



Publishers  
Association

# Summer Reading List

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FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS



# Introduction

**The Publishers Association is delighted to present the Summer Reading List for Parliamentarians 2023. This annual list celebrates the incredible capacity of books to educate, inspire and entertain.**

**All of the following titles have been nominated by MPs and Peers as their recommended read for the Summer Recess. We are thrilled to have received such a wide range of suggestions from politicians across the Houses of Parliament and hope they inspire you to pick up a new book this summer.**

**Our thanks go to all the parliamentarians who made submissions, and we are particularly grateful to Nickie Aiken MP for her ongoing support for this project.**





### Nickie Aiken MP

**Hitler, Stalin, Mum & Dad**  
by Daniel Finkelstein

“

Just the title was enough for me to buy it and I was not disappointed. A family history of love and endurance wrapped around the most heinous events of the 20th Century. ”

### Lord Alton of Liverpool

**The Age of the Strong Man**  
by Gideon Rachman

“

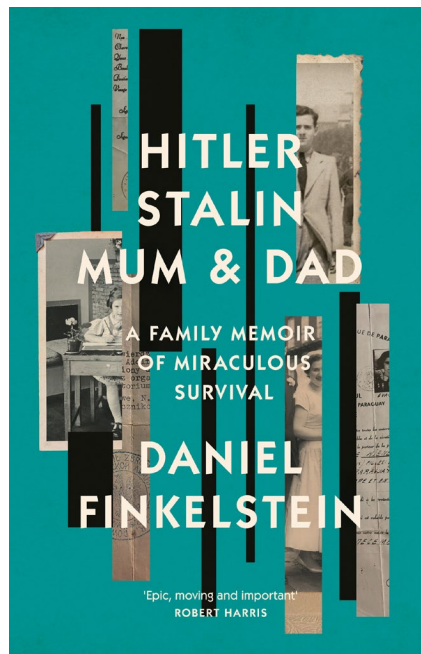
Rachmann brilliantly examines how the cult of “the Leader” and the rise of authoritarianism threatens democracy around the world. ”

### Baroness Anderson of Stoke on Trent

**Hitler, Stalin, Mum and Dad**  
by Daniel Finkelstein

“

This is an emotive, heart breaking and incredibly well written family story which will make you cry and remind you of how lucky we all are to live in a democracy. ”



### The Rt Hon Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom

**The Great Post Office Scandal**  
by Nick Wallis

“

It tells of the most widespread miscarriage of justice in British history, in a profoundly disturbing saga that is far from over. ”

### Harriett Baldwin MP

**We Need To Talk About Inflation**  
by Stephen D. King

“

Inflation is the biggest challenge facing the UK economy. ”

### Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

**English Food: A People's History**  
by Diane Purkiss

“

Wonderfully rich, entertaining and saucy: how the aristocracy, the empire and capitalism gave us the food, and countryside, we have today. And why IS toast an English dish? ”

**The Near Future in Twenty-First-Century Fiction: Climate, Retreat and Revolution**  
by David Sergeant

“

We need to get beyond apocalypse novels and zombie tales in picturing the future: Sergeant in this academic but still readable work, helps us see patterns in what's now a flood of fiction. ”

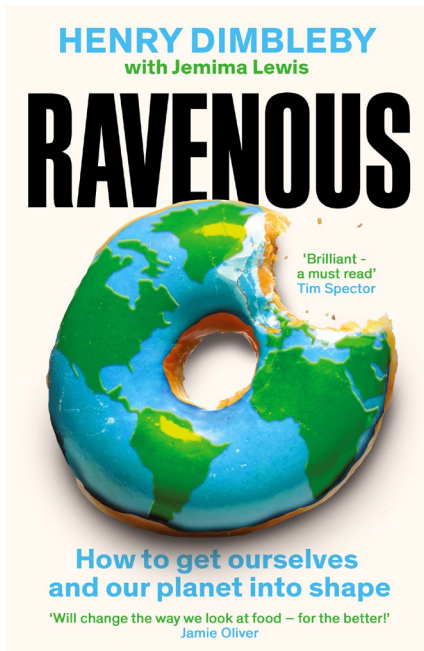
**Baroness Berridge**

**Blood Legacy: Reckoning with a Family’s Story of Slavery**

by Alex Renton

“

It gets most people out of their “echo chamber”, is well written and uses emotion and horror in the correct measure. ”



**Lord Bethell**

**Ravenous**

by Henry Dimbleby with Jemima Lewis

“

A knock-out blow for sensible thinking on the explosion of obesity, the obscenity of modern processed food and the hope that we can return to a sensible culture around what we eat. ”



**Kirsty Blackman MP**

*SNP Cabinet Office Spokesperson*

**The Fair Botanists**

by Sara Sheridan

“

Beautiful historical fiction, well-researched, set in 1822 Edinburgh. ”

**Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist**

**The Earth Transformed**

by Peter Frankopan

“

Puts our current life on Earth into context. ”

**Lord Balfe**

**The Middle Kingdoms: A New History of Central Europe**

by Martyn Rady

“

A sweeping but readable history of Europe east of the Rhine. ”

**The Rt Hon Baroness Blackstone**

**An Uneasy Inheritance: My Family and Other Radicals**

by Polly Toynbee

“

For its honesty and its values, and for the fascinating story she tells of an extraordinary family. ”



**The Rt Hon Suella Braverman MP**

*Home Secretary*

**Trans: When Ideology Meets Reality**

by Helen Joyce

“

Women’s rights and why biology matters. ”

## Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury

*Liberal Democrat Lords  
Spokesperson for Culture, Media  
and Sport*

### The Ghost Net

by Alan Jenkins

“

A collection of beautiful poems which contain among them haunting memorials to the journalist Marie Colvin, and Alan's fellow poet Mick Imlah. Both cut down in their prime. And Jane Wellesley's – Blue Eyes & a Wild Spirit – a biography of her poet grandmother Dorothy Wellesley who was admired by Yeats but not by her snobbish social set. Today the publishing industry is behaving like them – undervaluing poetry. Please can this change? ”

### Andrew Bowie MP

*Minister for Nuclear and  
Networks*

### Jock's Daunder Room Monymusk

by Monymusk School Pupils

“

This exploration of Doric is an absolute triumph of ambition and imagination from the pupils at Monymusk school. Congratulations to the P1, P2 and P3s who co-authored and illustrated this book themselves. ”



### The Rt Hon Sir Ben Bradshaw

### The Transgender Issue

by Shon Faye

“

There is so much ignorance and prejudice about transgender people – this is an excellent start for those who wish to be better informed. ”

### Lyn Brown MP

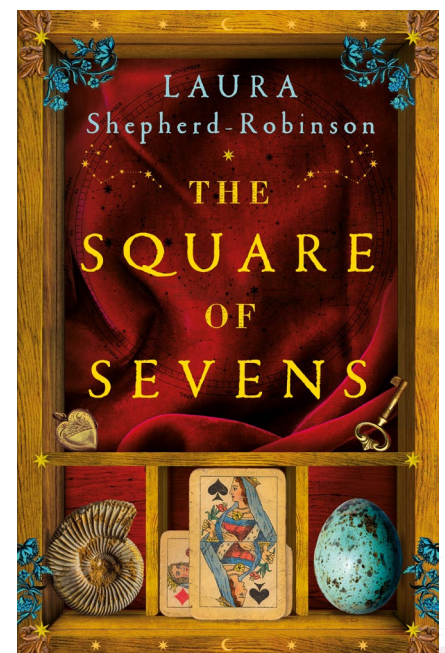
*Shadow Minister for  
Foreign, Commonwealth and  
Development Office*

### The Square of Sevens

by Laura Shepherd-Robinson

“

Having read her first two, I am very much looking forward to reading the third. She writes excellent historical crime novels based in London, late 18th century. This current novel is about the murder of a high class sex worker and a fortune teller who wants to find out what happened and why. ”



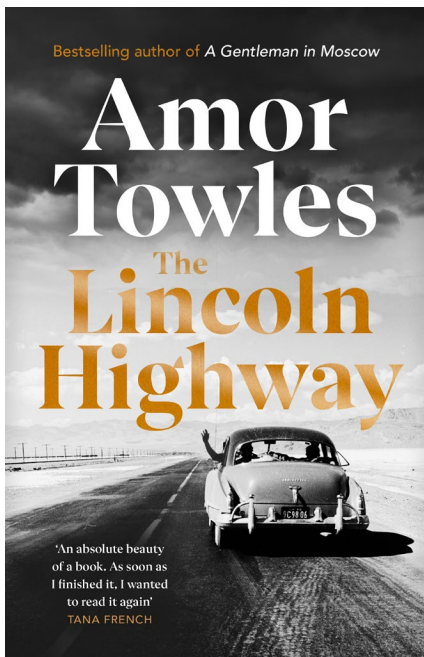
**Richard Burgon MP**

**Uncomfortably Off: Why the Top 10% of Earners Should Care about Inequality**

by Marcos González Hernando and Gerry Mitchell

“

A brilliant book that clearly sets out why it’s in all of our interests to care about inequality in society. ”



**Rob Butler MP**

**The Lincoln Highway**

by Amor Towles

“

A phenomenal story, beautifully written. ”

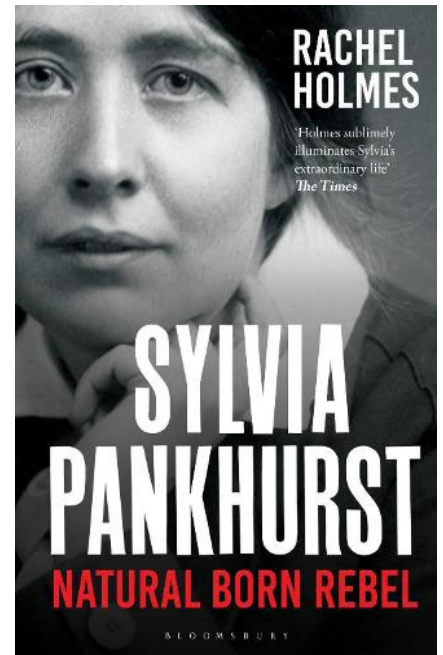
**The Rt Hon Baroness Chakrabarti CBE**

**Sylvia Pankhurst: Natural Born Rebel**

by Rachel Holmes

“

An epic historical biography of huge contemporary relevance. ”



**Wendy Chamberlain MP**

*Liberal Democrat Work and Pensions Spokesperson; Liberal Democrat Chief Whip*

**The World: A Family History of Humanity**

by Simon Sebag Montefiore

“

One for keeping at home, as opposed to fitting it into the suitcase as it comes in at 1300 pages, *The World: A Family History* is a fascinating, broad brush and innovative approach to the telling of world history. Telling that the first time any part of the British Isles appears in the main narrative is during the reign of James VI and I when the seeds of the British Empire were being sown - it is ruthlessly focussed on those who drove history and humanity forward. ”

**The Rt Hon Alex Chalk KC MP**

*Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice*

**Other Men’s Flowers**

by Field Marshall Lord Wavell

“

It is a peerless poetry anthology that is food for the soul! ”



**Alex Cunningham MP**  
*Shadow Courts and Sentencing  
Minister*

**The Most Famous Man on  
Marsh Road: A memoir  
of Growing up in Prewar  
Middlesbrough**  
by Patrick Durkin

“  
It is simply a great read and  
stimulating too. ”

**The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey  
MP**  
*Secretary of State for  
Environment, Food and Rural  
Affairs*

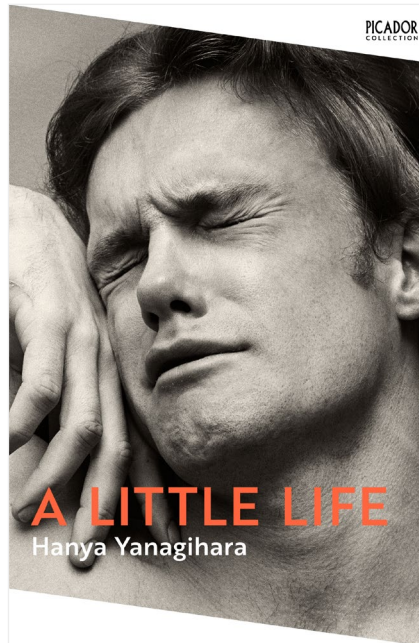
**Wind in the Willows**  
by Kenneth Grahame

“  
It celebrates nature and  
friendship. Toot toot! ”

**Sarah Champion MP**  
*Chair, International  
Development Committee*

**A little life**  
by Hanya Yanagihara

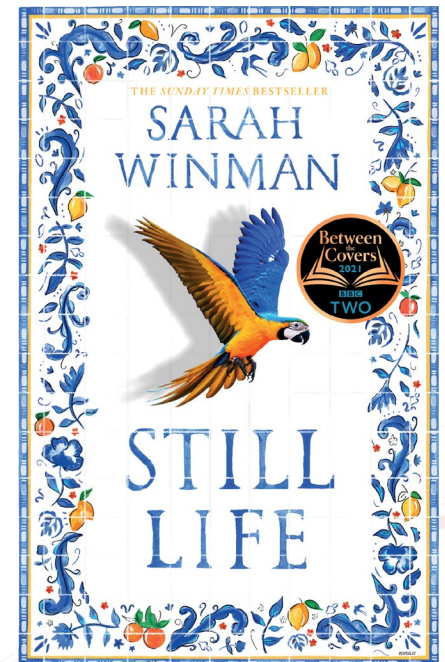
“  
Challenging subject matter, but  
exquisitely written and truly  
captivating – I grieved when it was  
over. ”



**Mims Davies MP**  
*Minister for Social Mobility,  
Youth and Progression*

**Still Life**  
by Sarah Winman

“  
A wonderful, multigenerational  
story set in Tuscany where you  
are submerged fully into the lives  
of the well rounded characters.  
Entrenched in the grim realities  
of the second world war, engaged  
with art and lifted by love and  
the goodness of strangers. This  
is a great summer read, that you  
can truly lose yourself in and feel  
regret for finishing a good book  
when the last page has been  
turned. ”

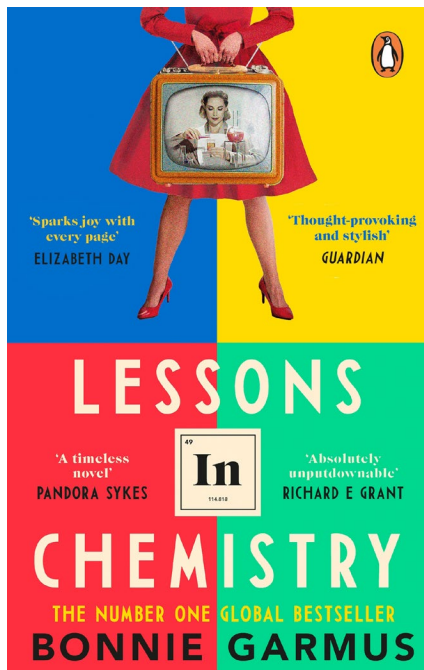


**Alexandra Davies-Jones MP***Shadow Minister for Tech,  
Gambling and Digital Economy***Lessons in Chemistry**

by Bonnie Garmus

“

I loved this unique story which had female empowerment at its heart – a great read for everyone and a fantastic insight into 1960s California. ”

**Dame Caroline Dinenage MP***Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee***Lessons in Chemistry**

by Bonnie Garmus

“

Unusual and compelling storyline, slick narrative, perfect literary heroine! ”

**Samantha Dixon MBE MP****Operation Mincemeat**

by Ben Macintyre

“

This beautifully written, thrilling and (at times) very funny book about how the body of a dead tramp duped the Axis powers 80 years ago and turned the tide of WWII, is a revelation – so good, you couldn't make it up. ”

**Allan Dorans MP****No Ordinary Day: Espionage, Betrayal, Terrorism and Corruption**by Matt Johnston  
with John Murray

“

A real life story of murder, espionage, terrorism and corruption which the Government would rather you did not know about. ”

**The Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson MP***DUP Westminster Leader***The Seven Sisters**

by Lucinda Riley

“

First in a gripping and highly readable series of books by Irish author Lucinda Riley centred on a 'family' of sisters brought together by a figurehead in the form of 'Pa Salt' and all with their own story told in a way that compels the reader to walk a journey of discovery with each of these fascinating characters. ”



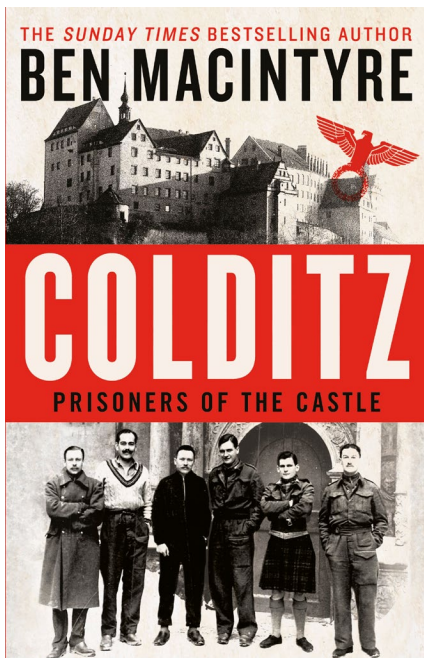
**Flick Drummond MP**

**Colditz: Prisoners of the Castle**

by Ben Macintyre

“

I love Ben Macintyre’s books because he brings history to life and this is a tale of extraordinarily brave men as well as those who just learned to survive in Colditz. ”



**Ruth Edwards MP**

*Assistant Government Whip*

**Lessons in Chemistry**

by Bonnie Garmus

“

One of the most unique, original and enjoyable books I have ever read. Read it and release your inner Elizabeth Zott! ”

**Chris Evans MP**

*Shadow Minister for Defence*

**Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI**

by David Grann

“

A tragic true story which reads like a thriller. ”



**The Rt Hon Lucy Frazer KC MP**

*Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport*

**Man’s Search for Meaning**

by Viktor Frankl

“

An incredible thought-provoking reflective story of survival. ”

**Louie French MP**

**The Facemaker**

by Lindsey Fitzharris

“

A fantastic book telling the incredible story of the pioneering plastic surgeon, Sir Harold Gillies, and the establishment of one of the first hospitals dedicated to facial reconstruction in Sidcup for soldiers during World War I. ”

**Gill Furniss MP**

*Shadow Minister for Roads*

**Lessons in Chemistry**

by Bonnie Garmus

“

Its a very unusual fiction book and I could not put it down – a must read for summer. ”

**Tim Farron MP**

**The Air We Breathe**

by Glen Scrivener



**The Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale MP**

**The Cricket Match**  
by Hugh de Sélincourt

“  
Essential annual reading for every summer!”



**The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP**  
*Minister of State for Education*

**Great Circle**  
by Maggie Shipstead



**Barry Gardiner MP**

**The Immigration Handbook**  
by Caroline Smith

“  
Humorous, life affirming, but trenchantly unsentimental, this sequence of poems should be required reading for every MP who is trying to understand what is happening in our immigration system.”

**Patrick Grady MP**

**The Ministry for the Future**  
by Kim Stanley Robinson

“  
Prescient warnings about climate change, told through a gripping story and just enough hope and optimism.”

**Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town**

**An Uneasy Inheritance: My Family and Other Radicals**  
by Polly Toynbee

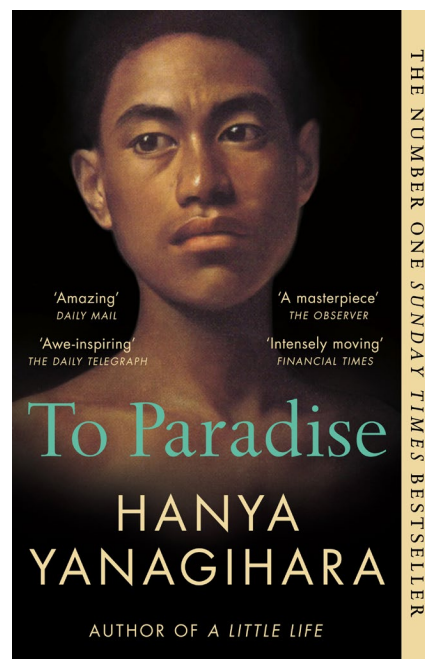
“  
A different angle from well-known political writer and player. Easy read and with best story about Boris Johnson in the nude you'll read anywhere.”

**Patricia Gibson MP**

*SNP Environment, Farming, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Spokesperson*

**To Paradise**  
by Hanya Yanagihara

“  
After reading “A Little Life” I am very keen to read more work by this author and this next book from her – it promises to be just as impactful as her previous masterpiece.”



**The Rt Hon Simon Hart**  
*Chief Whip*

**Winged Hours**  
by Frank Griffiths



**Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts CBE**

**Burning The Big House: The Story of the Irish Country House in a Time of War and Revolution**

by Terence Dooley

“

A fascinating insight into the behaviour, motives and objectives of the participants in that tragic period; carrying echoes that still reverberate today. ”

**The Rt Hon John Glen MP**  
*Chief Secretary to the Treasury*

**Boy on a Bicycle: A Mandarin’s Memoir**  
by Hayden Phillips

“

A witty and personal account of a lifetime in the civil service from a former Perm Sec and constituent. ”

**Carolyn Harris MP**

**Red Notice: How I became Putin’s No.1 Enemy**  
by Bill Browder

“

It is an eye-opening and gripping real life account of one mans fight for justice against Russian powers – a political must read. ”



**The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
*Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*

**Lucky Jim**  
by Kingsley Amis

“

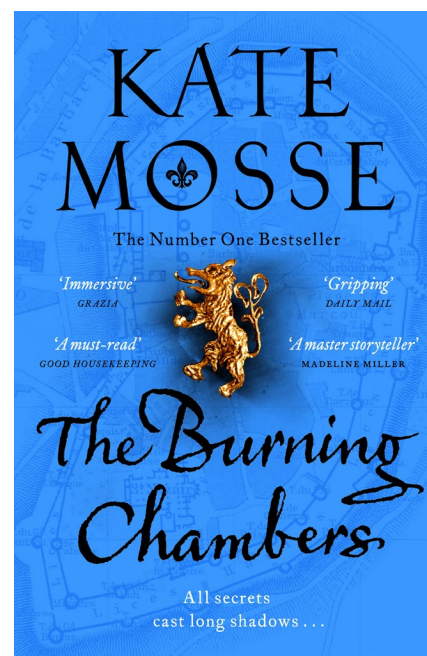
Funniest book I’ve ever read and his description of a hangover is the best passage of writing in English literature. ”

**Sally-Ann Hart MP**

**The Burning Chambers, The City of Tears, The Ghost Ship**  
by Kate Mosse

“

A trilogy of books (I have not yet read the third one) Joubert Family Chronicles. Wonderful historical escapism. ”



**The Rt Hon Alister Jack DL MP**  
*Secretary of State for Scotland*

**Land of Milk and Honey: Digressions of a Rural Dissident**  
by Jamie Blackett

“

An excellent read! ”

## The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP

*Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education*

### The Fall of Númenor

by J. R. R. Tolkien

“

If it was The Silmarillion last year, this year it has to be the newly released book of Tolkien's work, The Fall of Númenor. This book delves into how Númenor was founded and how the Rings of Power were made. It has been brilliantly brought together by Brian Sibley, who co-wrote the adaption of the Lord of Rings for Radio 4. I am looking forward to escaping the world of politics into the Second Age this summer, reading this on the top of the Yorkshire Dales, overlooking a lake, my imaginary Middle Earth.

”

### The Rt Hon Alister Jack DL MP

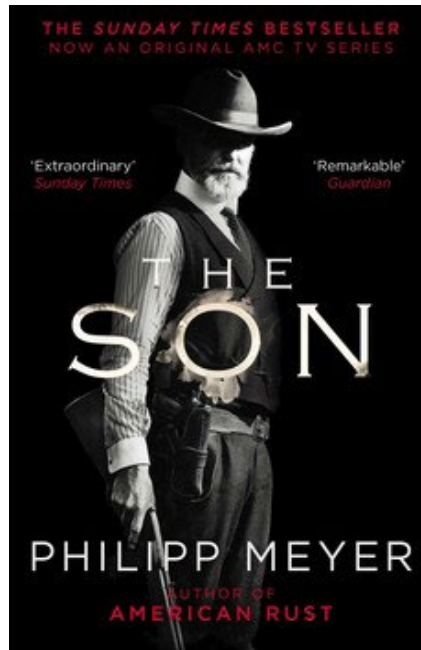
*Secretary of State for Scotland*

### Land of Milk and Honey: Digressions of a Rural Dissident

by Jamie Blackett

“

An excellent read! ”



### Kevin Hollinrake MP

*Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business*

### The Son

by Philipp Meyer

“

Brilliantly written epic about the origins, struggles and success of the United States, told through the eyes and lives of successive generations of the McCulloch family. ”

### Alicia Kearns MP

*Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee*

### The Avoidable War

by Kevin Rudd

### Fay Jones MP

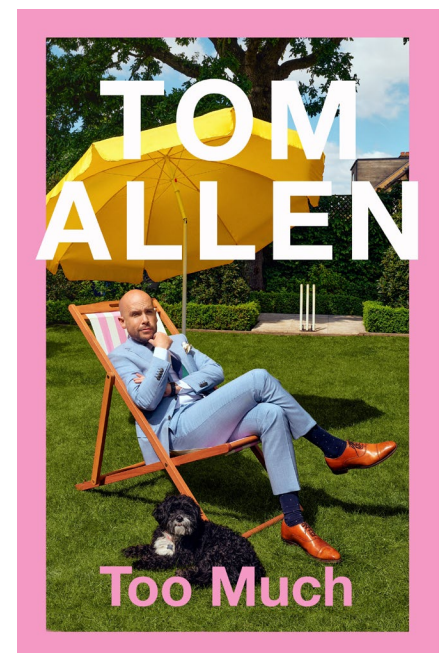
*Assistant Government Whip*

### Too Much

by Tom Allen

“

So many of us live with grief and this book lightens the load, helping to find your way back to joy. ”



### Baroness Lister of Burtersett CBE

### The Dictionary of Lost Words

by Pip Williams

“

A wonderful novel that conveys the power of words and of women in a way that is both engrossing and ultimately very moving. ”



**The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP**  
*Secretary of State for Education*

**Freezing Order**  
by Bill Browder

“ Looking at Russian corruption which is all very timely with the Ukrainian war. ”

**Mark Logan MP**

**China’s War with Japan, 1937–1945: The Struggle for Survival**  
by Rana Mitter

“ Britain’s preeminent thinker on China. Published 10 years ago, yet timeless. Contains insights into China’s relations with Japan, the US and the UK. ”

**Lord McNicol of West Kilbride**  
*Deputy Chairman of Committees for the Lords*

**The Square of Sevens**  
by Laura Shepherd-Robinson

“ This is a beautifully written book with attention to detail, not to mention a great storyline and pace. ”



**Andrew Lewer MBE MP**  
*Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Publishing*

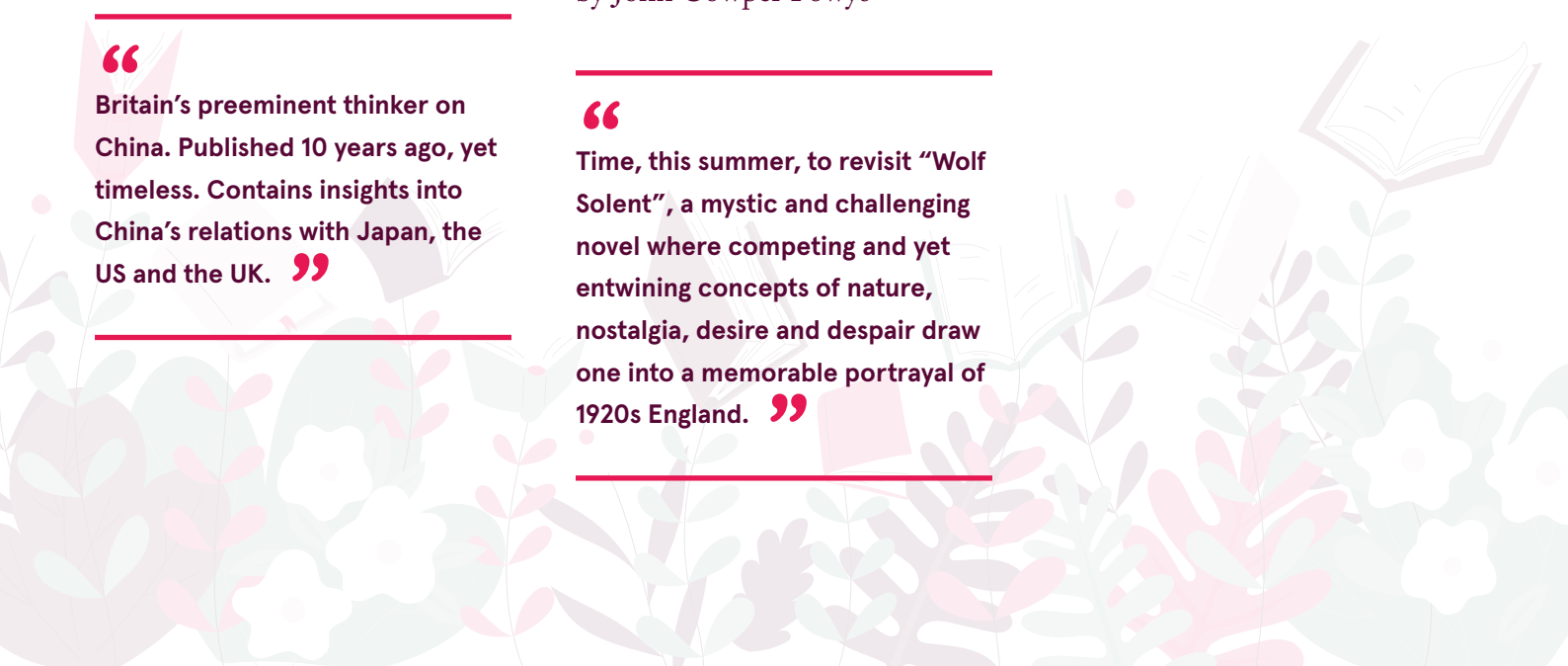
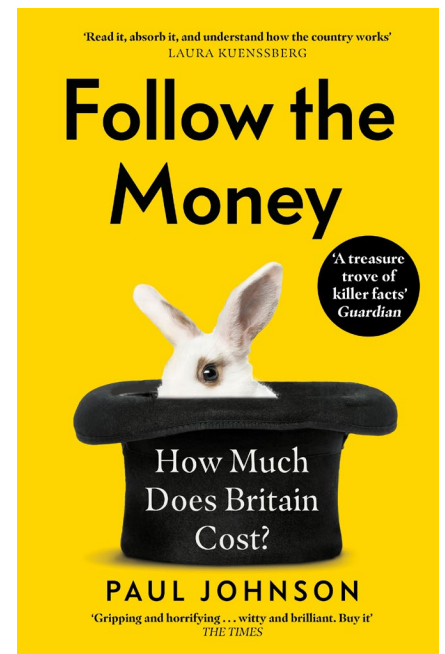
**Wolf Solent**  
by John Cowper Powys

“ Time, this summer, to revisit “Wolf Solent”, a mystic and challenging novel where competing and yet entwining concepts of nature, nostalgia, desire and despair draw one into a memorable portrayal of 1920s England. ”

**Lord Leong CBE**  
*Shadow Spokesperson for Business and Trade*

**Follow the Money: How much does Britain cost?**  
by Paul Johnson

“ Anyone interested in politics or how much it costs to run the country, should read this book. ”





### Rachel Maclean MP

*Minister of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*

#### The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion

by Jonathan Haidt

“

No matter how much we present facts, debate or argue either in politics or with our friends, some people will never see things our way. It's good to understand why, to be able to disagree cordially in politics, and to avoid falling out with people we love but disagree profoundly with! ”

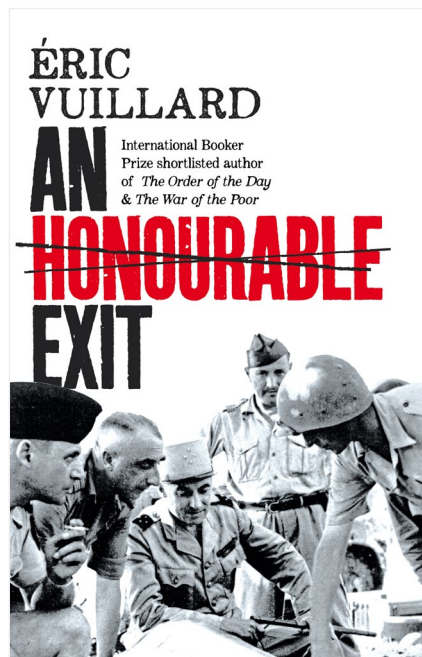
### Conor McGinn MP

#### An Honourable Exit

by Éric Vuillard

“

The writing is as exquisite as the lesson is blunt. ”



### Taiwo Owatemi MP

#### Ultra-Processed People: Why Do We All Eat Stuff That Isn't Food...and Why Can't We Stop?

by Chris van Tulleken

“

This is an interesting and informative book which widens the debate into the causes of many of the health concerns facing the UK including the increases in obesity, Diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer rates. ”



### The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP

*Minister of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office*

#### Getting China Wrong

by Aaron L. Friedberg

“

Thought provoking analysis from an expert. ”

### Stephanie Peacock MP

*Shadow Minister for Media, Data and Digital Infrastructure*

#### Lessons in Chemistry

by Bonnie Garmus

“

Lessons in Chemistry is both funny and thought provoking, dealing with the many challenges my Grandmother's generation faced. When I first started reading it, a woman stopped me on the train to tell me she wished she could read it for the first time all over again – I now feel the same! ”



### Ian Murray MP

*Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland*

### The Street

by Susi Holliday

“

I haven't read it yet but the book is based on the outskirts of Edinburgh where I grew up and the twisted tale is intriguing. ”

### Sarah Olney MP

*Liberal Democrat Treasury and Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Spokesperson*

### Iconicon: A Journey Around the Landmark Buildings of Contemporary Britain

by John Grindrod

“

It's a fascinating and engaging account of how political decisions have created our built environment over the last 50 years through an examination of some of the iconic architecture of the time. ”

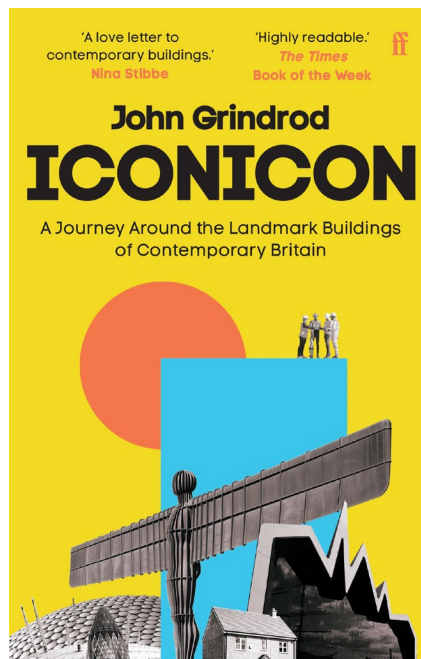
### Lord Rennard MBE

### Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution

by Simon Schama

“

It is absolutely brilliant and shows what happened when people in France got angry, just like they are now. Politicians in Russia should beware the lessons and perhaps in Britain too when people demand change. ”



### Bridget Phillipson MP

*Shadow Education Secretary*

### A Pebble In The Throat

by Aasmah Mir

### Victory: The Inside Story of Labor's Return to Power

by Peter van Onselen and Wayne Errington

### Angela Richardson MP

### Winter's Fury: The Furyck Saga: Book One

by A E Rayne

“

Strong female lead character in a fantasy series that includes battles, dark magic and an ancient prophecy. ”

**Toby Perkins MP***Shadow Minister for Education***Demon Copperhead**

by Barbara Kingsolver

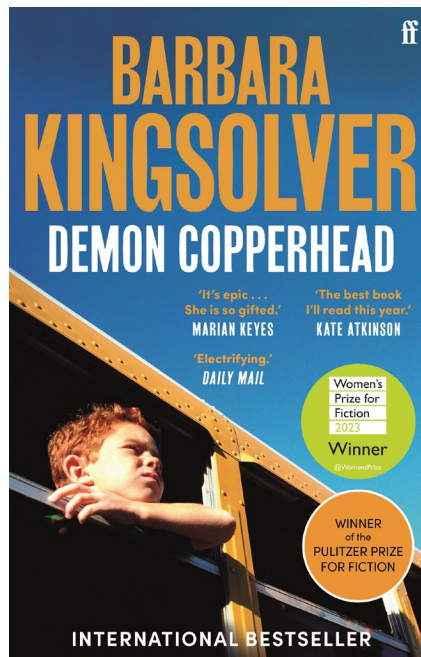
“

The book I am recommending, *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver, is a modern reimagining of *David Copperfield* set in the United States during the Opioid crisis that devastated so many communities.

I was a big fan of Dickens when I was growing up and I think this was due to his social commentaries on poverty, injustice and the plight of the most vulnerable people in Victorian times. The need to address these social injustices always resonated with me and inspired me to go into politics.

*Demon Copperhead* holds up a similar black mirror to society as Dickens, whilst also being full of the same humour, tragedy and, most importantly, hope for a better future that characterised his work.

The book won the 2023 Pulitzer Prize, but is a very accessible due to the humour and strong characters and would make a great summer read. ”

**Lucy Powell MP***Shadow Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary***Demon Copperhead**

Barbara Kingsolver

“

This book was recommended to me and I am enjoying it, so can recommend it to others. ”

**The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP***Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero***A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle**

by Julian Jackson

“

This fascinating book about the life and motivations of Charles De Gaulle provides insights into the modern French psyche. From the tradition of street protest (and revolution) to our neighbour's attitude towards Brexit, I have never read a more compelling analysis of what makes France France. ”

**Alexander Stafford MP***PPS to the International Trade Secretary***Russia: Revolution and Civil War 1917–1921**

by Antony Beevor

“

Shows the absolute horror of the civil war, and the death and destruction caused by both sides meaning that whatever happened normal people suffered. ”





### Tulip Siddiq MP

*Shadow Economic Secretary to the Treasury*

### Wandering Souls

by Cecile Pin

“

A moving story of three immigrant children whose lives are splintered following the Vietnam War. A must read! ”

### Alison Thewliss MP

*SNP Home Affairs Spokesperson*

### Freezing Order

by Bill Browder

“

An essential insight to the flow of Putin's dirty money, and the influence it buys. Every Parliamentarian must read this! ”

### The Rt Hon Baroness Stowell of Beeston MBE

*Chair, Lords Communications and Digital Committee*

### Values, Voice & Virtue: The New British Politics

by Matthew Goodwin

### Conspiracy: Peter Thiel, Hulk Hogan, Gawker, and the Anatomy of Intrigue

by Ryan Holiday

“

Conspiracy: Peter Thiel, Hulk Hogan, Gawker, and the Anatomy of Intrigue is the true story of Peter Thiel's secret and successful plot to destroy a media empire. It has the pace of, and reads like, a thriller. It's a fascinating insight not just to the mind of a billionaire, but what focussed and relentless strategic thinking really means. ”

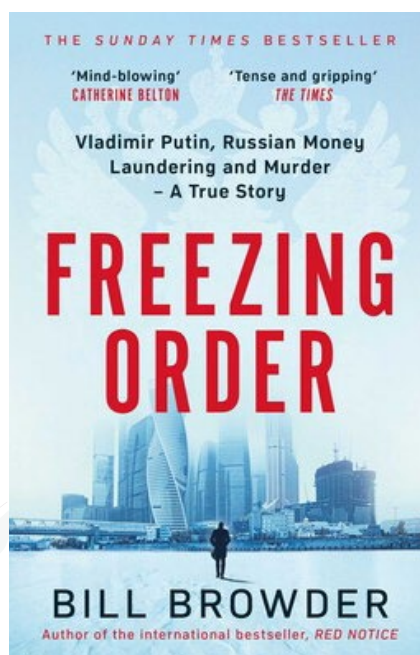
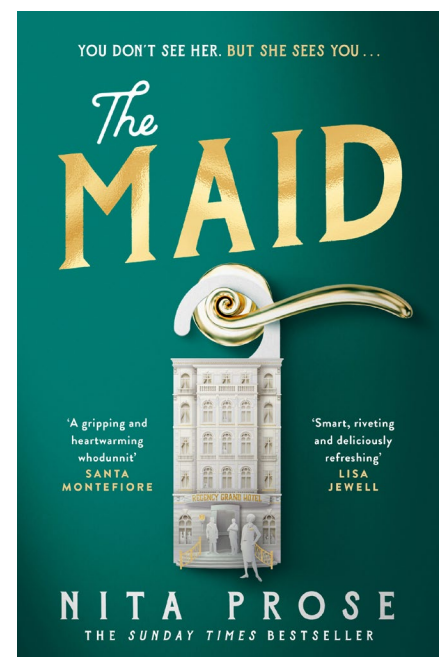
### Giles Watling MP

### The Maid

by Nita Prose

“

The way the author delved into the minds of the characters was of particular interest to me. ”



### The Rt Hon Dame Rosie Winterton MP

*Commons Deputy Speaker*

### The Square of Sevens

by Laura Shepherd-Robinson

## 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.