

U DHY

Records of Sir Robin Maxwell-Hyslop MP

1966-1999

Accession number: 2001/01

Biographical Background: Sir Robert John (Robin) Maxwell-Hyslop was born on 6th June 1931 in Buckingham to Captain Alexander Henry Maxwell-Hyslop, a naval officer. He was educated at Upper College, Toronto, and Stowe School, where he decided to become an MP. He read PPE at Christ Church Oxford and became the president of the University Conservative Association, before taking his first job as a graduate apprentice at Rolls-Royce Aero-Engine Division in 1954.

He contested the seat of Derby North in 1959, where he halved the majority of the incumbent MP, before being selected in 1960 as the Conservative candidate for a by-election in the safe seat of Tiverton in Devon. He held the seat until 1992. His main parliamentary concerns were over the engineering and aircraft industry, tourism, agriculture, defence policy and economics; he was an active member of the Trade and Industry Select Committee from 1971 to 1992, and the Procedure Select Committee from 1979 to 1992.

He was uninterested in becoming a minister, allowing him to defy the party whips as he saw fit, and was mainly concerned with his constituents and with parliamentary procedure, of which he had an encyclopaedic knowledge. Some of his most noteworthy contributions to politics include the alteration of the system by which Speakers are elected, persuading the Speaker to publish all his Private Rulings, and his vital role in the election of Bernard Weatherill to Speaker of the House of Commons.

He was also fluent in Portuguese, won the first ever Politician of the Year award in 1989, and was the last Conservative MP to ask Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher a question at Prime Minister's Questions.

He was knighted upon his retirement from politics in 1992 and died on 13 January 2010, leaving a wife and two daughters.

Custodial history: The papers were donated by Sir Robin Maxwell-Hyslop in January 2001

Description: Papers include articles by or about Sir Robin Maxwell-Hyslop, speeches by him, correspondence with Speakers of the House of Commons and others, and papers relating to the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill of 1977.

Arrangement The papers were filed by subject before deposit by Sir Robin Maxwell-Hyslop, and his arrangement has been retained.

Extent: 1 box

Related material: The History Centre holds the records of a number of MPs who were contemporaries of Robin Maxwell-Hyslop:

Papers of Peter Crampton MP [U DCN]

Papers of John Prescott MP [U DMR]

Papers of Elliott Morley MP [U DMY]

Papers of Austin Mitchell MP [U DMM]

Papers of Chris Mullin MP [U DMU]

Papers of Eric Lubbock MP, 4th Baron Avebury [U DML]

Papers of J. Kevin McNamara MP [U DMC]

Papers of Sir Patrick Cormack MP [U DPK]

Access conditions: Some of the records in this collection contain confidential information and are closed for a period of time at the request of the depositor. See item level records for details.

Access to all other material will be granted to any accredited reader.

Copyright: Various

Language: English

U DHY/1	Biographical information on Robin Maxwell-Hyslop Includes biographical information detailing Maxwell-Hyslop's education, his brief military career, work at Rollys-Royce Aero Engines, and his parliamentary career sourced from the House of Commons and its magazine, which includes a caricature, as well as from newspaper clippings - discussing his lack of ambition to become a minister and his role on the back bench; also enclosed are letters from George Thomas (The House Speaker) and Richard Barlas (quondam clerk of the House of Commons), Maxwell-Hyslop's speech made on George Thomas's retirement, and details on the procedure for picking the next speaker. 1 file	1976-1989
U DHY/2	Papers on parliamentary, constitutional, and political topics Including rights of the Speaker of the House of Commons, nationalisation, GCSE funding, fines for contempt within the House, rising of house prices, and parliamentary privilege. Bills discussed include the Amendment of Statutory Instruments and the Outlawries bill. Also includes articles from the Financial Times detailing Maxwell-Hyslop's career and parliamentary personality. Contains correspondence between Maxwell-Hyslop and Edward Heath, Richard Barlas, Chief Whip Humphrey Atkins, former PM Alec Douglas-Home, Speakers George Thomas and Bernard Weatherill, Richard Barlas, Kenneth Bradshaw, Margaret Thatcher, and John Major. 5 files	1966-1998
U DHY/3	Articles and Speeches written by Robin Maxwell-Hyslop Topics include parliamentary privilege, tax havens, the Canada Bill, Baltic gold, the	1978-1989

dissolution of parliament and the position of the crown, and the advantages of the Proportional Representation system during elections. Also contains a House of Commons Official Report of Parliamentary debates (volume 18, no. 59) which details the Shops (Amendment) Bill, the Canada Bill, and the Right of Reply in the Media Bill, among other topics. Publications included consist of the Financial Times, the House Magazine, and the journal of the National Federation of Self Employed & Small Businesses and Tollit & Harvey Ltd.
1 file

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| U DHY/4 | <p>Correspondence
Correspondence with a) Prime Ministers, b) Officers of Parliament, c) senior civil servants, d) senior ministers.
1 file</p> <p>This item is closed until 1 January 2026 at the request of the depositor. For more information please contact archives@hull.ac.uk.</p> | [1970s] |
| U DHY/5 | <p>Book, 'Secretary to the Speaker. Ralph Verney's correspondence', edited by Robin Maxwell-Hyslop
Letters are by both Ralph Verney and his wife Nita. The correspondence is primarily between them and their family, and details both personal information and political insight. Aside from familial letters, the book also includes statements written from Verney's official position as the Secretary to the Speaker written during events such as Speaker's trips.
1 book</p> | 1999 |
| U DHY/6 | <p>Records relating to parliamentary questions asked about the "shot dog" case
Records in this file relate to the beginnings of the Jeremy Thorpe scandal, although Thorpe is only mentioned by name in press cuttings. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop asked two parliamentary questions relating to allegations that the Home Office had attempted to prevent Somerset Police giving information about the matter to the press.</p> <p>Includes:
1) statement by Maxwell-Hyslop entitled "Home Office attempt to gag the Press alleged: Questions to Secretary of State" (3 December 1975), with attached parliamentary questions and response from a Home Office minister, and a letter dated 15 December 1975 detailing further developments</p> | 1975 |

from Maxwell-Hyslop's point of view
2) press cuttings relating to the shooting of Norman Scott's dog, December 1975
3) paper by Maxwell-Hyslop entitled "The Liberals and Proportional Representation", 3 December 1975.
1 file

U DHY/7

Correspondence with Speaker Bernard Weatherill, and events leading up to his election
Includes House of Commons Official Report, Volume 44, Parliamentary Debates; letters to and from James Callaghan MP, Father of the House; contains information of context of the Local Government Bill - parts are annotated; Maxwell-Hyslop complains about actions of clerks to Speaker Bernard Weatherill; letter from Speaker to W.J. McCourt Esq.; correspondence between vice-chairman of the Anglo-Brazilian Parliamentary Group Maxwell-Hyslop and P.L. Warwick of the Speaker's Office regarding members of Brazil's parliament restoring its monarchy, Speaker Weatherill and Maxwell-Hyslop, and Weatherill and Antonio Henrique Bittencourt Cunha Bueno; anecdote and letters regarding Maxwell-Hyslop recommending a statement to Speaker Weatherill; correspondence with Buckingham Palace; Maxwell-Hyslop and Speaker Weatherill discuss the libel of a temporary officer of the house, Dr Barry Rider; letter to 'Mrs Garrett' who plans to write a biography of Jack (Bernard) Weatherill, Maxwell-Hyslop writes about his election to Speaker and his own election to Parliament; contains correspondence between Sir Robert Fellowes, then the Queen's Private Secretary, and Maxwell-Hyslop discussing difficulties in electing the next Conservative Party leader prior to dissolution and before polling day; includes letters from Maxwell-Hyslop to Lord Nicholls regarding the Houses of Commons' and Lords' Joint Committee on Privilege.
1 file

1983-1998

U DHY/8

Correspondence with Speaker George Thomas Regarding the policies of private rulings by the Speaker and the usurpation of this by the clerks; also discussed is Maxwell-Hyslop's 25th anniversary as a member of Parliament.
1 file

1976-1983

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U DHY/9	<p>Letters and official report from the House of Commons regarding the Sheriff Peter Thomson case</p> <p>Contains Maxwell-Hyslop's thoughts on the cover. Maxwell-Hyslop writes to the Clerk of the House Richard Barlas explaining the situation, who responds with a letter enclosing three journal extracts regarding precedents of the dismissal of a judge, which other than extract 1 are included; also contains letter from Patrick Nealon outlining the same precedent.</p> <p>1 file</p>	1977
U DHY/10	<p>Papers from Robin Maxwell-Hyslop MP concerning the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill of 1977</p> <p>Includes 'The Speaker's Casting Vote'; newspaper cuttings concerning Maxwell-Hyslop's discovery of the "hybrid" nature of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Bill and the ensuing chaos in the House of Commons; official reports and minutes; a copy of the Aircraft and Shipping Industries Bill; and the official report and letters from the House of Commons.</p> <p>1 file</p>	1976-1977