



The Lords: Crisis? What crisis?

As soon as the Conservatives narrowly won the 2015 general election it was easy to predict trouble ahead between the new government and the Lords (see our blog [here](#) and [Monitor 60](#), pages 6–7). While during the coalition years the Conservatives could largely rely on support from Liberal Democrat peers, they are now heavily outnumbered in the second chamber. This uncomfortable position – which has long faced Labour and Liberal governments – is a new one for a Conservative government.

Tensions were already apparent in the initial rash of [government defeats](#) in the Lords. By the middle of October there had been 17, compared to just three in the equivalent period under the coalition – much to ministers' frustration.

But tension peaked over decisions on the Tax Credits (Income Thresholds and Determination of Rates) (Amendment) Regulations, taken in the Lords on 26 October. The regulations implemented significant changes to the tax credits regime, which the government estimated would save £4.4 billion; but did so via 'secondary' rather than 'primary' legislation. On such measures the Lords retains an absolute veto, which is in practice very rarely used. After a lengthy and heated debate, peers voted not to reject the regulations outright, instead deferring their approval. This was an innovative means of stalling the process without explicitly using the veto.

The government's public fury [began in advance of the vote](#). [Anonymous briefings](#) suggested that a defeat would result in 'floods' of new Conservative peers being created, or even in the 'suspension' of the House of Lords. Immediately after the defeats two things occurred. On 28 October ministers announced a review of the Lords' powers over delegated legislation, to be conducted by former Conservative Leader in the chamber Lord Strathclyde. On 25 November the Chancellor announced the abandonment of the proposed tax credit changes. Had the government responded by asking the Commons to vote for the changes (and had it won), the Lords would almost certainly have backed down.

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But peers' resistance stemmed partially from knowledge of [widespread unease among Conservative MPs](#). Lobbying by backbenchers was clearly crucial both to the Lords defeat, and to George Osborne's subsequent climbdown.

The [Strathclyde report](#) was published on 17 December (for a longer analysis of its contents and implications see [here](#)). It proposed three options for the Lords' power over secondary legislation: that the chamber should be removed from the process completely; that the existing conventions of restraint should be reaffirmed via parliamentary resolution; or that the government should amend the Statutory Instruments Act 1946 to ensure that any Lords veto could be overridden by a subsequent House of Commons vote. The third of these was his preferred proposal.

Tangled up in this row was not only the Lords' power over secondary legislation, but the Commons' financial primacy. Ministers claimed that peers had overstepped the mark by blocking a policy with such major financial implications. The Strathclyde report proposed reviewing the use of Commons-only procedures in such circumstances. These little-understood waters were further muddled by claims in early December of Commons financial privilege on the Lords amendments seeking to give 16–17-year-olds the vote in the EU referendum (see [here](#) and page 11).

These events have opened up uncomfortable questions, not only for the Lords but also the government. When the Lords [debated the Strathclyde report](#) on 13 January, there were claims that ministers are under pressure to implement major policy changes via secondary legislation, seemingly to avoid parliamentary resistance. Such claims – which reached the [front page of The Independent](#) on 19 January – are greatly exercising the Labour opposition. Various peers cited the [2014 Hansard Society study](#) showing that powers delegated to ministers have become ever more wide-ranging, and that the system is unnecessarily complex; this urged a major root and branch review of delegated powers. Meanwhile, threats of 'flooding' the chamber with Conservative peers highlighted the Prime Minister's untrammelled power of appointment, and his potential to manipulate the Lords' membership to his own ends. Indeed, since all peerages are formally bestowed by the monarch, this demonstrated how the Queen [could potentially be placed in a very uncomfortable position](#) indeed.

In the Lords debate, former Lord Chief Justice Lord Judge expressed strong concerns about the extent of delegated power, as did current Chair of the House of Lords Appointments Commission Lord Kakkar (both Crossbench). There were also various criticisms from senior Conservatives. Lord Higgins suggested that the Treasury was 'trying to pull a fast one' by putting such major policy change into secondary legislation. Lord Cormack noted that the tax credit defeat had been a good news story for the Lords (in a period when its media profile has otherwise been unrelentingly bad – shown [here](#)). Lord Forsyth retrospectively thanked those sponsoring the defeats for getting the Chancellor out of a political fix, while Lord Norton argued that the Strathclyde report was based on a false premise (expanded [here](#)). The 2006 [Joint Committee on Conventions](#) – whose conclusions were approved by both Houses – explicitly stated that the veto could be used in 'exceptional circumstances' (as it had been in both 2007 and 2012). By the end of the debate it was unclear what convention the government believed had been breached, with Lords Leader Baroness Stowell seeming to imply that use of the veto would have been preferable to the kind of delay motion employed.

On 19 January the Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) [took lengthy evidence](#) from the Unit's Meg Russell and from Lord Strathclyde. Both readily agreed that no constitutional crisis had occurred. Action on Strathclyde's recommendations could prove tricky, and seems on balance unlikely. But, as explored by PACAC, other serious matters – the management of delegated power, and unregulated prime ministerial patronage – have now been put firmly onto the parliamentary and media agenda.



Meg Russell giving evidence to the Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee. This image is subject to [parliamentary copyright](#). www.parliament.uk

Parliament



English votes for English laws takes effect

On [22 October 2015](#) MPs approved [changes to the standing orders of the House of Commons](#) that introduced ‘English votes for English laws’ (EVEL). The central effect of these changes will be to ensure that, on certain legislative provisions that relate only to England (or England and Wales), and on which comparable decisions have been devolved elsewhere, the legislation will only pass if approved by a majority of English (or English and Welsh) MPs. The changes have proved highly contentious, and were described in the Commons as ‘a charter for breaking up the Union’ ([Chris Bryant, Labour](#)), and as making Scottish MPs ‘second class’ ([Pete Wishart, SNP](#)). In the [final vote on the arrangements](#), Conservative MPs voted cohesively in favour, while all other parties voted against.

Now that the changes have been approved, attention will turn to their practical operation. The Speaker has already certified that EVEL will apply on several bills, including the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill, the Childcare Bill, and the Energy Bill. The first ever legislative grand committee stages – at which English, or English and Welsh, MPs formally consent to such bills – were [held on 12 January](#) on the Housing and Planning Bill. Several statutory instruments have also been certified, for which a slightly different process applies. Shortly before the procedures were adopted in October, the influential Commons Procedure Committee published an [interim assessment](#), drawing attention to the scheme’s potential to put pressure on parliamentary time and resources. In January it announced that it will conduct a [thorough evaluation of EVEL’s operation](#): written evidence should be submitted by 12 April, and the committee intends to report its findings early in the 2016–17 session.

Michael Kenny and Daniel Gover of the [Mile End Institute](#) are currently working on a major research project examining the implementation of EVEL. Further information and updates are available on [their website](#).

Commons Procedure Committee inquiries

The Procedure Committee has set itself an ambitious programme. As well as monitoring the implementation of EVEL (see above), it will conduct a [short inquiry into private members’ bills](#), for which it is inviting written evidence before 19 February. In January it announced its intention to [give particular attention to supply procedure throughout the 2015 parliament](#), starting with the Commons’ procedures for examining the estimates. Written evidence on this topic is invited by 25 March.

New management structure for the House of Commons

A select committee on the governance of the House of Commons was established in 2014 to resolve a [row over the appointment of the next Commons Clerk](#), on the retirement of Sir Robert Rogers (now Lord Lisvane). Speaker John Bercow wanted to appoint Carol Mills, an Australian parliament official who had a management rather than a procedural background, but this provoked alarm that such a non-traditional figure might not appreciate the power balances at Westminster. The committee, chaired by Jack Straw, produced a [consensual report](#) which recommended that a new Director General should report to the Clerk ‘but with clearly delineated autonomous responsibilities for the delivery of services’. The change would be cost-neutral and accompanied by a senior management review and a remodelling of the House of Commons Commission (see [Monitor 59](#), page 5).

David Natzler, having served as acting Clerk, was [appointed](#) the 50th Clerk of the Commons in April 2015 after an open competition. Ian Ailles was then [appointed](#) as the first Director General, taking up his post in October 2015. His background is in the travel and leisure industry, a clear sign that the priority is to develop customer-focused services at the Commons. Westminster has a million visitors a year, and major problems with the building fabric (see page 4), including infestations of mice and moths, so there are formidable challenges ahead. A new Governance Office serves both Ailles and Natzler, and a review of the senior staffing structure is due to report in April.

Lords changes

Amidst the high-profile arguments with the government (see front page), various important changes have occurred in the Lords. On the same day as the tax credits votes, 26 October, the first ever woman bishop was introduced as one of the 26 Lords spiritual. Rachel Treweek takes her seat as the Bishop of Gloucester. In December the Procedure Committee [proposed changes to the leave of absence procedures](#) so that peers must explicitly state in their applications that they reasonably expect to return to active membership in the future – with an intention that those who cannot will instead take permanent retirement. This is likely to reduce the number of members on leave of absence (currently standing at 31). The outcome of the Lord Speaker's group on reducing the size of the House (reported in [Monitor 61](#), page 4) was still awaited at the time of writing.

Beyond membership, there are various procedural innovations. On 29 October the Liaison Committee [recommended establishment of an International Relations Committee](#) – in response to peers' long-held desire for a committee on foreign affairs. This was agreed on 10 November, and will take effect from the 2016–17 session. On 13 January a [major report](#) was published by the Leader's Group on Governance of the House, chaired by Baroness (Gillian) Shephard of Northwold. This proposes changes to the domestic committees, with abolition of some committees (e.g. Refreshments, Works of Art) in favour of a simplified structure, topped by a new senior committee chaired by the Lord Speaker. This would bring the Lords' arrangements into closer line with recent changes in the Commons. The report is yet to be debated.

Rebuilding the Palace: restoration or reform?

Unnoticed in the short-term horizon of political news, a momentous project is getting underway. The Palace of Westminster [is falling apart](#), and this Grade 1 listed building forming part of an UNESCO World Heritage Site, with a million visitors a year, cannot be patched and repaired indefinitely.

Senior officials [warned in October 2012](#) that irreversible damage would occur if nothing was done. An [Independent Options Appraisal](#) was published on 18 June 2015. This set out three options: Rolling programme. Undertaking minimum work taking 32 years.

1. Both chambers would have to close for between 2–4 years, at different times, but sittings could be relocated to a temporary structure elsewhere in or around the Palace.
2. Partial move out. The work would be carried out more quickly if first the Commons, then the Lords, were to move to temporary accommodation outside the Palace.
3. Full move out. If both Houses fully vacated the Palace this would take the least time and would avoid disruption to parliament from construction works. This approach would take around six years.

Cost estimates were in the range of £3 to £6 billion for all options. A [joint select committee](#) of both Houses was established in July 2015 to consider them, chaired by the Leaders of the Commons and the Lords. It expects to report in May. Within the Palace there is huge concern about public and political resistance to billions of pounds being spent on work for MPs and peers, but it is hard to see the Commons working effectively by borrowing the Lords chamber for years on end.

The [Restoration and Renewal programme](#) offers [major opportunities](#) to re-design chambers and committee rooms to be more user-friendly and to enhance public engagement. The last opportunity to reshape Westminster was in the 1940s, when Churchill decided on restoration after bombing destroyed the Commons. A crowded chamber, where at least 200 MPs are denied a seat if attendance reaches capacity, might have fitted the mood then. However, once MPs become used to more spacious and well-equipped facilities in a temporary chamber, perhaps with electronic voting, they may be reluctant to return to a mere restoration with traditional lobbies.



View of the Palace of Westminster | Image credit © [Hernán Piñera](#)

Executive



Cabinet committees and task forces

The Conservative government has fewer cabinet committees than its coalition predecessor, but many more implementation task forces. There are nine cabinet committees, of which the main ones of constitutional interest are the Constitutional Reform Committee and the European Committee on the EU Referendum, which is chaired by the Prime Minister. Reflecting his central role in the government, the Cabinet Office minister Oliver Letwin chairs the Constitutional Reform Committee and the Home Affairs Committee, and he is a member of every single cabinet committee, and of all the task forces except one. The full list of cabinet committees can be accessed [here](#).

Special advisers and extended ministerial offices

One of the many government documents published on 17 December, the last Commons sitting day before the Christmas recess, was a [list of special advisers and their salaries](#). This data was released six months later than the [equivalent list](#) published by the coalition government, which appeared a month after the coalition was formed in June 2010. The latest list shows that the new government has 93 special advisers, of whom one third (32) work in 10 Downing Street. The next largest group are in the Treasury, where the Chancellor of the Exchequer has ten: six special advisers and four more on his Council of Economic Advisers.

Half the cabinet (ten ministers) now have three special advisers rather than two. Oliver Letwin is the only cabinet minister to have none. [Extended ministerial offices](#) (EMOs), under Exception 4 to the Civil Service recruitment principles, have been established in the Cabinet Office, DEFRA, DCLG, the Department for Education and the Scotland Office; but we do not know how large those EMOs are, or how many additional appointments have been made.

Ministerial Code changes

In October the [new version of the Ministerial Code](#) was published, leading to an outcry at the omission of previous words reminding ministers of their duty to comply with international law and treaty obligations, and to uphold the administration of justice. The new version simply says that there is an ‘overarching duty on ministers to comply with the law and to protect the integrity of public life’. This led the former Treasury Solicitor Sir Paul Jenkins to [say it was disingenuous of the Cabinet Office to present the changes as mere tidying up](#): he had seen at close hand ‘the intense irritation these words caused the PM as he sought to avoid complying with our international legal obligations’. There followed [lively exchanges](#) on the UK Constitutional Law Association blog between critics and defenders of the change.

Freedom of information

As reported in [Monitor 61](#) (page 6) in the wake of [R \(Evans\) v Attorney General \[2015\] UKSC 21](#), and the [publication](#) of Prince Charles’ so-called ‘black spider letters’ the government set up an [independent commission](#), headed by Lord Burns, to examine potentially changing the government veto power and the impact of FOI on decision-making and resources.

Since then the commission and its remit have been a source of considerable controversy. Its call for evidence received [30,000 submissions](#) and generated powerful opposition from civil society, the church and across the media including the [Guardian](#), [Daily Telegraph](#) and [Daily Mail](#). Opposition MPs reacted by [forming a cross-party counter commission](#) in November championing the expansion of FOI, and there was [vocal opposition](#) from within the Conservative party itself. ConservativeHome, seen as the voice of the grassroots of the Conservative party, is also opposed to any change and is [actually calling for the Act to be extended](#).

In December a [Sun editorial](#) quoted a ‘senior Tory minister’ as saying that ‘nobody in the government wants to touch this now, it’s a very hot political potato’ and pointed out that the government itself has failed to present any evidence to the commission. In January it was [suggested](#) that any changes will be limited and that the Act may be extended to cover charities. Meanwhile under Scotland’s separate FOI law covering devolved matters, there are [plans to consult on extending the Act to certain schools and prisons](#).

Our own [research](#) has found little solid evidence for some of the claims around FOI's negative impact. For more, see a new article by Ben Worthy and Robert Hazell, 'Disruptive, Dynamic and Democratic? Ten Years of Freedom of Information in the UK', available [here](#).

Elections and Political Parties



Individual electoral registration

The shift to a new system of electoral registration was completed in December 2015. The old system, under which one person per household registered all the eligible voters living there, has been replaced with individual electoral registration (IER). The move began in 2014. Initially, voters registered under the old system were 'carried over' to avoid large numbers of unintended disfranchisements. As reported in the [previous Monitor](#) (page 7), the government announced last summer that this transitional period would end a year earlier than the original plan of December 2016.

This proved controversial. The Electoral Commission [recommended](#) that parliament reject the early transition, arguing that the government was acting 'without reliable information' on how many legitimate electors would be deleted from the register as a result. A motion in the House of Lords to annul the order effecting the move was defeated only narrowly, by [257 votes to 246](#). Notably this occurred on the day after the tax credits vote (see front page), and may have been influenced by peers' reluctance to defeat two statutory instruments in close succession.

The change matters partly because it may affect who can vote in the important May 2016 elections to the devolved assemblies, the London mayoralty, and many local authorities. Its deeper potential impact, however, is upon the [forthcoming review of parliamentary constituency boundaries](#), which is based on the electoral registers in December 2015. There has been much speculation as to how many voters will be disfranchised by the early end of transition, with campaign organisations suggesting figures as high as [two million](#). The Electoral Commission [made clear](#) that it expected the real figure to be much lower. There could

nevertheless still be significant impacts in some inner-city areas where populations are particularly mobile. The details of the December registers and their implications for the distribution of parliamentary seats across the country were unknown at the time of writing, but are due to be published this month.

Election courts

Voters can contest an election result by petitioning the courts to rule that a candidate has broken the rules. Such a petition led to the unseating of Labour MP Phil Woolas in 2010, after he was found to have made false statements against his leading opponent.



Alistair Carmichael speaking in Aberdeen, 20 March 2015.
Image credit © Liberal Democrats.

One such petition was lodged following the 2015 election, against the Liberal Democrat MP for Orkney and Shetland, Alistair Carmichael, who was also accused of making a false statement. The election court [ruled](#) on 9 December against the petitioners. The law concerned – section 106 of the [Representation of the People Act 1983](#) – says that 'A person who ... (a) before or during an election, (b) for the purpose of affecting the return of any candidate at the election, makes or publishes any false statement of fact in relation to the candidate's personal character or conduct shall be guilty of an illegal practice, unless he can show that he had reasonable grounds for believing, and did believe, that statement to be true.' There was no dispute that, in claiming not to have known about the [leaking](#) of rumours regarding Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, Alistair Carmichael had made a false statement of fact about a candidate (namely, himself). But the court ruled that there was 'reasonable doubt' as to 'whether the false statement was a general one in relation to his personal character or conduct, or whether it was more specific and limited to a false

statement that he was not involved in that particular leak'. The case thus highlighted the limited grounds on which election petitions can succeed: most forms of lying are not covered.

Recall of MPs

As reported in [Monitor 60](#) (page 6), a new mechanism for removing an MP was created shortly before the 2015 election by the [Recall of MPs Act](#). The key parts of the Act do not come into force, however, until detailed provisions for running petitions and other aspects of the system are set out in secondary legislation. That [legislation](#) was laid before parliament in November. Its length – over 170 pages – suggests the reason for the delay was complexity rather than any intent to renege on the policy. It received the assent of the Commons in late January and is due to be debated in the Lords on 11 February.



Inter-governmental relations inquiry

Inter-governmental relations (IGR) have received unprecedented scrutiny in the last two years, and are now the subject of [an inquiry](#) by the Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee (PACAC). PACAC is exploring the dynamics and processes of relations between governments, civil servants and parliaments across the UK, questioning whether there is scope for improvement. If its report chimes with those that preceded it, including from the House of Lords [Constitution Committee](#) and the [Devolution \(Further Powers\) Committee](#) of the Scottish Parliament, it is likely to find the current system wanting.

Concerns about the state of UK IGR have not gone wholly unnoticed. When the leaders of the UK's governments [last got together](#) at a plenary meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee in December 2014, they instructed officials to revise the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with a view to developing more effective IGR. More than one year on, we still await the outcome.



David Cameron and Nicola Sturgeon. Image credit © [Arron Hoare](#)
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What then are the prospects of change? From the outset, the governments' preference was for an ad hoc system of IGR which relied more on informal relations between officials than formal summitry. Until 2007, the Joint Ministerial Committee met infrequently (with the exception of its European format). Even now, its meetings are less regular and formal than in most other countries with multi-level government. Outside of government, most assume that the existing machinery is no longer fit for purpose, especially amid the fragmentation of political representation and new complexities in the design of devolution. But change requires the agreement of all four administrations, and will have to confront constitutional asymmetries, party differences, and competing perceptions of the purpose of IGR.

Weak processes contribute to the other key problem – lack of transparency. IGR is dominated by executives everywhere, but the inability of parliaments to scrutinise IGR is especially acute in the UK. As devolution and intergovernmental relationships become both more complex and politicised, parliaments are keen to scrutinise and hold their governments to account for the parts they play, as evident in the attention of PACAC and others.

English devolution

The [Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill](#) completed its passage through the Commons in December 2015 and received royal assent in late January. A number of amendments were introduced late on. The most controversial were provisions that allow combined authority boundaries to cut across county council areas, and for powers to be transferred from

counties to combined authorities accordingly. Powers enabling the new [Transport for the North](#) body to take statutory form were also included. 2016 should see the first orders passed under this legislation, putting the commitments of devolution deals into practice.

Alongside Greater Manchester, Sheffield and Cornwall, further 'devolution deals' have been announced, in [Tees Valley](#) and the [North East](#) (October 2015), and [Liverpool](#) and the [West Midlands](#) (November 2015). Each of these deals includes provision for an elected mayor and a new combined authority covering the entire area, bringing the total number of 'metro mayors' to six so far. Conversely, the ongoing lack of a deal in West Yorkshire has been attributed in the media to a lack of consensus over a directly-elected mayor. The deals in these areas feature a number of similarities, devolving power over adult skills, business support, employment support, transport and bus franchising, and planning, compulsory purchase and management of public sector land. None of them have sought powers over health and social care like those offered to [Greater Manchester](#) and [Cornwall](#).

The government has also begun to address councils' appetite for fiscal devolution. The metro mayors will have the power to raise a precept on the council tax; a power to borrow; power to raise a supplement on business rates, with the approval of the Local Enterprise Partnership; and access to an investment fund, in most cases £30 million per year. These powers will raise relatively small sums of money: their value will be in leveraging additional private (and public) investment in regeneration and infrastructure projects.

The first devolution deal for a 'two-tier' area (with both county and district councils), for the '[North Midlands](#)' (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire) was released in January 2016, albeit in draft. This featured a similar range of powers to the October and November deals, plus one elected mayor covering both counties. Nineteen local authorities are covered by this deal (compared with ten in Manchester and seven in the North East). Maintaining relationships between such a broad spectrum of councils will be a challenge.

Scotland: Holyrood election looms

The Holyrood elections in May dominate Scottish politics. If [the polls](#) are to be believed, the SNP are heading for another overall majority, in a parliament originally designed for power-sharing via coalition

or minority government. In the absence of a second chamber, a powerful committee system was intended to challenge the executive branch, but with a Scottish government majority in all committees, and heavy party discipline, this is no longer the case. The SNP have no incentive to change it.

Finance Minister John Swinney presented [his budget](#) in November, the first in which he had to take an income tax decision. He matched George Osborne very closely, notably on income tax rates – and differed only in cutting taxes a little more. While Osborne permitted a council tax two per cent rise, tied to paying for elder care, Swinney maintained his complete freeze, for the ninth year.

In constitutional politics the immediate issue is the [Scotland Bill](#), making its way through the Lords. It requires Scottish Parliament consent, and SNP ministers are unwilling to agree until they have a deal on the so-called 'fiscal framework', essentially how much grant will be lost in return for access to their new streams of tax income – virtually all income tax and half VAT. Negotiations are being conducted behind closed doors. Tax devolution inevitably comes with risks, but the Scottish government want to take on as few of those risks as possible, and retain as much of the Barnett formula as they can: unsurprising, given it supports very high devolved expenditure. This one will run to the wire, perhaps very close to the start of the Scottish election campaign.

The bigger constitutional question remains: does SNP dominance of Scottish politics mean another independence referendum? Nicola Sturgeon is more cautious than some of her supporters. She will neither set a date, nor rule the idea out, though a vote to leave the EU would be 'a material change of circumstances'. Some nationalists suggest that the party needs more developed economic policies – on the currency and public spending, given the complete collapse of oil revenues – before any rerun. But the issue will not disappear for the foreseeable future.

Wales: draft Wales Bill sails into choppy waters

The autumn and early winter in Wales were dominated by debate about the [draft Wales Bill](#), published in October. Following the February 2015 command paper [Powers for a Purpose](#), the draft bill seeks to implement

a ‘reserved powers’ approach to Welsh devolution by amending the Government of Wales Act 2006, and to devolve the limited range of further functions agreed through the ‘St David’s Day process’.

The bill outlines a highly complicated way of delivering reserved powers, largely because of its determination to maintain the status quo of a shared legal jurisdiction for England and Wales, and consequently to limit the extent to which the National Assembly can legislate on ‘private law’ or criminal law matters. A joint Constitution Unit/ Wales Governance Centre project has been considering it and published [its report](#) at the start of February, following the [earlier joint report](#) published in September 2015.

Criticism of the bill has been near-universal, from across the political spectrum as well as from professional organisations and civil society. It has included [the Welsh government](#), [the National Assembly’s Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee](#) and many bodies in civil society. Perhaps the most damning criticism of the process came from the Assembly committee: ‘a bill made for Wales not with Wales’. One body that has played a limited role in the debate has been the Commons [Welsh Affairs Committee](#), which had not yet reported by the end of January. It was due to be the key player in the process of pre-legislative consultation when announced by the Secretary of State, and concluded taking evidence at the beginning of December 2015.

Separately, in the [UK government’s spending review and autumn statement](#), the Chancellor announced that the need for a referendum on the partial devolution of income tax will be removed, and that a ‘Barnett floor’ to protect the Welsh government’s budget will be put in place (though [without specifying how that would work](#)).

What changes will be made to the draft bill, whether tax devolution will actually happen and in what way, remain to be seen. The ball is now back in the UK government’s court. But the government has already missed its goals in two key respects. First, it is very hard to see how they will have a bill before parliament ahead of the Assembly elections in May 2016. That in turn will affect the timing of any significant change to the Assembly’s powers. Second, there is no pressure on the Welsh government to make any move toward income tax devolution before that happens – necessary for Conservatives to be able to propose a tax cut in the Assembly elections.

Northern Ireland draws back from the brink, a little

In November a political [agreement](#), analysed in detail [here](#), returned political stability to Northern Ireland. This followed a period of disarray and semi-functionality in government, provoked initially by Sinn Féin’s withdrawal over welfare issues from the previous year’s [Stormont House Agreement](#), followed by further tension over killings among people once active in the IRA that some saw as indicating continuing IRA activity.

On welfare, Sinn Féin – torn between a need to balance budgets in government in Northern Ireland while maintaining an anti-austerity position in opposition in Dublin – backtracked, pleading the greater good of ensuring devolution did not collapse. In effect the British government called its bluff. A reflection of the continuing problems the institutions have with difficult political issues was that, rather than legislate for the changes in welfare – a devolved matter in Northern Ireland – in the assembly, Westminster was authorised to do it by [emergency legislation](#). The concerns about paramilitarism were assuaged by [official reports](#) stating that the IRA while extant was peaceful in intent, and by new monitoring arrangements; though the UUP, having [withdrawn from the executive](#) over the issue, chose to remain outside. Rather as though nothing significant had happened, the First Minister Peter Robinson and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness pledged that their parties would work closely together for the future.

The new agreement having been reached, Peter Robinson felt able to step down as FM and as leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, and was replaced in both roles by Arlene Foster, the Finance Minister. The Social Democratic and Labour Party, one of the smaller members of the Executive, beset by soul-searching over its declining prospects, [ousted its leader](#) Alasdair McDonnell in favour of Colum Eastwood. And Martin McGuinness has speculated publicly about standing down himself. Thus the world moves on, even in Northern Ireland; nobody a few years ago would have expected the DUP to advance a woman to the two top slots, still less one like Mrs Foster relatively recently arrived from the Ulster Unionist Party, and no sort of Free Presbyterian. Mr Eastwood represents generational change, being just 32.

The Agreement restored order to executive finances: [next year's budget](#) is agreed. The provisions of the Stormont House Agreement on flags, parades and minor institutional change are advanced, though sometimes marginally – and even that degree of advance proved impossible on issues to do with the past. But the devolution show has been kept on the road, and the substantial advances it has been accompanied by remain as well.

But the agreement carries no guarantee against future crisis: it does not deal with the [fundamental weaknesses in Northern Ireland politics](#). Further challenges may follow the elections (immediately if Sinn Féin outpolls the DUP and becomes entitled to the First Minister post). But the elections will also be followed by a three year electoral gap, which may permit a greater show of imagination in setting things on course.



Bill of rights consultation delay

In the [last Monitor](#) (page 2) it was reported that the Justice Secretary, Michael Gove, intended to publish a consultation paper on plans to replace the Human Rights Act with a British bill of rights in the autumn. However, as this issue went to press nothing has yet materialised. The delay was confirmed by Gove in his [oral evidence](#) to the House of Lords Constitution Committee on 2 December, in which he said that the consultation paper was now likely to be published in the 'new year' because of 'complex' issues that the Prime Minister had raised 'about whether we should use the British Bill of Rights in order to create a constitutional longstop similar to the German Constitutional Court and, if so, whether the Supreme Court should be that body'. [Newspaper reports](#) in January suggested that David Cameron intends to announce changes along these lines after he completes his European Union renegotiation.

Selection of new UK judge for European Court of Human Rights

The process of selecting the next UK judge on the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [has begun](#), as the current UK judge, Paul Mahoney, will retire in September. This process has two stages: in the UK and then in the Council of Europe.

Michael Gove, in his capacity as Lord Chancellor, is running the UK stage of the selection process on behalf of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and this is being administered by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC). The Lord Chancellor [has convened a seven-member panel](#), which includes a chair, two judicial members, three lay members and a legal member. The chair is Dame Rosalyn Higgins and the two judicial members are Lord Reid and Lord Dyson. The three lay members are Baroness O'Neill, Professor Graham Gee and Richard Heaton, Permanent Secretary at the MoJ. The legal member is Iain Macleod, a legal adviser at the FCO.

The panel will consult senior figures, conduct interviews and produce a long-list of up to ten candidates for the Lord Chancellor. From this list, the Lord Chancellor will finalise a shortlist of three candidates to submit to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which is an assembly of national parliamentarians drawn from Council of Europe member states. The UK national delegation to PACE will then meet the shortlisted candidates in London. Finally, PACE will run further interviews through its Committee on the Selection of Judges, before making the final selection by majority vote.

Autumn spending review

Because of the brighter [forecasts](#) from the Office for Budget Responsibility, the Chancellor was able to be a bit more generous in the autumn statement in November than had been expected. The Ministry of Justice, which had experienced cuts of one third in real terms since 2010, [announced](#) that it could maintain its £700m programme of investment and modernisation of the Courts Service, generating savings of £200m per year by 2019–20. In all, 91 courts and tribunals will be closed, and a further 31 merged.

New website on judicial power

A [new website](#) has been launched as part of Policy Exchange's Judicial Power project. The website, run by [Professor Graham Gee](#) and [Dr Richard Ekins](#), features frequent [blog posts](#) and [information about the project](#), which is seeking to understand and correct what the investigators consider to be an undue rise in judicial power.



Renegotiation of the terms of membership

The government has continued to work towards the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. This must be held by the end of 2017, but the Prime Minister has [strongly signalled](#) his preference for a vote in 2016.

Following several months of largely private negotiations with EU leaders, David Cameron set out his key goals for reform of the UK's relationship with the EU in a [letter](#) to European Council President Donald Tusk on 10 November. He said that he wanted change in four areas: protections for the interests and influence of non-Eurozone members within the EU; greater efforts to promote economic competitiveness; an opt-out for the UK from 'ever closer union', alongside a stronger role for national parliaments and reaffirmation of the principle of subsidiarity; and changes designed to reduce migration into the UK from other member states, notably through a four-year qualifying threshold for receipt of in-work benefits and social housing. The Prime Minister also indicated that, if satisfactory agreement was reached in all four areas, he would be 'ready to campaign with all my heart and soul to keep Britain inside a reformed European Union'.

Hopes were initially expressed that a deal could be struck on these matters at the meeting of the European Council on 17–18 December. Ahead of that meeting, [Donald Tusk wrote to Council members](#) reporting the results of bilateral discussions with all member states. He indicated substantial agreement in the first three areas identified by David Cameron. But he said the fourth area was 'the most delicate'; while agreement on

various changes was likely, there was 'no consensus' on the four-year benefits delay.

Discussions did take place at the December meeting, but without reaching conclusions. The [official statement](#) following the meeting said only that there had been 'substantive and constructive debate' and that members would work towards 'mutually satisfactory solutions' at the next European Council meeting, on 18–19 February. On 2 February, [Tusk wrote to European Council members](#) setting out the draft of a proposed settlement. He and David Cameron hope this will form the basis for agreement at that meeting, which would allow the Prime Minister to call the referendum for late June. If resolution is delayed to the following Council meeting (on 17–18 March), then the earliest likely referendum date would be in mid-September.

Domestic developments

Meanwhile, domestic preparations for the referendum have been continuing. The enabling legislation – the [European Union Referendum Act](#) – received royal assent on 17 December. The most controversial point in its passage through the Lords (for its earlier Commons passage see [Monitor 61](#), page 12) concerned the franchise: ministers wanted to maintain the voting age at 18, but on [18 November](#) the Lords defeated the government to insert a threshold of 16. [Subsequently](#), however, the Lords narrowly decided not to insist upon this amendment after it was rejected by the Commons.

In early January, the Prime Minister [announced](#) that, while there will be a clear government position in the referendum, individual ministers will be allowed to deviate from that. This is the same approach as was adopted by Harold Wilson for the 1975 Common Market referendum. Until the renegotiation is finished, ministers are bound to follow the government line of deciding which way to vote only once the deal on offer is known. Nevertheless, while David Cameron has increasingly signalled an expectation that he will campaign to stay in, Chris Grayling became the first cabinet minister to [hint strongly](#) that he will campaign to leave.

Beyond the current government, the pro-EU side received heavyweight support in December, when former Prime Minister [John Major](#) and former Conservative leader, Foreign Secretary, and Eurosceptic [William Hague](#) both said they would be voting to stay in.

International



Spain: hung parliament leads to uncertainty

Spain's general election, held five days before Christmas, resulted in an unprecedentedly [fragmented parliament](#) with no party close to an overall majority. The conservative Partido Popular (PP) remained the largest party, but with little over one third of the seats and few coalition options. Two new entrants — the anti-austerity Podemos and Ciudadanos, a centrist party that emerged in opposition to Catalan independence — made significant gains at the expense of PP and PSOE, the traditional party of the centre-left. By early February a new government had still not been formed and fresh elections during 2016 appear to be a distinct possibility.

Underlying the uncertainty over the identity of the next government is a long-running debate over how best to respond to Catalan nationalism. PP and PSOE have both [opposed](#) the idea of an independence referendum being held in Catalonia but Podemos promised one in their election manifesto. This issue is a major stumbling block to any coalition of the left being formed between PSOE and Podemos, though in late January there were some indications that Podemos [may be willing to back down](#). Such a coalition would still fall short of an overall majority.

On the [Constitution Unit blog](#) Alberto López-Basaguren, Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of the Basque Country, has [argued](#) that the political uncertainty created by the election result will make it difficult to address the issues that led to it – the deterioration of the democratic system manifest in numerous corruption scandals and the crisis surrounding the country's devolution arrangements.

Italian Senate reform

On 13 October 2015 the Italian Senate, in a somewhat surprising move, [voted in favour](#) of a draft reform that would considerably reduce its own powers. Prime Minister Matteo Renzi is pushing for a plan to abandon the current 'perfect' bicameral system, according to which the two chambers of parliament have equal

powers and are both directly elected. Such a powerful upper chamber is very unusual in a parliamentary democracy. The [1948 Italian Constitution](#) was designed to prevent the rise of another dictatorship by spreading power as widely as possible; however, the current system can lead to gridlock. Neither chamber can override the other in the legislative process, and hence 'shuttle' between them can go on indefinitely.

The reform would essentially see the Senate's jurisdiction limited to constitutional issues. On any other bill, it would only be able to offer advice. It would also become indirectly elected by members of the regional administrations, although citizens would be able to indicate which councillors should also serve as senators when voting in regional elections.

As this reform entails modifying the Constitution, the process is quite long: both chambers now have to approve the bill again, which means that there is still plenty of scope to change it. Renzi has also [promised to hold a referendum](#), provisionally scheduled for around autumn 2016, before finalising the change. There have previously been several unsuccessful attempts to reform the Italian Senate. Most recently such an attempt failed in 2006 when it was defeated in a referendum. Hence, the fate of the Senate is still far from certain.

You can read more about the proposed reform [on our blog](#).

Canada: new advisory board for Senate appointments

Following the election of a Liberal government in October reform of the all appointed Senate has been high on the Canadian political agenda. Justin Trudeau, the new Prime Minister, has [pledged](#) a non-partisan Senate and a new 'merit-based' appointments process. In opposition he had [expelled every Liberal Senator](#) from the party caucus, forcing them to sit as independents. In naming his government he [declined to appoint](#) a Leader of the Government in the Senate, the equivalent position to the Leader of the House of Lords in the UK.

On 19 January an advisory board consisting of eminent Canadians from a range of fields was [announced](#), with some inspiration from the UK House of Lords Appointments Commission. The board's role will be to produce a shortlist of five nominees for each Senate vacancy for consideration by the Prime Minister. There are currently 22 vacancies after Trudeau's Conservative

predecessor Stephen Harper [made no new Senate appointments](#) between March 2013 and his election defeat. A Leader of the Government is [expected to be named](#) from among the first five appointments, due by the end of February.

The Conservatives have [criticised the new process](#), saying that ‘The Senate nominations list which the panel creates will remain secret and non-binding, and Prime Minister Trudeau will have carte blanche to appoint senators who don’t appear on any recommended list’. At the election the Conservatives had [proposed](#) more far reaching reform or even abolition.

Poland: concerns over democracy and the rule of law

There is widespread concern over an apparent deterioration in democratic pluralism and the rule of law in Poland. In October, the nationalist Law and Justice party (PiS) became the first party in Poland’s post-communist history to win an absolute majority of seats in both chambers of the Polish parliament (on 37.6 per cent of the vote). Having already secured the presidency in May, PiS is in a powerful position; it has used this to press rapidly ahead with reforms.

Changes in two areas have been criticised. One concerns the powers and independence of the Constitutional Tribunal (or court). Just before the elections, the previous government appointed five new Tribunal judges. The new government amended the law so that it could annul these appointments and install its own nominees. It also shortened the terms of the Tribunal’s President and Vice-President. Then another law enacted in late December raised the majority required for a Tribunal decision from half to two-thirds of the members present, making it harder for the Tribunal to rule against legislation. The second area concerns media pluralism, where a new law has placed the public service broadcasters under direct government control.

Some experts have urged a measured assessment of these changes. Two of the previous government’s Tribunal appointments were in fact later ruled unconstitutional, and Professor Aleks Szczerbiak has [pointed out](#) that the Tribunal had become largely a creature of that government.

The general reaction has, however, been very negative. On 13 January, the European Commission announced an investigation into whether the changes violate the EU’s

Rule of Law Framework. The import of this procedure and the nature of the Commission’s concerns are set out in a [Commission fact sheet](#) issued on the same day.

People on the move

After **Arlene Foster** replaced the retiring **Peter Robinson** as First Minister of Northern Ireland she has carried out a minor reshuffle of DUP ministers. **Mervyn Storey** has taken over Foster’s old job as Minister for Finance and Personnel with **Maurice Morrow** becoming Minister of Social Development.

Harriet Harman, the former deputy leader of the Labour Party, was appointed as chair when the Joint Committee on Human Rights was re-established in November. The previous chair, **Hywel Francis**, retired at the general election.

Kamal El-Hajji, previously Head of Front of House and VIP Relations at the Ministry of Justice, has become Serjeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons. His predecessor, **Bob Twigger**, stepped down in September.

Mark Egan, formerly Deputy Head of the Commons Table Office, took over as Greffier of the States of Jersey in December. He replaces **Michael de la Haye**.

Claire Bassett is the new Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission, succeeding **Peter Wardle** who stood down after over ten years in July.

Lord Justice Burnett has been appointed as a new senior judicial commissioner and vice-chair of the Judicial Appointments Commission for a five-year term from 1 November 2015.

Philip Cowley, previously Professor of Parliamentary Government at the University of Nottingham, has moved to Queen Mary University of London as Professor of Politics.

Constitution Unit News

Citizens' assemblies

The Unit's Deputy Director, Dr Alan Renwick, was involved in running two pilot [citizens' assemblies](#) in Sheffield and Southampton during the autumn. Supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the assemblies aimed to provide home-grown evidence to inform the debate about whether a 'people's' constitutional convention should be held in the UK. Two versions were trialled: the Sheffield assembly was a 'pure' citizens' assembly, comprising 32 randomly selected members of the public, whilst the Southampton assembly included both regular citizens and local politicians. Each dealt with questions concerning devolution of power to their local areas. Dr Renwick has drawn out eight lessons from the Sheffield assembly [on our blog](#) and a report on Assembly North has been published [here](#).



Assembly North. Image credit © Democracy Matters

***Faces on the Ballot: The Personalization of Electoral Systems in Europe*, by Alan Renwick and Jean-Benoit Pilet**

[This book](#), published by Oxford University Press this month, takes the study of electoral systems into new territory. Attention has traditionally focused on the degree to which electoral systems are proportional or majoritarian – how far they spread power across parties or concentrate it in the hands of a few. As voters disengage from parties, however, we need to attend also to electoral system personalisation: how far voters can

influence not just how many seats each party wins, but also who fills those seats. Most European countries use list-based proportional systems, and these vary widely in the power they give voters to determine the ordering of candidates' names. The book identifies a widespread shift towards more personalised electoral systems in Europe over the past quarter century. It explores the processes underpinning this shift and the degree to which the reforms adopted have affected politics more widely.

Click [here](#) to order online and use the code AAFLY7 for a 30 per cent discount.

Seminar series on Brexit: the constitutional consequences for Britain and Europe

The Constitution Unit, working in collaboration with UCL's [European Institute](#) and [Department of Political Science](#), has secured funding from the ESRC's [UK in a Changing Europe](#) programme to run a series of seminars on the constitutional consequences of UK exit from the European Union. The seminars will run in the spring, and will be supplemented with online materials. Further details will be announced on our [website](#) in due course.

Parliamentary Candidates UK funding

[Parliamentary Candidates UK](#) have secured funding from the Danish Council for Independent Research's [Sapere Aude Programme](#) for four years through to August 2019. This will fund their research on the personalisation of politics.

Staff news

Congratulations to Parliamentary Candidates UK Research Associate [Dr Javier Sajuria](#), who passed his PhD viva in December! Javier's thesis, supervised at UCL by [Dr Jennifer Hudson](#) and [Dr Sherrill Stroschein](#), analysed the creation of social capital on social networking websites and how this process may affect political participation.

Research volunteers

The Unit is grateful for the hard work and diligence of our research volunteers. Thanks to the autumn 2015 volunteers Roberta Damiani, Daniel Goldstein, Anisa Kassamali, Barney McCay and Matthew Rice.

News from Constitution Unit Fellows

In [Monitor 61](#) (pages 15–16) we introduced our new group of eight [Constitution Unit Fellows](#) – senior academics from outside UCL who will have strong links to the Unit and contribute to our research, publications, and events. In this and future issues a selection of them will provide updates on their research.

Justin Fisher: The impact of constituency campaigns on the 2015 general election

There is now a broad consensus that the campaigns which parties embark upon at constituency level can deliver electoral pay-offs. Broadly speaking, the more intensely parties campaign, the better they perform electorally. But the effects are not uniform. Campaigns tend to be more effective when elections are tighter, when parties are not particularly unpopular, and when the campaigns in the constituencies are co-ordinated and managed well by the parties at national level. Historically, Labour and the Liberal Democrats have been good at managing their campaigns and allocating resources in an electorally efficient manner. The Conservatives have tended to have had less success in this respect.

The constituency campaigning study, funded by the ESRC, measures campaign intensity by surveying candidates' election agents. The results are fascinating. 2015 was the election when the Conservatives really 'got it right'. An effective targeting strategy helped the party gain and defend seats very successfully. However, what is also notable about 2015 was that both the Labour and Liberal Democrat campaigns also delivered electoral gains – the more intensely the parties campaigned, the better they performed. This is particularly surprising in the case of the Liberal Democrats as the party was unusually unpopular going into the election. But it was able to offset this to some extent by running a well organised and very defensive campaign, focusing resources on a few seats that the party already held.

Of course, the inescapable fact is that Labour and especially the Liberal Democrats lost seats and this illustrates that campaigning will only achieve a certain amount – its success is contingent on contextual factors.

But our findings also suggest that if Labour and the Liberal Democrats had not campaigned so effectively at constituency level, the results for those parties would have been even worse. Further information can be found [here](#).

Professor Justin Fisher is Head of Politics, History and the Brunel Law School Department at Brunel University London.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: Evaluating the pilot public reading stage of bills

Together with [Dr Louise Thompson](#) from the University of Surrey, I am leading a project funded by the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust which aims to evaluate the extent to which the 2013 pilot public reading stage did truly engage the public. This pilot, run by the House of Commons, consisted of inviting the public to comment on the detail of the [Children and Families Bill](#), integrating it into its scrutiny. During a period of two weeks, between second reading and public bill committee, the public were able to post detailed comments on the bill's clauses. The initiative aimed to experiment with ways to involve the public in the legislative process. During the two weeks of the public reading over 1000 comments were submitted. These were then summarised and passed on to the MPs sitting on the public bill committee.

The project encompasses a comprehensive evaluation of the whole process, including three different foci of analysis: the actual process, the impact on the bill's scrutiny and the public's perceptions of the process. We have developed documentary analysis to establish the different steps of this pilot, as well as the impact of the public reading on the bill's scrutiny. We have also developed a content analysis of all of the comments submitted during the public reading to ascertain the type of contributions made by the public, but also to help define a profile of the people who submitted comments. We are now in the process of developing interviews with contributors, as well as staff and MPs. So far, our research has shown that rather than a public-led initiative, this was highly mediated by charities and other interest groups. It has also shown that comments were not always focused on the detailed scrutiny of bill clauses, unless they were highly guided by interest groups.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira is Professor of Politics at the University of Leeds.

Bulletin Board

Events

To sign up to our events, visit the Constitution Unit [events page](#). Seminars are free and open to all. They are held in the Council Room, Rubin Building, 29–30 Tavistock Square, unless otherwise specified.

Citizens' Assemblies and Democracy in the UK: Lessons from Two Successful Pilots

Dr Alan Renwick and Katie Ghose, Chief Executive of the Electoral Reform Society
10 February 2016, 1pm

[Register](#)

The Human Rights Act 1998: Past, Present and Future

Professor Colm O'Cinneide and Dr Jeff King
7 March 2016, 6pm

[Register](#)

The Policy Impact of Parliament

Professor Meg Russell, Professor Philip Cowley and tbc
15 March 2016, 6pm
Committee Room 10, Palace of Westminster

These seminars are funded by the family of Barbara Farbey, late of UCL, who greatly enjoyed them.

Watch our previous events online on our [Vimeo page](#).

Unit in the news

Alan Renwick discusses the EU referendum (BBC R4 *The World This Weekend*, 11 Oct 2015)

Meg Russell and Robert Hazell comment on the constitutional issues behind the House of Lords vote on tax credits, including an appearance on *Newsnight* (see links [here](#), 25–31 Oct 2015)

Robert Hazell on Jeremy Corbyn and the privy council (*Sky News*, 11 Nov 2015)

[Unit research on financial privilege](#) cited ahead of Lords vote on EU referendum votes at 16 (*Daily Telegraph*, 8 Dec 2015)

Meg Russell discusses clashes between the Lords and Commons (BBC Parliament *The Week in Parliament* [5:00], 11 Dec 2015)

Meg Russell reacts to the publication of the Strathclyde Review (BBC R4 *The World at One*, 17 Dec 2015)

Meg Russell suggests that the government should do a deal with the House of Lords on limiting numbers in exchange for changes to powers (*New York Times*, 17 Dec 2015)

Select committee appearances

Robert Hazell gave evidence to the House of Lords Constitution Committee on the Union and devolution (view [here](#), 14 Oct 2015)

Meg Russell gave evidence to the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the Strathclyde Review (view [here](#), 19 Jan 2016)

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Unit publications

Meg Russell, Daniel Gover, Kristina Wollter and Meghan Benton, 'Actors, Motivations and Outcomes in the Legislative Process: Policy Influence at Westminster', *Government and Opposition* (online early access, Nov 2015). [View online](#).

Ben Worthy and Robert Hazell, 'Disruptive, Dynamic and Democratic? Ten Years of Freedom of Information in the UK', *Parliamentary Affairs* (online early access, Dec 2015). [View online](#).

Robert Hazell and Patrick O'Brien, 'Meaningful Dialogue: Judicial Engagement with Parliamentary Committees at Westminster', *Public Law* (Jan 2016).

Gianfranco Baldini and Alan Renwick, 'Italy toward (yet another) electoral reform', chapter in Chris Hanretty and Stefania Profeti (eds), *Italian Politics: The Year of the Bulldozer* (Istituto Cattaneo, Jan 2016). [Order online](#).
[Also available in Italian](#).

Alan Cogbill, Robert Hazell et al., *Challenge and Opportunity: The Draft Wales Bill 2015* (Constitution Unit/Wales Governance Centre, Feb 2016). [View online](#).

Alan Renwick and Jean-Benoit Pilet, *Faces on the Ballot: The Personalization of Electoral Systems in Europe* (Oxford University Press, Feb 2016). [Order online](#) and use the code AAFLY7 for a 30 per cent discount.

Publications to note

John Strafford, *Political Parties and Democracy* (The Reform Foundation, July 2015). [View online](#).

Matthew Goodwin and Caitlin Milazzo, *UKIP: Inside the Campaign to Redraw the Map of British Politics* (Oxford University Press, Nov 2015). [Order online](#).

Philip Cowley and Denis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 2015* (Palgrave Macmillan, Dec 2015). [Order online](#).

Joe Randall and Jo Casebourne, *Making devolution deals work* (Institute for Government, Jan 2016). [View online](#).

Contributors to *Monitor 62*

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The issue was edited by Jack Sheldon.



The Constitution Unit



Constitution
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