

# Hansard Alumni Newsletter

November-December 2006

The last few months have been busy ones for the Hansard Scholars Programme. Not only were we joined by 31 Scholars in September but we're delighted to welcome a new member of staff to the Programme.

Ivanna Chakma joined us in September from the Greater London Authority as the new Scholars Programme Coordinator. Alex Boughton has taken over from Phil Parvin as Director of the Study & Scholars Programme. Phil has moved to Cambridge and we wish him the best of luck with his new position at Cambridge University.

## Scholars Programme Update

In September, we welcomed 31 Scholars onto the Hansard Scholars Programme. The 22 US undergraduates and nine postgraduates (from countries including Albania, Lebanon, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Romania, Uzbekistan, Jordan and Palestine) are now approaching the end of their time on the Programme. In addition to placements in Parliament, the Autumn 06 Scholars have been interning in a wide variety of organisations, including the Cabinet Office, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, BBC Parliament, Human Rights Watch and the Department of Trade & Industry. Arrangements are now well underway for our Spring 2007 Scholars who arrive in London on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Further details at:

[www.hansardsociety.org.uk/programmes/study\\_programme](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/programmes/study_programme)

## "Where are they now?"

Jim Dolan, United States of America  
(Spring 2005 Scholar)



After interning with Jonathan Djanogly MP in spring 2005, Jim returned to the US for his final year at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts where he graduated with a double major in political science and history.

Undeterred by the British weather Jim was accepted onto a postgraduate Master's Programme in International & European Politics at Edinburgh University. "I'm writing my dissertation on the role of the Scottish Parliament, on the increasingly federalist British state", said Jim, "and looking at concepts of identity and Britishness in the UK".

Whilst in the UK, Jim is also hoping to spend some time working for the Conservative Party in Scotland and meet up other Hansard Alumni from the Spring 05 Programme, who are currently in the UK. Once he's finished his Master's, Jim plans to pursue a doctorate in British politics and teach at university level.



## Hansard Society - Think Tank of the Year!

The Hansard Society has won Think Tank of the Year at the prestigious Public Affairs News Awards 2006. The Society, which works to promote effective parliamentary democracy, was nominated by Chris Lowe, Director of Government Relations, Precise Public Affairs, who said:

*"I have worked with the Hansard Society on a range of projects for a number of years and I strongly believe that they are one of the finest and most important think tanks in the UK today. Unlike virtually every other think tank, the Hansard Society is genuinely independent and non-partisan. They raise questions about our democratic system and political institutions that no other think tank or research institution has the expertise or insight to raise, and they have done more than any other similar organisation to open up our political system to external organisations and groups, and to broaden and enrich political debates."*

## Parliament in the Public Eye 2006: Coming into Focus?



On 2 November the Hansard Society launched a report to review the Putnam Commission, which examined how Parliament communicates with the public. The half day conference was well-attended and included high profile speakers, such as, Baroness Hayman, Nick Robinson and of course

Lord Putnam himself. The report was highlighted in *The House Magazine* and Lord Putnam spoke on the *Westminster Hour*, *Yesterday in Parliament*, *Radio 4*, *Radio Five Live* and *BBC News 24*.

To read a report of the conference visit:  
[www.hansardsociety.org.uk/assets/Putnam\\_Conference\\_Notes.pdf](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/assets/Putnam_Conference_Notes.pdf)

To download a free copy of the report visit:  
[www.hansardsociety.org.uk/assets/HansardWeb.pdf](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/assets/HansardWeb.pdf)

## Other News from the Hansard Society

### **New MPs**

In early December we will be launching a report on new MPs. The publication will follow the highs and lows of parliamentary life for new MPs from the 2005 intake. The report will detail their experiences, their ambitions and their perceptions on their role at the outset, and how these have changed as they settle into the House of Commons. For further details, please contact:

[hans\\_admin@hansard.lse.ac.uk](mailto:hans_admin@hansard.lse.ac.uk)

### **MPs in Schools Scotland**

The Hansard Society Scotland is currently working on the MPs in Schools Scotland resource pack, which will be published in English and Gaelic early in the New Year. Pilot sessions were held in Dumfries, Glasgow, Saltcoats and Stornaway back in February, and the printed booklet and CD-Rom – a companion to the popular MSPs in Schools – are now at the design stage.

### **Hansard Society at Party Conferences**

The Hansard Society again held fringe events at the four major party conferences in September. The events, “Listen to me! Can politicians ignore the new media?” looked at the role of communication in a modern democracy and speakers included:

Liberal Democrats Conference: Baroness Williams of Crosby, Nick Clegg MP & Lembit Öpik MP

Labour Party Conference: Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, Shahid Malik MP, Deborah Mattinson (Opinion Leader Research).

Conservative Party Conference: Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe MP, Iain Dale (political commentator & blogger).

Scottish National Party: Roseanna Cunningham MSP and Alex Bell (writer and broadcaster), Angus MacNeil MP and Joyce McMillan.

### **EU & Political Literacy Teacher Conferences**

The Hansard Society is working with the UK Office of the European Parliament to deliver eight teacher conferences across England and Wales from December 2006 to July 2007. The UK Office will launch a series of new free teaching resources to support teaching about the European Union. Delegates will also be offered the opportunity to participate in a series of new workshops that will enable them to deliver political literacy teaching confidently and in an innovative and engaging way. For further details, please visit:

[www.hansardsociety.org.uk/Citizenship\\_Conferences](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/Citizenship_Conferences)

### **Hacking Democracy - eDemocracy Conference '06**



November saw the staging of the 2006 eDemocracy Conference at the CBI Conference Centre in London.

Discussion topics included voting, campaigning, governance, representation and, of course, the very latest in technology. There was also the London premiere of 'Hacking Democracy,' an HBO Films documentary on the controversy surrounding the security of electronic voting machines in the US Presidential elections.

Clare Ettinghausen, Chief Executive of the Hansard Society, chaired a Q&A session with Matthew Taylor, chief adviser on political strategy in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Ross Ferguson, Director of the eDemocracy Programme, chaired a seminar on the use of digital media by political parties featuring panelists from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties.

### Upcoming events

#### **Democracy & Capitalism**

The third Hansard Society *Democracy Series* pamphlet by Lord Dahrendorf with contributions from Professor Gerry Stoker, Ruth Lea (Centre for Policy Studies), Stewart Wallis (New Economics Foundation) and Vincent Cable MP will be launched at Manchester University at 6.30pm on Thursday November 30. Speaking at the launch event will be Gerry Stoker (Professor of Political Science at Manchester University) and Stewart Wallis (Director of the New Economics Foundation).

For further details, please contact:

[hans\\_admin@hansard.lse.ac.uk](mailto:hans_admin@hansard.lse.ac.uk)

#### **Hansard Scotland Democracy Forum**

Rt Hon Lord Steel of Aikwood (David Steel) and Susan Deacon MSP will be speaking at a Hansard Scotland Democracy Forum, “Hard Acts to Follow: The Role of the Presiding Officer in the Scottish Parliament” at 6.30pm on Thursday 7 December (venue to be confirmed).

### And finally...

#### **Calling all Hansard Society Alumni!!!**

We'd like to let you all know about our new 'Recommend a Friend' scheme – if you have a friend or colleague who you think may be interested in taking part in the Hansard Scholars Programme then please let us know. As a token of our gratitude, each Hansard Alumnus who recommends someone who then participates in the Programme will receive:

- Free membership of the Hansard Society for one year
- Copies of all Hansard Society publications for one year
- Copies of “Parliament, Politics & Lawmaking” (Ed. Alex Brazier, Hansard Society 2004), “Members Only? Parliament in the Public Eye” (Puttnam Commission, Hansard Society 2005) and “New Politics, New Parliament” (Brazier, Flinders & McHugh, HS 2005).

For further details on any of the stories covered in this newsletter, please contact Alex Boughton on: [a.boughton@hansard.lse.ac.uk](mailto:a.boughton@hansard.lse.ac.uk) or at: +44 207 428 1213.