

Ministers reflect

George Young



December 2015

George Young

Biographical details

Electoral History

1997-2015: Member of Parliament for North West Hampshire

1974-1997: Member of Parliament for Ealing Acton

Parliamentary Career

2012-2014: Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Whip

2010-2012: Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal

2009-2010: Shadow Leader of the House of Commons

1998-2000: Shadow Leader of the Commons

1997-1998: Shadow Secretary of State for Defence

1995-1997: Secretary of State for Transport

1994-1995: Financial Secretary

1990-1994: Minister of State for Housing and Planning

1981-1986: Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (environment)

1979-1981: Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (health)

George Young was interviewed by Jen Gold and Peter Riddell on 21st July 2015 for the Institute for Government's Ministers Reflect Project

Jen Gold (JG): Thinking back to when you initially started as a minister, so back under Thatcher, what was your experience of coming into government like?

George Young (GY): Okay, in 1979, there was minimal preparation/induction for being a minister. Prior to the election, I had been in the Whips Office, taking an interest in social security, in other words, whipping the Child Benefit Bill, social security legislation but not a shadow minister. And after the election, I became a junior minister in the Department of Health under Patrick Jenkin [Secretary of State under Thatcher] and Gerry Vaughan [former Minister]. Obviously, I knew roughly what being a minister was about but in terms of preparation, very little indeed.

And my first impression was it was a long time before I met anybody as young as I was or earning as little as I was! [laughter]. One was dealing with Perm Secs [Permanent Secretaries], Dep Secs [Deputy Secretaries, now Director Generals] and all that who were grey-haired, older people and I was in my mid-30s. But also how enormously helpful private office was, Patrick Nairne, who was the Perm Sec was, and also the Secretary of State, Patrick [Jenkin], who had been a Minister before. So I was sort of thrown in the deep end with some manifesto commitments, to knock out a tier of administration – I wonder where we have heard that before – to reorganise the health service.

But also, I had at the back of my mind, some priorities. If you look at my election addresses in the '70s, it was quite hot on cancer. So I knew I wanted to do something about smoking and I got Gerry Vaughan and, more important, Patrick Jenkin on side and actually we were really aggressive on smoking, much more so than David Owen who was the outgoing minister. So although one was ill-prepared, one had at the back of my mind, things I wanted to do.

So support from the civil servants, support from colleagues and a rough idea. I had been the whip on the health bill which phased out pay beds. Do you remember that? David Owen and Barbara Castle phased it out. I had done all the social security bills, so I knew roughly what the areas of controversy were and joined with Lynda Chalker [former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State]. So does that vaguely answer [your question]?

JG: Yes.

GY: In terms of had my party done anything to prepare me for office? Did anyone? Absolutely not.

JG: And did you feel that anything was different in 2010 in terms of the party set up, support structure?

GY: Yes. Was it the IfG [Institute for Government] that did some things in 2010?

Peter Riddell (PR): Yes.

GY: I remember I came to one of them [preparation for government sessions]. I came to one of them and I was talking to some civil servants and they said, 'That has been really helpful, we now know what the Tories will do if they get elected, but', he said, 'We have no idea what the Labour Party will do if they are re-elected!' [laughter] So in a sense it was the opposite of what you might have expected in that the Labour Party, I don't know to what extent they put their cards on the table, but certainly the civil servant said to me, we now know where you are coming from.

Also, I don't know if it is relevant but before the election when I was Shadow Leader of the House, I held a sort of public expenditure exercise but on legislation and I wrote to all the Shadow Cabinet and I said look what bills do you want in the first few sessions? And then we had them in one by one and we grilled them, rather like the Treasury do with your budget: how does this fit in? Is it really a priority? We have

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got far too many bids; are you ready? I don't think we had done that before and I am not sure what happened before the last election and of course it was then thrown into some turmoil by the coalition but we did have... you probably know this, we did have draft bills; we did have a draft Queen's Speech and we were quite well-prepared for 2010. And certainly my fellow colleagues benefitted enormously from what the IfG were doing in terms of training and induction and all the rest and were much better prepared than I ever was in '79.

JG: Even with that preparation in 2010, was there anything that still took you by surprise in those first few weeks?

GY: Well, I then became a Business Manager and there is no... I don't know if the IfG have done anything to prepare you for business management?

PR: No, but we ought to.

GY: But it is a totally different skill to managing a department. When you're managing a department, you have got a Perm Sec aged 60 and a whole team of civil servants who are absolute experts. You turn up as Leader of the House and you find Mike Winter [Head of Office, Leader of the House of Commons] aged 40 and four people. When you turn up as Chief Whip and you have got Roy [Stone, Private Secretary to the Chief Whip] and a handful of people, not all white-haired civil servants but some really street-wise House of Commons operatives. Now because I had been Shadow Leader before, because I had been in the Whips Office, I knew a little bit about it but there was no sort of formal preparation for being Shadow Leader or Leader. Again, the civil servants were fantastic, Mark and Roy who had been doing the job... you probably know them both but Roy has been there since Murdo [Maclean] left. So I hadn't been formally prepared for being Leader of the House but by having been Shadow Leader twice and having been in the Whips Office, I knew a little bit about business management. And having been in the House for quite a long time, I roughly knew how the House would react and how you manage the House.

PR: Going back to the Major period when you were in the Cabinet, there was a gap, 13 years; how much did your experiences of being a minister in the Major years – I mean Treasury initially and then Transport Secretary – affect your expectations when you came back in 2010, albeit to a very different job as a business manager?

GY: What surprised me was how much less work ministers had; how much more time they had. I remember going home with two or three boxes a night and often at weekends. And somewhere during the Blair period, something happened and the workload of ministers, even junior ministers seem to reduce very sharply. I don't know how it happened but I remember being surprised talking to colleagues, you know, 'How many boxes? How long did it take?' And they said, 'Oh, [I] knock it off during the day'. Somehow, somebody reduced the burden on ministers in those 13 years. Although I was not a departmental minister, I just noticed junior ministers instead of spending their life signing letters, they seemed to have a life of their own; something happened.

Major had a different style of managing Cabinet, and of course, it was a coalition. David [Cameron] was very good about involving the Lib Dems at every stage. You know, 'Nick, this is where I am coming from on this, where are you?' Very inclusive, going round and obviously John Major didn't have problems with the Lib Dems, whereas Margaret [Thatcher] tended to lead from the front.

Also, one thing I discovered is that Cabinet is now timed: 9.30 to 11.00. Under Major and Thatcher, you went on until you had finished. But now people have programmed in engagements at 11 o'clock. And also with David, if there is a big agenda, he would say, 'Well I am really sorry but we are going to put that on to next week' or 'I cannot accept any more bids to speak on this item because we are against the clock'. I just don't remember that with John Major, so it is much more managed timewise. Quite often we just had to postpone things to the next week.

PR: Were there any big surprises at all at each of your stages: when you first became a health minister in '79 and then when you entered Cabinet in the mid-'90s and then when you returned [in 2010]? Anything you didn't expect?

GY: I think that actually the big jump for me was going from PUSS [Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State] to Minister of State under Heseltine, partly because there was a lot delegation to ministers of state. that was quite a big jump from doing the adjournment debates, getting the bills through, signing the letters to actually driving policy; that was quite a bit step, perhaps almost a bigger step than back-bencher to PUSS.

Minister of State to Secretary of State, again a big jump. Suddenly, you know, you have got the budget and the arguments with the Treasury, the PES [Public Expenditure Survey] round – very big in the Major years the annual PES round – plus the party conference speech. And by the time I had reached the Cabinet, we had lost our majority, so I was taking rail privatisation through at a time when the government had lost its majority. And we would have debate, opposition day after opposition day on railway privatisation and Alistair [Goodlad, Government Chief Whip] would come up and say, 'George I am sorry, I am not absolutely certain we have won this one, we have got Robert Adley, Hugh Dykes [MPs] who are a bit wobbly on rail privatisation'.

What were the surprises? I think I'll get into transport. I found that we'd got a programme of planned roads all over the country and then you looked at the budget and you realised there was no way we could build all those roads. And people kept on serving CPOs [compulsory purchase orders] on us because we had blighted their property by publishing and we had not got the money to build them. So the first thing was to get the balance between the resources and the programme. And [Brian] Mawhinney [former Transport Secretary] had initiated an integrated transport strategy and I had to sort of bring that to a conclusion and then get the railways privatised before the election. That was the one thing John said to me: 'George, I want you to be Transport Secretary and I want you to get the railways under the private sector' and that was a major challenge which we did.

PR: And in terms of the allocation of time, how did you balance your time between the department, Parliament, and the constituency?

GY: And travelling.

PR: And travelling, yes.

GY: You have to have a serious conversation with the diary secretary and you say nothing goes in the diary until I've agreed it. It seems fairly obvious but sometimes the civil servants say, 'Well, the Secretary of State has always done this conference'. Then if possible, keeping Fridays clear so you can do the constituency. And being sort of ruthless, I suppose, about priorities and if you can, delegating to poor old junior ministers.

Much more of a problem when I was in Ealing Acton which really was a marginal seat. But the thing about that was you could pop in and out during the week, in fact during the day, and sort of tick off and then have the weekends relatively clear. But the civil servants, not all, it is getting better, but they don't always understand that in order to pursue your career, you have to get re-elected and indeed re-selected, which involves spending a certain amount of time in the constituency. I actually found, once you had explained it they were quite helpful.

PR: One thing that has come up in quite a lot of conversations has been whether civil servants understand the parliamentary side.

GY: Some of them just don't understand. For example, one minister got his private office to sign off on his behalf some letters to I think Nick Winterton [then MP for Macclesfield], and it came fizzing back from Nick Winterton, saying 'This is wholly unacceptable, I want the Minister's signature'. And you then had to have a conversation about signing letters, particularly to some people and some just don't

understand the sensitivities of Parliament and sometimes even Parliamentary Branch don't always get it right.

And I hope it is getting better about UQs [urgent questions] which of course there are much more but quite often a UQ bid would come in, perhaps on Thursday and if it is granted you were up at 10.30 and the bid comes in at eight and the Civil Service really do have to move very, very quickly to make sure there is a minister around and get them briefed and on his feet. I think it is getting better but quite a lot of the civil servants do not understand the sensitivities but I suppose it is up to the minister to explain.

PR: It is a very interesting theme that.

GY: Yes. And during the Major period, quite often Ministers would be called back because of the slenderness of the majority. But quite often the civil servants did not understand all about that. One would be abroad at a conference and the other ministers, many of whom of course weren't MPs, just could not understand why you got this phone call in the middle of a conference and would go back to vote.

JG: Did your role as Leader of the House, then as Chief Whip give you any new perspective on some of the challenges that ministers faced?

GY: Well yes, PBL Committee, do you remember PBL? Parliamentary Business and Legislation, which I chaired and then attended as Chief Whip. Some ministers were really good, came along, well briefed about the legislation; others less so and they had a hard time, a hard time from the whips, particularly if they could not answer the questions. So one of the lessons was if you are coming to PBL, don't wing it, you really need to know every bit about your bill, otherwise, you may find you don't get the slot.

The other thing at Cabinet, I am sure others have said this, the people that you listen to are people who speak without reading out their notes; the people you switch off to is when they have got a brief from their department on something and they sit down and they read it out. And if you have got a prepared note from your department, look at it, put it on one side and then speak to your colleagues in your own language looking around the table. Also quite interesting, some colleagues are really good on other people's subjects and others are hopeless and some colleagues insisted on speaking on everything, without adding a lot of value. Whereas some colleagues wouldn't speak a lot, other than on their own subject, [but] when they did, really interesting, spot on, very valuable.

And so I think interventions in Cabinet, you do have to think quite carefully about what you want to say and of course you have got to look after your department, but don't for god's sake sit down and read out this turgid prose.

PR: What would you regard as your greatest achievements in office and how did you achieve them?

GY: I think some of the changes we made in the last Parliament in terms of electing select committee chairman and the Back Bench Business Committee. When I was Shadow Leader, I had to get that past the Party. If you remember the Labour government refused to set up the Back Bench Business Committee. So having sat initially on the Wright Committee [on reform of the House of Commons], but always having been in favour of reform – taking power away from the Executive and giving it back. Getting that through the Party and through the House, that was an achievement. That has, as you know, empowered the select committee chairman and it shifted the terms of trade away from the Executive and towards the select committees.

Some of the things I did as Housing Minister, I don't know how closely you followed Housing, but getting private funding into Housing Associations, large-scale voluntary transfer, reform of the private rented sector, Housing Action Trusts. I did housing on and off for nine years, so by the end, I actually knew more about it than some of the civil servants and we sort of drilled down into housing, some of the things I did then, I am quite pleased with. Leasehold reform – nightmare.

PR: On the Housing Association reforms, how much did that involve building consensus over a long period?

GY: Well it is getting to know the people, the Chairman of the NFHA [National Federation of Housing Associations], the CIH – Chartered Institute of Housing – going to Harrogate year after year. I was Chairman of a Housing Association before I became an MP. But also just cultivating them and speaking their language, understanding their problems. I really enjoyed that and I was the first Minister to be made an honorary member of the CIH. If you talk to them, they would say, ‘Well, [Nick] Raynsford [former Housing Minister] and Young were the ones who sort of understood’. So, I really enjoyed doing housing under Heseltine and things like City Challenge.

And then getting the railways into the private sector without a clear Conservative majority in the house and against the clock. And although people grumble about it, they have not actually changed it in that we have still got the TOCs [train operating companies], Network Rail which was Rail Track, and the system of franchises coming up for renewal with the ROSCOs, the rolling stock companies, owning the rolling stock. The basic structure is there and I think it is the right thing to do.

Also some of the things I did on smoking, working quite closely with ASH [Action on Smoking and Health], changing the Tory Party’s traditional attitude: well if people want to kill themselves, let them, towards a more interventionist, paternalistic approach which may have upset some of my right-wing colleagues. So there are a number of things.

And then in the last Parliament, I suppose working with the Lib Dems. The Coalition worked best with the business managers, who weren’t preoccupied with policy, but in getting the business through. By and large, if the Lib Dems rebelled on welfare, my chaps were solid. If my people revolted on Europe, they were solid. Alistair Carmichael and Don Foster in the Whips Office, the Leader’s Office, the Coalition worked really well and the further down you got, the more difficult it became until you reach the constituencies where you are at war. So, having a good relationship with Alistair and then Don was really important and also David Heath who was my...

PR: Deputy.

GY: Deputy Leader. I got on really well with him.

PR: In terms of being Leader of the House and Chief Whip particularly, was there any sense of you seeing yourself assisting career development?

GY: Yes, I wish we could have done more of it. We don’t do nearly enough HR, career development, managing people who are going through a difficult period. And some of the new MPs who came from large companies with well-developed HR, annual reviews, said well, ‘What is it?’ Partly because we had to give three or four whips to the Lib Dems, we were short.

PR: Sure. That is publicly known.

GY: So we were short and one of the things that got squeezed was HR. And I talked to some private sector companies who were prepared to help us but then they realised it would have to go in the register, they would have to declare it as a donation, and at that point they backed off. So I had some serious conversations with HR people from major companies who recognised that we were really short here and I asked one Whip to specialise, Anne Milton, who has a health background. And when there were difficulties, I would usually ask Anne to come in.

There is a bit of resource in the House, there is a psychiatrist but actually people don’t really want to talk to a psychiatrist. In the last Parliament, funnily enough, Alistair Burt had a role in the Whips Office doing this and encouraged annual reviews but you have put your finger on a weak spot, in all parties, we don’t do enough. And when there is a problem, a Nigel Evans [former Deputy Speaker who was arrested then acquitted of sexual assault charges] or whatever, it is quite difficult. Nigel Evans is a very good

example of how the party managers can get drawn into a court case and I think two in the Whips Office gave evidence and that is quite difficult. Do you keep written records of all your conversations with colleagues? If so, do those then get put in the public domain? But the short answer is all parties ought to do more.

PR: You are talking mainly about relationships with back benchers, what about junior ministers? How much do you see yourself as a talent spotter?

GY: Well indeed, yes. And you would see that some junior ministers were struggling and so when you had a reshuffle conversation with the Prime Minister, you'd say, 'I really think so and so needs a break, they are not coping; they are in trouble in standing committee; colleagues are beginning to grumble; they are in trouble at Question Time; and they are a liability and they ought to be moved on'. And one of the things that David has done, my suggestion but I am sure others have suggested it, is that you bring people back, which makes it easier to get rid of people.

So what I encouraged David to say is, 'Look, we are approaching [the] election, I need a different squad on the pitch and so thank you very much, you have been a fantastic minister and maybe in due course... but just for the moment...'

PR: That raises another point. Our sense is that the greatest shock to a minister who is sacked is that they never know it is coming. And because there isn't an adequate system of advice or appraisal, often the people who could remedy the problems... apparently no one tells them they have got a fault.

GY: Yes, I should have said that in answer to an earlier question that at least twice a year, the whips have a one or two-day meeting where they go through the whole parliamentary party with whichever whip is in charge of that flock, initiates a discussion about somebody and then there is a discussion. So to that extent, there is a review of every single...

PR: And that includes ministers?

GY: Coming as a shock, one of the things I did with David [Cameron]... the first re-shuffle wasn't a fantastic success; there were tears and grumbles. So the next time I said to David, 'Look if you are going to sack somebody, would you like me to ring them up first and just warn them'. And so the second time round, we did that and I would ring them up and say, 'The Prime Minister is making some changes and has had to take some really difficult decisions. He would like to see you at 11 o'clock'. And they sort of crack the code. And afterwards, I did some research and I said to them, 'Did it help?' And they all said, 'Yes, it was much better to know when I went in'. And of course, it was much easier for David because by the time they reached him... and it actually saved one or two people coming all the way into London to be sacked – you know, 'Talk to me over the phone if that is what it is'. One call in the background [you could hear] the guns blasting away, because he was shooting at the time.

But I think when you become a minister, and I have been sacked more times than anyone else – well I have left the government four times – when you become a minister, you know you are there because of the prime minister and the rules of the game are that you can be sacked. You know that and sometimes you are sacked without having done anything wrong; you know that. So, it comes with the [territory].

PR: Would it be possible to have a more formal appraisal process with ministers or is it just impossible because...?

GY: What with the minister?

PR: Yes.

GY: The answer is we don't, unless it has changed. We don't have a formal session with each secretary of state. I don't know to what extent you are beginning to encroach on the prime minister. It is easier to do

with junior ministers. With secretaries of state, the prime minister will probably see more of them than the whips.

PR: Yes and there is also the Civil Service feedback there.

GY: Yes, indeed. So I think what the whips do is say: ‘This team is not working well; the Secretary of State is not getting on well with that Parliamentary Secretary or that Minister, there is some tension there and Prime Minister, when you move your team around, you do need to address this and move some people around’. So we would look at it in terms of teams but it is slightly beyond the chief whip’s remit to get on to the prime minister and say... although they can do, having said that, I have suggested that one or two people might be moved on to make way for others. But you have put your finger on it and if the IfG can come up with any... progress on HR for MP’s really ought to come from within the House of Commons rather than political parties.

JG: One question we have been asking people to get a sense of their approach to decision-making is whether they can talk us through an occasion where they faced an unexpected event or crisis in office and how they went about dealing with it? Does anything come to mind?

GY: Wow! I think if you are a secretary of state, the things that I found really difficult was when the chiefs or legal chap in a department will tell you are 100% certain of winning this judicial review and then blow me down, you have lost – statement in the House, emergency legislation, egg all over the face. And now we have a more judicially active society. Losing a judicial review was quite... that was quite difficult. I had to pull one of the franchises – it wasn’t a judicial review – but at the last minute, we found that somebody had been putting money in the wrong till and the first franchise, private franchise, we had to pull and that was... Firstly, we had to decide do we pull it? Is it so serious that you pull it? And we decided that actually yes, because you couldn’t have it there and then how do you explain that this flagship policy was now being derailed. So, that was really difficult.

Losing the Syria vote... I told the boss that there would be 30 Tories who would vote against it and in the end, there were 29. But that was difficult. Actually the Prime Minister was very good about it, he took it on the chin with a statement to the House and he moved on, actually. It was an amazing how he moved on.

Other difficulties, losing the House of Lords programme motion. Not a good day for the business managers, a major rebellion. I think the Labour Party may live to regret that. They voted for second reading then scuppered the programme so whenever they get in next, they are going to have to do it. Whereas if they had only supported the programme motion, we would have done it.

A business manager [deals with] one long crisis after another: a bill isn’t ready; a minister isn’t there, you know, whatever. But how does one cope? I think if you are Secretary of State or Chief Whip, you do it, you take it on the chin, you do not get somebody else to do it, it is you, you go to the House, you do the media, you take it, even if someone else has goofed down the line, and so I always did that.

PR: How good were civil servants in a crisis?

GY: I found them quite good.

PR: I mean like this example of the franchise you had to pull.

GY: Did Nick Montagu [former Deputy Secretary, Department of Transport] ever come into your life?

PR: Oh yes, I know Nick.

GY: He was in charge of all of that. Nick was good, an unusual civil servant. Very clever, very funny, and he was good and Patrick Brown, the Secretary of State. They were fine.

I think the other thing is that if there is a problem, tell the Prime Minister. They don't like being caught on the hop, so warn them if you can [do] that, you know, you have got this judicial review and although everybody says it is a technicality... So let Number 10 know if there is something. They don't like being caught on the hop and also just be open and honest; don't try and smoke screen and if you made a mistake, the best thing to do is say, 'Look, we got that one wrong' – as long as you don't say that too often.

PR: What did you find the most frustrating thing about being a minister, looking over the whole of the period?

GY: I think a lot of the meetings one has, there are too many people, and they go on too long. You know, you spend your life at meetings and it is just frustrating that so many people have to come along and they take so long. I don't know if that is a fair answer but you do spend an awful lot of your time [in meetings] – frustrating.

PR: And how would you define an effective minister?

GY: An effective minister, from a business manager's point of view: good in the House, popular with colleagues, answers his letters, does people's patrons clubs, respected by the opposition, does not appear in the tabloids, [and is] re-selected.

I think from a business manager's point of view, which is where I ended up, people who spend time with colleagues. It may be boring for them but tea room, drinks in their office, out and about doing the Association AGMs. [Also] good on the media – can look after themselves on Today, Newsnight, all that. And when you hear them, you think, 'Ah this is going to be alright, safe in their hands, knows what he is talking about, reasonable' – so a range of qualities. Someone you would feel comfortable with when they are speaking on behalf of the government or your party. Somebody who makes you feel really relaxed, this is going to be okay. Whereas some people you think, 'For Christ's sakes, what is he going to say next?'

JG: And do you have any advice or what would you to say to a minister who is entering government for the first time?

GY: Talk to your predecessor to find out where the bodies are buried; talk to the junior ministers who have already been there, and then you need a serious conversation obviously with your permanent secretary as well. What I found was I needed to know what the priorities were for that department. And in the case of Transport which is the only place where I was Secretary of State, it was sorting out the public expenditure, sorting out the railways and bringing to a conclusion this integrated transport strategy. And okay, we have got two years before the next election and those are the three things I really want to focus on. So within that folder you get for incoming ministers, you need to distil that into some things that are really, really important, particularly if they are politically important like privatising the railways. So talk around and then after, perhaps a few weeks, work out what you want to do [and] where you want to be at the end of your time.

JG: And in hindsight, is there anything you would do differently in the way you have approached your roles?

GY: Well I suppose I would be more intelligent; I would not have got sacked by Margaret Thatcher which seriously derailed my career.

PR: How long were you out for?

GY: I was out for four years.

PR: Four years was it?

GY: During the Poll Tax.

PR: I remember.

GY: I suppose, on the Poll Tax, I think it now appears that nearly everybody was against it from Nigel Lawson to Rhodes Boyson, although I didn't notice it at the time. And I think we could have stopped it actually. We were amazingly lucky to get away with it. We introduced it and abolished it and then got re-elected – amazing.

So I think it was the biggest mistake my party has made while I have been in Parliament, is the Poll Tax. So the question is could I and others... could we have somehow stopped that? What else would I have done?

My seat got abolished; there was nothing I could do about that. It is a question I should ask myself more often. I don't know if I spent enough time with my junior ministers; I tried to involve them but you tend to let them get on with it. Some secretaries of state are really good about what happened in Cabinet and I tried to do all that but quite a lot of the junior ministers sometimes feel a bit sort of cut out of what is going on up there and again perhaps I should have spent more time with the junior ministers about where the party was going. No, I think I need to think about it.

PR: No, that is fine.

JG: Is there anything that we have not asked you about your observations or challenges or about being a Minister that you would like to add?

GY: No, you have covered it really well. I found that when it was obvious we were going to lose an election, so in '97, members of the Labour Shadow Cabinet used to come up to me and ask me, you know, 'What was it like?' No, I think you are doing a major piece of work which I will be fascinated to read.

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2 Carlton Gardens
London SW1Y 5AA

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7747 0400

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7766 0700

Email: enquiries@instituteforgovernment.org.uk

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