

# Surrey in Europe

Newsletter of the Surrey Branch of the European Movement: Summer 2010

- June 18th** European Movement - London Branch. "The EU and British Sport"  
Speakers, reception and screening of England v. Algeria. 6 p.m. 24, Endell  
Street, Covent Garden, WC2H 9HQ. Contact [info@em-il.org.uk](mailto:info@em-il.org.uk).
- June 24th** Federal Trust/Federal Union. "Is the eurozone working?" 5.30 - 7.  
31, Jewry Street, EC3N 2EY, Contact [alison.sutherland@fedtrust.co.uk](mailto:alison.sutherland@fedtrust.co.uk).
- June 30th** Surrey Branch lunchtime meeting. 12 noon at the Watermill Inn, Reigate  
Road, Dorking. Ian Stewart, British Council Director in several East  
European countries from 1994 to 2007. "British Cultural Relations in  
Europe". Contact [beryl@jrodell.com](mailto:beryl@jrodell.com).
- August 7th** Surrey Branch Summer Lunch Party. At Edgeworth, 37, Ralliwood Road,  
Ashted. Contact [beryl@jrodell.com](mailto:beryl@jrodell.com).

News, views, contributions, queries please to editor [keith-tunstall@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:keith-tunstall@tiscali.co.uk)

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## Will the 2010 election be seen as historic?

Members have had an exciting few weeks since the election. The last Newsletter, quoting from the Conservative manifesto and leadership, indicated that we were due for a seriously eurosceptic government. In the event we have what might be called a pragmatic coalition, seemingly prepared to engage constructively in the EU. We shall see.

Across the political spectrum there is a consensus of support from our members for the coalition. The gasps of disbelief from Liberal Democrats, as the exit polls showed fewer seats from a higher percentage of votes, have metamorphosed into amazement that they nevertheless share power.

**Edwina Currie** is “delighted we have a Tory cake-mix (more or less) with strong pro-European yeast! Should bake nicely.” “Cameron is more pragmatic than we realise; his anti-EU stance had much to do with beating his rivals into the leadership job, and staying there.”

**Philip Goldenberg** and **Stuart Paterson** welcomed the Lib Dem presence as curbing the anti-Europe right wing of the Tory Party. Stuart and **Denis Loretto** both see hope that the Tory MEPs will now be able to link with less extreme allies in Brussels.

Denis also sees as a major benefit that any plan to repatriate powers from the EU is not now on the agenda – “apart from healthy subsidiarity which no doubt we all support”.

**David Woodhead** writes that he is a Heathite Tory for whom “Europe is a touchstone issue”. “I am pleased with the Con-Lib Dem coalition: I felt a gust of fresh air blowing through the body politic and I believe we have the possibility of a better government – and governance – than recent one-party governments have provided.”

**Judy Brewis** also echoes earlier times when the Conservative party was pro-Europe. “I very much hope that the appointment of David Lidington as Minister of State at the Foreign Office with special responsibility for Europe, replacing an arch-sceptic, will make a considerable difference to the British attitude to the EU. He has had experience of advising Douglas Hurd when he was Foreign Secretary, and also apparently John Major at the time of Maastricht.”

**Nick Brougham**, styling himself as “a lifelong pro-European activist Tory”, agrees the appointment of David Lidington is to be welcomed – “but only as a start. The next task is to get the Tory MEPs back into the EPP grouping in the Brussels’ parliament. The Tory MEPs should be at the heart of the body politic - not bleating from the periphery.”

*“I’m delighted we have a Tory cake-mix with strong pro-Europe yeast! Should bake nicely.”*

**Edwina Currie**

“The euro sceptic EPR grouping that the Tories helped create and currently inhabit was an artificial construct that had everything to do with placating the eurosceptic wing of the Conservative Party at home in the pre-election period and nothing to do with coherent European policy. Now, post-election, it has served its only obvious function and the quicker it is allowed to collapse the better. It only requires a couple of highly unreliable/eccentric/unsavoury (choose your adjective) MEPs to leave the EPR to make it defunct as a group. I’m sure this can be engineered!”

“If not, various members of the grouping have made any number of unacceptable/offensive/outrageous (choose again) comments, out of keeping with the small-l-liberal “New Politics” of the UK coalition, to justify a hasty departure from the EPR.”

In spite of the rhetoric, Conservative Governments have always engaged in a positive way with Europe, and given the nature of the coalition I don't expect this Government to be any different. Indeed, I expect the coalition's language vis-à-vis Europe to mirror this positive approach much more closely than it might have done in different circumstances. William Hague already seems to have found a new speech writer!"

"Interesting, and from a pro-European standpoint, encouraging times!", says Nick.

***"Things at present look a lot brighter than they did just a few weeks ago."***

**John Warner**

However, **David Weaver** and others point out that a coalition of Lib Dems and Labour would have made more certain that European policy was more positive, even though "Nick Clegg's decision to join the Tories was right in all the circumstances. "

**John Preston, John Warner** and David Woodhead fear trouble ahead as the right-wing of the Tory party will not accept a centrist position on Europe.

**Lynda MacDermott** is also more cautious about the future for the pro-Europe cause. She has made a careful analysis of what the coalition has said and "although the opening is rather encouraging on a second look you can see possible problems."

In the coalition agreement of May 11<sup>th</sup> Relations with the EU is heading number 9. It starts off: *We agree that the British Government will be a positive participant in the European Union, playing a strong and positive role with our partners, with the goal of ensuring that the nations of Europe are equipped to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: global competitiveness, global warming and global poverty.*

Lynda points out that the emphasis is on 'nations' rather than people and there is no mention, for example, of better financial regulation. More worrying are the parts which say *We agree there should be no further transfer of sovereignty or powers over the course of the next parliament.... We agree that we will amend the 1972 European Communities Act so that any proposed future treaty that transferred areas of power, or competences, would be subject to a referendum on that treaty...* While this, in effect, confirms that the Lisbon Treaty is accepted as a fact of life, and that in turn probably means that there is unlikely to be any need for new treaties in the next five years, the door has been opened for referendums to be a deciding factor in European matters.

Europhiles had cause for real concern with the Tory manifesto pledge to introduce a British Sovereignty Bill. This however has effectively been ditched....*We will examine the case for a United Kingdom sovereignty bill to make it clear that ultimate authority remains with parliament.*

The coalition agreement makes no mention at all of the euro. Edwina Currie and **Dick Hazelwood** agree that this was inevitable given the current problems of the eurozone and the international financial crisis.

In summary, members are relieved with the situation as far as our relations with Europe are concerned. While some of us might see advantages in an ever closer union, there was never a prospect at this stage of any government taking this view. The Guardian summarises the coalition agreement as "overwhelmingly Tory Eurosceptic in tone but it has been almost entirely shorn of substance that might change the post-Lisbon European status quo." I, for one, will settle for that.

***The coalition agreement is "overwhelmingly Tory Eurosceptic in tone but it has been almost entirely shorn of substance"***

**The Guardian**

**Keith Tunstall**

## If it wasn't for UKIP we would now have a eurosceptic government

The quirkiness of our electoral system gave UKIP no seats but enough votes to deprive the Conservative Party of an overall majority. So says the Telegraph. They point out that UKIP got more votes than the majority of the winning Labour or Lib Dem candidate in twenty-one constituencies. Just think, if the Conservatives had managed to cross the line, Bill Cash and his friends would have been able to do unto Cameron what they did unto Major. So, Thankyou UKIP.

In Surrey UKIP got 7.8% of the vote, compared with their national average of 3.1%. We cannot write them off. Both the Surrey Advertiser in the west and the Surrey Mirror in the east will no doubt go on favouring letters from UKIP. Alan Wasdell has been our main standard bearer over the years on the Letters Page. Recently David Weaver has taken up the challenge. Here are some of his arguments...

### My brushes with UKIP

One of the things that has impressed me during my encounters with UKIP is their use of very selective statistics. Constant repetition establishes them as the truth.

For example, UKIP claims that some 75% of our law is imposed from Brussels by an unelected bureaucracy and that the EU costs us £45 million a day.

UKIP claims that the 75% figure is gleaned from official EU sources, and that is actually true. However this figure relates to a six year old German analysis, nothing to do with the UK, and includes regulations as well as directives. The Swedes reckon the correct figure is 6.3%, the Finns 12%, the House of Commons library says 9.1%.

It is a question of definition. I spent an hour or so looking at web sites via Google. I suggest the best site for checking European facts is [www.jcm.org.uk/blog](http://www.jcm.org.uk/blog). It won an award last year. For this particular cost issue go to [www.jcm.org.uk/blog/?p=2230](http://www.jcm.org.uk/blog/?p=2230).

The second contentious statement, repeated ad infinitum, is the emotionally powerful 'unelected bureaucracy'. Unfortunately this phrase seems to have seeped into the British psyche and I find that I too have a deep dislike for unelected bureaucrats.

But the Council is made up of the heads of government, each of whom has been elected. The European Parliament has 754 elected members and the Commission is subject to the approval or disapproval of Parliament. UKIP's claim of rule by an unelected bureaucracy is patently false. The EU Parliament has, as a result of the Lisbon Treaty, assumed powers that were previously denied it, and that seems to me to be rather a good thing! Both the European Parliament website and Wikipedia provide clear and detailed information about all aspects of the Lisbon Treaty. Incidentally the number of civil servants working for the EU in Brussels is 25,000.

With regard to the cost of EU membership, the information available is vast – and contradictory! The Democracy Movement for Surrey estimates it at £65 billion a year, a UKIP election pamphlet quoted £45 billion, The Daily Telegraph of 2.12.08 announced that the Treasury forecast for 10/11 was £6.5 billion, whilst the BBC News of August 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 told us that the Treasury's forecast was £6.4 billion, up from the previous estimate of £4.5 billion. Take your pick! I recommend a Google search – try "cost of UK membership of the EU in 2010" Make sure you are sitting comfortably, preferably with a cup or glass of something decent to hand and settle down for an entertaining and sometimes infuriating read – a long read!

**David Weaver**