today's democracy, imperfect as it is; all of that, without the help of, or need for, an invisible and rationally improbable supernatural being!

But, I must make it quite clear, that *those* ancient Greeks have absolutely no connection with the people who currently inhabit the area now known as Greece!

5 German aristocrat and statesman; Prime Minister of Prussia (1862–1890), First Chancellor of Germany (1871–1890); he is nicknamed the *Iron Chancellor* and is noted for his laconic remarks.

6 <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=politician>

When I use the word politician in this book, I mean *party* politician, someone who identifies themselves as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, UKIP, Green etc.

Tragically, that which is most important to 'we the people', i.e. the means and processes by which we are governed, has become boring and made irrelevant and invisible to most of us because politicians:

- ... are seen to be more concerned about being re-elected than anything else
- ... are *all the same*, or least seem far too similar to one another
- ... are *remote* from the lives most of us have
- ... talk on TV and radio is largely London-centric
- ... get away with stuff and are not subject to the same rules as “we the people”
- ... live in the 'Westminster bubble'
- ... have driven us all mad because they *all* just have to present their point rather than answer any direct questions put to them
- ... just have to have lots of new shiny policies (how I have come to hate that word!) to feed the 24/7 news machine. Policies which rarely change things for the better and regularly piss off teachers and NHS staff, for example, who have to deal with constant change forced upon them.

One could go, and on, but *one* won't.

That list is riddled with cliché, but is sadly all too true, because politicians have themselves *become* the cliché. Politicians don't know how to reduce the public's poor perception of them and we have largely lost the will to complain because nobody in power is willing to give up that power by being honest.

The bitter truth is that it's far worse than that; far, far worse, as I will demonstrate throughout this book.

The *politics* we hear about, *every-bloody-where* is all about the politicians themselves and not about you and me. The discussion is hardly ever about what should best be done for the benefit of the people, but whether or not a particular proposed *policy* is *politically* acceptable.

Voter apathy, particularly from the young, has been caused by the very nature of what party politics has become. The main parties have become philosophically bland and focus on a reactive (as opposed to a pro-active) sound bite policy and announcements designed for the media rather than us.

In this book I will show how the wisdom of many thinkers from the, distant and not so distant past, has been lost, or ignored by those who have, or rather, *take* power over us.

Most of us just want to get along, raise our families, plant our vegetables, watch football, buy shoes and occasionally have a jolly good moan about how bad things have become. In other words, most of us do not strive for power, do not want to take power so we tend to get leaders in politics and business who are more driven by their need for power and money than a desire to do good for humanity.

We must therefore share some of the blame.

Of course, this state of affairs has always been part of human society, but recently matters have become more extreme. Realising that is important, because those of us who *are* the sheep, are being exploited by the wolves to an even greater extent.

By which I mean by wealth distribution caused mainly

1. by a generally accepted *but debatable* need for endless economic growth
2. by the massive globalisation of businesses which is very bad news for the future of humanity; ever bigger corporations point to a dystopia warned about by many authors
3. The way money has changed from a means of exchange into a corrupt vehicle to make even more money but not achieving anything of use to humanity in general, e.g.
 1. exchange rate manipulation (fraud is the other name for it)
 2. a whole new industry based on minute changes in stock prices and ever faster computers
 3. stock market manipulation, George Soros is the prime example here

I discuss the philosophy of money in great detail later.

Our government uses the same means, as most other governments, for measuring economic growth, namely Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Even the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) questions the usefulness of GDP⁷.

Time for another definition, because without understanding what others mean by GDP, we remain in blissful ignorance.

'The UK National Accounts including GDP are compiled using the European System of Accounts 1995 (ESA95) which itself is based on the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA93). These systems are recognised worldwide and are adhered to by the majority of countries.' [Ed: err, that was supposed to clarify the issue?]

At first sight that seems OK, except for the fact that:

1. No measure for increased happiness or well being is included in GDP. OK, I realise that is difficult to do, but economic activity without a defined philosophical goal to improve the quality of human life is surely pointless?
2. The method for compiling the figures is not defined and nobody really checks. When you look at what GDP actually is, you begin to see flaws so big that they render the measure useless, many unreal items can cause GDP to increase, e.g.:
 - GDP goes up if a financial institution makes a profit on selling shares in a business. I have to point out than nothing has actually been made other than a redefinition of the same measure of an asset. Everything is exactly the same as it was before except that the ownership of the thing has changed. (duh)
 - GDP goes up when a company spends money on advertising. Everything is exactly the same as it was before except that a company's potential profit has been reduced by the amount spent in the hope that more profit can be made in the future. (duh)
 - GDP goes up when the amount borrowed goes up. You have to first realise that money does not actually exist. It only exists as long we believe that it exists. Money is a bit like Thor, Woden, Zeus, Yahweh, Allah and the Tooth Fairy. So then, credit (which is a promise to return some money to somebody, sometime) is considered a useful measure of the nation's health?

7 http://www.oecdobserver.org/news/archivestory.php/aid/1518/Is_GDP_a_satisfactory_measure_of_growth_.html

(duh)

One could go on, but one won't ;-)

Globalised businesses and merchant banks are hungry for the world's rapidly disappearing resources which means that wealth and power are being concentrated into ever larger organisations controlled by fewer and fewer people. All this at an alarming rate!

Throughout this book I draw upon the wisdom to be found in *Small is Beautiful* (1973) written by economist Dr Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, as a guide to a wiser economic system which considers the real needs of 'we the people'. Economics, '*as if people mattered*' is the sub-title, and guiding principle, of his book and now mine.

A taster of what is to come in later chapters.

Few of us have the time, interest or inclination, to watch closely what our rulers are up to. Indeed, most of us don't actually realise who 'rules' us. If you still think it is the current *democratically* elected government then you are in for a few surprises.

Even in the 21st century, most of us *unconsciously* 'know our place' and find it difficult to move from a mind set of unconscious subservience to one of active, engaged questioning of the truly awful decision making process that is inherent in our so-called democracy.

For those younger than say, 50, with a busy working week, with children to think about, there is little time to ponder upon the subject of how Britain is administered and to realise what a massively dreadful job our politicians have done, and continue to do.

I started this book in 2009, having slowly realised that *party* politics was an outdated concept and was blocking any progress towards a modern useful representative democracy. More recently, I have spotted that many more people are beginning to come to the same conclusion.

Most of us just 'know' that something is wrong. We feel uneasy about the way those closer to the top of the heap seem to 'get away' with massive levels of white collar crime. *They* are never, or very rarely, held to account. When those few that *are actually* held to account in some way, they seem to either gently fade from view (but with massive pensions that *we* fund from the public purse) or, reappear a few months later having been forgiven by their mates and apparently forgotten by us.

Just one example springs to mind; Dr Liam Fox Member of Parliament for North Somerset, and former Secretary of State for Defence a position from which he resigned on 14 October 2011 over allegations that he had given a close friend, lobbyist Adam Werritty, access to the Ministry of defence and allowed him to join official trips overseas. Over a 17-month period, ending October 2011, Werritty was present at 40 of Fox's 70 recorded engagements. Fox also fiddled his expenses to the tune of £23,000, challenged the ruling, but was overruled and had to pay the money back.

Did he have to pay a 100% penalty as you and I would if we had fiddled our tax?

No, he did not.

So, by my reckoning Fox was corrupt on so many counts that you or I would have sacked him from his position of trust as a member of Parliament. We would have cancelled his

pension contributions and applied a 100% penalty to the expenses cash he fiddled. But, he was just demoted and sent to the back benches.

But, oh no, he was still there 4 years later, quietly pocketing his pension and MPs salary waiting for us all to forget. In 2014 he was actually allowed to start quietly making public statements of policy for the Tory party! In 2016 he became Secretary of State for International Trade and in 2018 he is a leading spokesman for pro Brexiteers in the Tory party.

Another example of this morally corrupt behaviour is that of Liberal Democrat MP David Laws. You can Google him yourself and discover how this millionaire defrauded you and me out of £100,000 and got away with it. His punishment was to be banned from attending the Houses of Parliament for seven days! That must have really taught him a lesson.

There are many, many more examples and I mention some of them throughout this book.

All this is a matter of public record plus I wrote a blog article on him back in 2011⁸.

To quote David Cameron '*we are all in this together*'.

To which I my response has to be 'bollocks!'

I accepted, without much thought, the closing down of 20% of the rail network in the 1950s & 1960s, plus the Conservative Party's privatisation policies of the 1960s & 1970s. These historically pivotal events were just a vague news background while I got on with my life. But then, when I retired, and actually had some time to read and think, I realised what a complete pigs ear successive governments have made of managing our human and physical resources.

Our water supply, ***our*** electricity supply grid, plus the means of electricity generation are now all owned by private businesses. To compound this gob-smacking theft, most of the new owners are no longer resident in Great Britain for tax avoidance reasons!

All perfectly legal of course and completely “within the rules” but not for the benefit of 'we the people'.

In my view those are ***crimes*** of massive and criminal incompetence.

They were ***public*** assets, managed (OK, managed quite badly at the time) by the public sector, but owned ***on our behalf*** by the government of the day.

All we ever needed government to do, was to improve the management of our resources rather than to sell them off cheap to a bunch of morally repugnant tax dodgers.

Our ***public*** assets were sold off cheaply by incompetent politicians who were desperate to balance the UK's books, but whose qualifications and ability to run the business, that is the United Kingdom of Great Britain, was sorely lacking.

You would expect the perpetrators of these crimes to be incarcerated on bread and water for life! Instead *we* honour them with knighthoods and labels like Baroness and Dame. Yes Maggie, I mean you and your 1980's government cabinet of short sighted, weak imbeciles who watched you do it.

8 <http://www.ruskinweb.co.uk/blog/?p=520>

However, it is not *we* the people who honoured *them*, it was *they*⁹ who did so, and NOT with *our* blessing.

We were not even asked.

I have many more examples of criminal incompetence, committed by our party politicians, laid out in the following pages.

But, perhaps the main problem with our system of part political government is the changes that have been made, by both Labour & Tory administrations, to Ministerial responsibility.

Over the last 40 years, ministerial responsibility has been quietly hived off to quasi non-governmental organisations (Quangos).

Quangos are not held to account by any form of democratic process *by design!*

Successive governments have removed responsibility and accountability from Government ministers so that they can't be blamed for cock-ups any more!

These organisations have taken over responsibility for regulation of privatised industries (Ofwat, Ofgem), education (Ofqual) and 742 more! (Ed: gasp)

Regulation was only required because we can't trust private companies to deliver what should really be in the publicly accountable domain. Sadly the quangos are toothless and cannot do much to rectify the colossal error in privatising what never should have been privatised in the first place.

In 2010, the Tory / Lib Dem coalition announced that they would get rid of most of the Quangos¹⁰ because nobody was quite sure what they did, and anyway they cost far too much. A bonfire of the quangos was ordered!

Then someone remembered why they had been created and of course nothing actually happened, but hey, who remembers government pledges?

Who checks? Who holds the government to account?

The latest Quango to be created is the Office for Budget Responsibility invented by slimy George Gideon Osborne. So then, you can't blame him any more, it was OfbuggeRS fault! (Ed: spelling error?) (Me: no!)

Clever political manoeuvre eh?

Slimy abrogation of responsibility is what I call it!

I hope this begins makes you angry enough to do something?

This sad tale could have been written by almost any member of the baby boomer¹¹ generation, who retired early with time on his or her hands, but it wasn't. I do know,

9 "they" will be defined throughout this book, read on

10 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11538534>

11 *Baby boomers* are people born during the post World War II *baby boom* between the years 1946 and 1964

however, that most people of my age, that I have met and discussed with, feel let down, pissed off, incredulous etc. at the behaviour and competence of our political leaders over the years.

Or rather, and more accurately, some of us do. I am not Oxbridge material; I am not a former member of the SAS; I am not a retired diplomat; I am not related to the Dimpleby dynasty; I am not a disillusioned politician; I am not a former journalist and I am not a former rock star (well actually, in my dreams, I almost was, but that's another story).

In short, I am nobody special at all, but I *am* qualified to write this because I rarely hear the opinions I hold, and conclusions I have drawn, voiced in the mainstream media. I do however hear them frequently when I speak to friends and acquaintances of a similar age to me.

I think I am advocating something based on sound philosophical principles and the wisdom of many historical figures much wiser than I¹².

That accumulated wisdom seems to be lost on those supposedly wise leaders of our nation.

Whether or not what I am proposing is going to happen soon, or is even possible, is debatable. So, let us have the debate!

The rest of us, have too many financial and other personal worries to be concerned about the ruling elite and probably won't be reading this anyway! Ho hum.

This book is about the 'we', 'they' and 'who' and my analysis of what has gone wrong.

That of course is the easy bit. The difficult bit is to describe where we *should* be and how to get there from here. As the well known Irish proverb goes, "If I were to be going there, I wouldn't be starting from here!"

Sadly most of us quietly accept the truly appalling job done by our party politicians over the last 100 years and move on to the next problem we face personally.

Politicians, of course, know this, all too well. They use that knowledge with forensic skill. They know just how and when to bury bad news and are all too aware, that, as a nation, we have an attention span of about 48 hours at most. This *know-how* is just part of the *job* of being a politician in the United Kingdom of Great Britain today.

This *know-how* has become the all consuming business of *party* politics and the truly sickening thing is that a high proportion of the cleverest minds of our day are exercised in the party politics of the problem and not the best solution to it.

The job of the politician is just not doing much for *you and me* any more, if it ever did.

The word politics itself has been corrupted from its original meaning. You can look back at page 2 to remind yourself of the definitions.

I now repeat what I said earlier in this opening chapter because I feel it is so important to understand. It is vital to realise what is wrong with much of the media discussion today.

¹² Incidentally, those of you interested in the pedantic mechanics of the English language will find considerable debate on the use of "*than me*" or "*than I*" - enjoy your research!

It is important to recognise that the word *politics* has been corrupted and *why* this has happened and how it is used today by those who misuse the word most, i.e. journalists and *politicians*.

politics: (defined, as it appears to be currently): The (pointless) discussion of how *what* ‘someone’ said might be *perceived* by ‘others’ and whether or not this will damage their ‘*credibility*’.

politics: (defined by the Oxford English Dictionary) “of, belonging to, or pertaining to the state or its body of citizens”(OED), i.e. the things that are important to you and me.

This insidious change in meaning and the growing similarity between the political parties has turned off so many of us from voting.

The word has become meaningless to all of us who don't actually make a living from the new corrupted definition; i.e. journalists and politicians.

We would *all* be interested in the original meaning of the word but are sickened, turned off by the banal and useless redefinition.

The tragedy is, that “when I were a lad”, many of we, the then young, were a pretty rebellious bunch, going on demos, sitting in, being members of political parties, forming rock groups and so on; BUT today’s yoof are more interested in da latest mobile ring tone and app for their comfort cushions (the ever present mobile communication device) cradled in their palms. Just watch their faces when you tell them to turn it off; pain, incredulity and anger rise in their pale little faces.

I see clearly that da yoof (that's anyone under 50 ;-) of the current generation are becoming mentally ill, exhibiting an unhealthy dependency on this electronic comfort cushion and its gentle and constant reassurance that they are an important part of the 24/7 immediate glittering techno communication generation.

So it is not da yoof what is gonna complain innit!? Dey ‘ave never ‘erd da todee program on raydio faw¹³.

*From my aged perspective, we are watching the birth of a severe mental illness of such proportion that it threatens our civilisation!*¹⁴

Why do I say this is severe mental illness?

I can give you several reasons:

- The human mind needs peace and silence in which to ruminate and grow, but the constant interruption from shiny, beautifully designed, beeping devices fool you into accepting the phony (geddit?), stress inducing urgency of those messages.
- The time consumed in paying attention to all that *froth* can never be reclaimed.
- A *commercial* agenda is being set by others, whether or not you realise it. The best example of this is the obscene queue formed at night when the latest iThingy is to

13 which being translated is “they have never listened to the Today program on Radio 4”

14 Awaiting time to check sources in BMJ (British Medical Journal)

be released at the 24/7 high street store selling the damn thing.

- To be alone with your own thoughts is natural and healthy, but to be constantly interrupted just has to be disorienting and unhealthy.
- Add to this the truly evil arrival of Facebook's intrusion into our personal space and you have the biggest change to the way humans relate to each other since the invention of the printing press; and that change is *not* for the betterment of the human condition!

Back then to my main theme in this book, which is an analysis of why party politics is no longer any use for *we the people* and the world as a whole.

I am old enough to have seen a lot, but still young enough to be able to synthesise all that experience into a reasonably well formed criticism of the political structure of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and, yes, to turn that experience into the bile ridden prose which the following pages have probably become.

There are two subjects it is conventionally *thought* better not to talk about at social gatherings, and those are religion and politics (and by *politics* we usually mean 'party politics').

Why not? I can think of nothing *more* worthy of discussion. Yes, both topics may be divisive and usually do result in heated arguments, and, yes, usually little is achieved in terms of solving the world's problems, but I feel we need more discussion not less. After all, it is *our* country and most of us want to feel that we have a say, even if it is a small one.

The discussion of party politics is indeed divisive and stressful. But I maintain that discussing politics, as originally defined, is the most important thing we can and should do!

I also *do religion* later in this book, see chapters 3 and 11.

Lately, I have chosen to talk about almost nothing else. I'm either losing friends quite fast, or the number of dinner party invitations has reached a new low ... (ah yes, the cuts biting, that must be it ...)

I wrote a fair chunk of this before the MPs' 2009 expenses scandal hit the headlines and I must stress that, in my view, the expenses issue remains an insignificant part of the problems with our governing elite, it was merely a symptom and consequence of the rise of a new political class.

Politicians, clever bunch that they mostly are, realised that it (the expenses issue) was a problem but that they could *solve*, or rather *handle* it, and, after a bit of pain and a minimum of casualties, still carry on in the same old way¹⁵.

I remember those few wonderful few weeks of revolutionary possibility in 2009. They tragically passed because those journalists with clout failed us and no other new voice appeared to catch and use the "moment".

15 ...which indeed they have, the amount claimed by MPs has actually increased since 2009 – so that's alright then! See chapter xx for more detail on the convicted criminals who sit in the House of Lords after they return from prison ...

Six months on and a “made over” Hazel Blears¹⁶ MP was appearing on certain¹⁷ political chat shows as if nothing has happened, truly *incredible!*

Nevertheless, *it* is highly symptomatic of the ills affecting this, and many other countries' political classes. Several years on, as this book is being finished, the expenses furore has all but disappeared, the politicians have wriggled off the hook and have cleverly once again diverted attention elsewhere.

Whilst that scandal has disappeared from most peoples perception another one or two are under way, namely bi-election spending, postal voting corruption and political honours for massage therapists.

We the people have been expertly **handled** and **they** have just **moved on**.

It is a tragedy that the expenses issue grabbed the headlines, because I maintain that it was *not* the most serious issue.

This whole book is about what I think the problem really *is*. I analyse the expenses issue in detail later in chapter 13 using the governments own figures; read and weep.

Even sadder is the simple truth that the amount of expenses being claimed in 2014 was far higher than it was in 2009 and the MPs were about to receive a 15% pay rise.

I write this in the hope that someone *else* (sigh) reads this and starts off the brave new world of competent husbandry, with a long term view, of this country's human and physical resources and **yes** that's **mostly all** that we need from government.

Whilst I think I can write reasonably well, I do realise that I am no orator. I lack inspirational leadership skills and am held back by an IQ somewhat lower than I would like. However, whilst my speed of thought and verbal skills are somewhat lacking, I *have* had the time, interest and motivation to read widely (philosophy, comparative religion, history etc.). The time I have had since 2003 has formed and then firmed up my opinions on the issues covered here.

I have formed two guiding principles which provide the structure and basis for this book.

The private sector should provide:

- stuff we choose to pay for
 - fun
 - innovation
 - cock-ups
 - shiny new technology

The government and the public sector should provide:

- stuff we all need, whether or not we are rich or poor

16 20 Feb 2014 - Former government minister *Hazel Blears* stepped down as MP for Salford and Eccles at the following election. Ms Blears famously waved a cheque for £30,000 which she was paying back to the Treasury, after fraudulently claiming the cash in the first place. She actually made it look as though she should be applauded for paying the cash back, incredible! People who are caught shoplifting do not usually get the option of returning the stolen goods to make it “all right” in that way. Oh yes, “we are all in this together...”

17 Andrew Neil's BBC2 program, “This Week”, seems to sport a high proportion of failed and dodgy politicians ... (Show sadly cancelled by the BBC in 2019)

- protection from baddies, internal & external
- a personal and criminal justice system
- a basic health system
- public utilities like water, road & rail infrastructure and electricity distribution
- quiet, enlightened competence in administering our resources
- investment in *long term* strategic technologies
- freedom of speech enshrined in law
- freedom from religion and faith based influences in our schools and civil administration
 - but, freedom to hold any belief or none
- a defined long term view of the philosophy of our nation
 - we used not to need it, but now we do, and fast!
- a few checks and safeguards from a wise body of elders ...

Sadly the statements of the previous two paragraphs are wishful thinking, particularly the latter.

But, what can *we* actually do about it? I lay out my action plan in the later chapters of this book.