

**Unveiling of blue plaque to Roy & Jennifer Jenkins
at East Hendred, 16 September 2023**

Introductory speech by their son Charles Jenkins

My father was born in Pontypool, near the border in south east Wales. Although his father, Arthur, left school at 11 to work in the mines, Roy had a comfortable childhood, as Arthur had educated himself, getting workers' scholarships to Paris and Ruskin College Oxford, and became a senior union official and the local MP.

My mother was born in Buxton, Derbyshire and I am very pleased that Roy Hattersley, who kindly invited her to the Buxton festival, is here. Her parents were both from Greater Manchester. Her father Parker Morris worked in local government. first in Salford and then Chesterfield, and for 30 years was town clerk of Westminster. Although on meeting Parker he seemed a very conventional conservative figure, he was described by his son, my mother's brother David, as a municipal socialist. He bought up land for the council when going for a good price to use for subsequent public investments, the largest example of which is the Churchill Gardens estate in Pimlico, whose planning and building he oversaw.

Thus they both benefited from backgrounds committed to public service and it was appropriate that they should meet in 1941 at a Fabian summer school at Dartington Hall, Devon, although the meeting took place at a cricket match signalling some fun as well as earnestness in their future.

Roy's writing and political career kicked off early in 1945 when he wrote an interim biography of Clem Attlee and first stood for parliament in the safe Conservative seat of Solihull, and then first became a very young MP by winning a by-election in Southwark in 1948.

Jennifer worked in a think-tank called PEP at the time but, as was normal even for progressive women at the time, she ceased working after she gave birth to me and only seriously restarted about 15 years later when working with the social entrepreneur Michael Young to found the Consumers' Association and *Which* magazine.

Her work in conservation began in the early 1970s when the chairman of the Ancient Monuments Society (now called Historic Buildings and Places), Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, asked her to become secretary. Ivor who had been a friend of Roy's family in Wales, was a man of many talents, athlete, classical scholar, mathematician, and passionate conservationist, particularly but not only of churches. I am very pleased to welcome his son and daughter-in-law, Victor and Barbara. For time the Society was run from the attic of my parents' house in London with huge help from Magda Russell who I would also like to welcome.

Roy was always hugely supportive of Jennifer's work and she certainly benefited from his political contacts. For his part, he always asked Jennifer to read and comment on the scripts of all his books and major political speeches. It is therefore very suitable that Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board should have given them the rare honour of a joint Blue Plaque.