

# SUMMER READING LIST

## FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS



#BookThatMadeMe



Publishers  
Association

Linked to our **#BookThatMadeMe** campaign, this year we are delighted to present a Summer Reading List for Parliamentarians that celebrates books that have had a positive personal impact.

The idea behind the campaign is to highlight the power reading has to inspire and influence people throughout life and the personal value of books. The following titles have been highlighted by MPs and Peers as books that have helped make them the person they are today.

We are very grateful to the parliamentarians who made submissions, with particular thanks to Nickie Aiken MP for her ongoing support for this project.

Join the campaign and highlight your **#BookThatMadeMe**.





### Nickie Aiken MP

#### Little Women

by Louisa May Alcott



Jo in Little Women struck me as such a feminist role model and set me on my lifelong campaign to improve women and girls' rights.



### Baroness Bonham-Carter

#### 100 Years of Solitude

by Gabriel García Márquez



I clearly remember the thrill of first reading 100 Years of Solitude, I was 15. It fired my imagination, immersing me in a fascinating new world – both the tale and in the way of telling it. The magic and the realism and its story of colonisation, politics, life, death and love, enthralled me. It has stayed with me and influenced me ever since.



### Chris Bryant MP

#### The Fortune Men

by Nadifa Mohamed



It is a very moving story about a man framed for a murder in Cardiff – all the more moving when you realise that it is based on a true story.



### Alex Chalk MP

#### Other Mens' Flowers

by Field Marshall Lord Wavell



Other Mens' Flowers – a poetry anthology by Field Marshall Lord Wavell. My favourite book. Poetry is my strength and stay!



### Sarah Champion MP

#### The Five People You Meet In Heaven

by Mitch Albom



"The Five People You Meet In Heaven" by Mitch Albom. This book made me reflect on the impact people, including strangers, can have on your life – and by association, we can have on others.





**Lord Clement-Jones**

**The New Liberty: Survival and Justice in a Changing World**  
by Ralph Dahrendorf

Ralph Dahrendorf's book **The New Liberty: Survival and Justice in a Changing World** published in 1975 – the text of his Reith Lectures delivered in November 1974 – was and is together with his subsequent book **Life Chances** published in 1980 a massive influence on my political and personal life.

I had joined the Liberal Party (the predecessor of the Liberal Democrats) in 1973, but the **New Liberty** gave me a firm philosophical and political underpinning for that choice, reconciling individual liberty with positive action for social mobility and societal change. As a result I am almost 50 years later still firmly a Liberal Democrat! I now chair the Council of Queen Mary University London the highest achieving Russell Group University for social mobility, with at the same time a great track record for freedom of expression.



**Mims Davies MP**

**Lean In**  
by Sheryl Sandberg

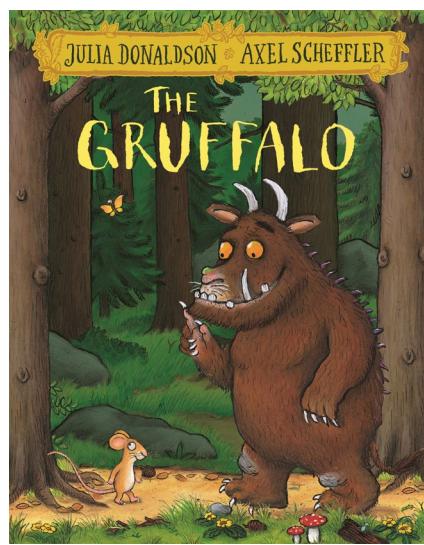
I totally fell for **Lean In** – by Sheryl Sandberg – it came at the right time for me – to help land the message of next stage female empowerment. I pass it on to other women and young women I work with, as something you should read. Even if you don't agree with it all, it truly makes you think about how you lead and engage in a way that supports others and we can all play our part when it comes to progression in the workplace.

**Mark Drakeford MP**

**Jim: The life and work of the Rt. Hon. James Griffiths**  
by D. Ben Rees



In this, the centenary of Labour's unbroken record of representing people in Wales, I'll be reading D. Ben Rees' biography of Jim Griffiths, one of the unsung heroes of the Labour movement here and beyond. Architect of the welfare state, leader of Labour's decolonisation programme, a committed devolutionist, the first ever Secretary of State for Wales: and all this for a man who began working in the anthracite mines of the Amman valley at the age of 12. Not simply a fascinating account of a life well-lived, but a reminder that there is a very different political tradition on which we can still draw, even in these disgraceful times.

**Chris Elmore MP**

**The Gruffalo**  
by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler



'The Gruffalo' having to read it over and over again to my 17 month son who is obsessed with books and would rather be read to than do anything else!

**Katherine Fletcher MP**

**Asterix the Gaul**  
by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo



The book that taught me how to read – Asterix the Gaul. 10-year-old me wasn't a great reader as I'm dyslexic – this was the 1st book I was willing to struggle with, as it's funny, has pictures that help tell the text story, has loads of history and I knew the names of the characters were all jokes – so if I could work out what it said I'd get the joke as a reward. My favourite – Unhygenix the fishmonger and his wife bacteria.





### Robert Halfon MP

#### Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

by Robert Louis Stevenson

“Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson should be a political manual: because the book is a warning of not just how a good individual can become bad, but how obsessive-compulsive and addictive behaviour can lead to absolute ruin. Even just opening the door to darkness a little, however talented and powerful one may be, means disaster in the offing.”



### Julian Knight MP

#### Schindler's List (original title Schindler's Ark)

by Thomas Keneally

“My English teacher Dr Kelly recommended it to me, he'd already pointed me to the beautiful Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith, Blood Red Sister Rose and Gossip from the Forest all from the same author Thomas Keneally. I was 16 and a carer for my mother at home, who was living with a debilitating back condition. I was cooking, cleaning, looking after the house and between shifts at Tesco stacking shelves my one true private time were books. I bought Schindler's Ark in a now closed bookshop Scrivener and Burgess in Chester. I started it on the bus home and read all 400 pages in a sitting until 5am, tears rolling down my cheeks. After I woke and did my chores I sat and read it again. The film in black and white was wonderful but nothing will ever approach that moment of opening that book, there is just something about reading which transcends and embraces. I can't say this book made me because I am deeply unmade but it gave me a glimpse of what being made is.”



### Andrew Lewer MBE MP

*Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Publishing*

### The Life of Samuel Johnson

by James Boswell

“

Dr Johnson was a regular visitor to my home town of Ashbourne in Derbyshire, inspiring me to study his life for my special subject at Newcastle University and then to write his entry in the ‘Oxford Companion to British History’. To this day I dip into my battered copy of Boswell for insight and sometimes solace.

”

### Lord Ralph Lucas

#### The Lion House

by Christopher de Bellaigue

“

A tale of the deadly allure of political power that I can read across to this moment, an aspect of 16th century history (Turkey and Venice) of which I was only vaguely aware, and beautifully written.

”



**Rachel Maclean MP****Jude the Obscure**

by Thomas Hardy

My chosen novel is *Jude the Obscure*. Before starting my English A Level at Sixth Form College, the tutor made this a compulsory text. At age 17 it had a huge impact on me and I re-read it every 10 years (I'm about due another read soon!) I was carried away by the imagination and power of the writing and the creation of Jude's life in the pages of a novel. Not a world that I knew or lived in, but nevertheless so real to me. I felt I could understand every single emotion Jude felt, his struggles, griefs, frustrations. On another level it also made me grateful for the things I had to a certain extent taken for granted - a free education and opportunity to go to university, freedom to think and believe what I wanted with respect to religion, and an appreciation that my life as a woman would not need to be defined by who I married, or the class I was born into.

**Sarah Olney MP****The Woman in White**

by Wilkie Collins

The book that really fired up a love of reading for me was 'The Woman in White' by Wilkie Collins. I borrowed it from my local library when I was 15 and spent the summer holidays completely absorbed in it. It's ludicrously over-written Gothic melodrama but it's got a gripping plot, unusual construction and a range of interesting characters, including an evil Italian count and a startlingly modern feminist.

I became hooked on florid Victoriana, which encouraged me to try the works of Collins' great friend, Charles Dickens, and then onto Thackeray, Austen and Eliot. Finding a 'way in' to these forbidding classics unlocked not just a love of reading and the confidence to keep trying challenging new books, it also changed my sense of myself. I became somebody who was open-minded about trying new things, and didn't set limits. I stopped thinking "I can't do that" and "That's not for people like me" and started thinking "I'll give it a go".

**Rachel Reeves MP****Square Haunting**  
by Francesca Wade

I was ashamed to say I hadn't heard of these amazing women before reading this fantastic book. But the stories of five women navigating independence in a room of their own are remarkable and inspiring.

**Alison Thewliss MP****The Handmaid's Tale**  
by Margaret Atwood

I would have to say The Handmaid's Tale as an adult (long prior to it being on tv!). Everything Margaret Atwood had outlined in the book had happened to women at some point in history, and it really speaks to the fragility of the rights we have in society. When there's been a rolling back of reproductive rights in the US, and women in Afghanistan now losing under the Taliban what freedoms they have gained, it really couldn't be a more timely read.

**Stephen Timms MP****Built as a City**  
by David Sheppard

"Built as a City" by David Sheppard, published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1974. David Sheppard, later Bishop of Liverpool, based this on his ministry in Newham. I read it as a student soon after publication.

**William Wragg MP****The Catcher in the Rye**  
by J. D. Salinger

# About the Publishers Association

We are the member organisation for UK publishing, representing companies of all sizes and specialisms.

Our members produce digital and print books, research journals and educational resources across genres and subjects.

We exist to champion publishing to the wider world and to provide our members with everything they need to thrive.

We are passionate about the capacity for books and reading to make life better for people.

