

competitive, and as gossipy and with as much back biting as to be found in traditional academe. I enjoyed Parliamentary life because of the continual change. Every day brings either something new or a new angle to an old subject. I must confess that I found it to be more exciting than academic life."

"When I decided to enter politics I marked out very clearly the interests and issues I wanted to cover. These were in central treasury sphere and so when I became a candidate I started to learn about these areas. One lesson learned from unsuccessfully contesting the seat in the industrial north of Bristol was that if I was to make any headway in politics, in particular as I am a woman coming from a background in education, then I had better understand how the economy, public expenditure and taxation works. These are subjects avoided, in the main, by my fellow politicians. The Parliamentary system and how Parliament works is not a difficult system to understand. At the time there were a number of Labour MPs representing Bristol and its environs and so we would meet and I would learn. As a former academic I also knew how the House of Commons' library and research department worked. Frankly to be noticed depends on how effectively the new MP has done his or her homework. So soon after my election I was able to discuss these complex issues with understanding and authority. I tabled many questions and spoke on financial and educational matters. This brought me to the attention of Joel Barnett and after some twelve months in the House he appointed me as his PPS and working with him was a fascinating experience." An examination of her time as a politician reveals Oonagh

worked with the leading Labour politicians of the day, as a member of their respective teams. She led for the Opposition on the main regulatory bills of the mid 80s; Banking Supervision Bill, the Building Societies Bill, the trustee Savings Bank Bill and (together with Bryan Gould) on the Financial Services Bill.

She considers her time spent with the Shadow Treasury team to have been productive and, with hindsight, beneficial when she embarked on a new career following her defeat in the 1987 General Election. "I wanted to spend my time in the team on technical issues and so I lead on most of the financial regulatory bills that passed through Parliament during the Eighties. So that in essence is how I came to be a management consultant in the Financial Services Industry".

#### **LIFE POST WESTMINSTER**

Dr McDonald explained that when she worked in the Defence team she did not come across the Gibraltar problem as at the time it was handled by Kevin McNamara.

The year after losing her seat she became, for an academic year, the Gwilym Gibbon resident Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford and at the same did the research and wrote most of 'The Future of Whitehall'. This was published by Weindenfeld and Nicolson in 1992. She also became a consultant to the Unity Trust Bank (this is a bank established and funded by the Trades Unions), accepted an invitation to the board of Birbeck College at the suggestion of Professor Dr David Hamlyn, and was appointed a member of the Council of the Consumers Association. At the Unity Trust Bank she advised on creating a Group Personal Pensions Plan. This was a good idea which was slow to get off the ground and

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