Right-wing Conservative MP who was dubbed ‘Junket Jerry’ and became involved in the ‘cash for amendments’ scandal

Elected for a fairly safe seat at the age of 32 and with his party in office for all but six of the next 28 years, Jerry Lee might have had a glittering career. It did not quite happen. By the time he retired as MP for Weston-super-Mare he was a ‘sanic’ Conservative without ever having become a grandee. He had also become embroiled in a ‘cash for amendments’ scandal.

Without any consultation, Wiggin put the name of a fellow Conservative MP, Sebastian Coe, the former Olympian champion, to an amendment to a bill safeguarding gas supplies to caravan sites—on the basis of a group for which he was a paid consultant. He had tabled in his own name what he would have had to declare his interest and the amendment would probably not have been carried. 'There was something naive about his defence — 'that is always the way I have operated'.

He was a委托ed and respected speaker, Betty Boothroyd, accepted his apology, but it did not appease his critics, some of whom demanded his resignation. More than 50 Labour MPs complained that he had been treated too leniently and called for an inquiry by the standards committee.

The privileges committee of the House of Commons was unimpressed. ‘Greedily toser’ was the view of Tory MPs, according to the whip, Giles Brandreth. The affair hastened the creation of a more independent oversight of MPs’ expenses.

Wiggin came from a family of achievers. His father, Colonel Sir William, was a suffragette enthusiast and the last British cavalry charge, against the Turks at Gallipoli in 1915. His grandfather had been a Lord Mayor of Birmingham in 1865 and an MP first as Liberal, then as a Conservative.

Alfred William Wiggin, he took the name ‘Jerry’ from his grandfather, was born in Worcester in 1937. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He left Trinity without taking a degree but enjoyed the sport and social life. At Eton he had been captain of shooting; he won a blue at Cambridge and in later life was chairman of the British Shooting Council.

After Cambridge he was a substantial tenant farmer in Croome in his native Worcestershire and had a hill farm in Peeblesshire. He dabbled in local Conservative politics and stood as the party’s candidate in Montgomery in the 1964 and 1966 general elections, losing to the Liberals on both occasions, but won the Westminster seat at a by-election in 1969, holding the seat until his retirement.

He sat on the right of the party — he was a member of the Monday Club and was a supporter of Ian Smith in Rhodesia, opposing sanctions against Rhodesia and South Africa; he regularly called for the restoration of capital punishment.

Wiggin was tall, physically imposing and something of a bon vivant. He enjoyed life in the Commons and had his own ‘set’, usually high-living and right-wing Sir Tufton Bulstrode. Although he held strong opinions, he was not impressionable when speaking in the Commons and senior figures in the party doubted his judgment. Private Eye called him ‘Junket Jerry’ because of his frequent trips abroad. He was a member of the British-Chinese parliamentary group, the British-Swedish parliamentary group, the British-Turkish parliamentary group and the British-Paraguayan parliamentary group.

In 1981 he became under-secretary at the Ministry of Defence, covering the armed forces; it was left to him to defend the withdrawal of the naval ice patrol ship Endurance from the South Atlantic, which is often seen as having been the trigger for the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982.

His dismissal from the post a year later was memorably captured in Alan Clark’s diaries. On the eve of a government reshuffle in June 1983, Wiggin apparently anticipated a promotion. His face lit up when Jan Gow, who was Margaret Thatcher’s parliamentary private secretary, informed him that he wanted to see him at Number 10 the next morning, quickly followed by ‘I’m afraid it’s not good news [sic] come to the back door’.

Despite his pleading and invocation of his experience as a major in the Territorial Army, Mrs Thatcher was unimpressed. She may have heard rumours that he was something of a ‘chancer’ who had diverted an RAF helicopter to visit a girlfriend. He took it badly, compounded by the recent divorce from his first wife, Rosemary Orr, and the fact that she had received his last payment of £12,000 in September.

He had three children from his first marriage. William, the Conservative MP for Leominster from 2001, was a year ahead of David Cameron at Eton and married a former girlfriend of the current prime minister. Thomas is a director at the family firm, and Audrey an executive coach. Wiggin married for a second time in 1989 when Morella Bulmer, who had previously married into the family of the cider group, became his wife. It was a happy marriage.

After his sacking, he seemed to nourish a grudge against the prime minister. In 1989 he voted for the ‘wet’ amendment put forward by Anthony Meyer when he made a token challenge for the leadership, an extraordinary step given Wiggin’s political views. Indeed, he frequently rebelled in the Commons. In 1996 he died the whips over the Firearms Bill, which tightened the use of guns after the massacre of children in Dunblane. He thought that was the justified level of compensation for those affected by the banning of firearms was inadequate, adding, ‘I am deeply ashamed of my government’.

He became chairman of the select committee on agriculture in 1987 during a stormy period for farming, which included growing concerns over salmonella in eggs and mad-cow disease. He was knighted in 1993 and retired as MP in 1997.

William Rees-Mogg, a former editor of the Times, described Wiggin as ‘a shrewd politician — though probably closer to the intellectual spine of the rugby XV than of All Souls’.

Sir Jerry Wiggin, Conservative MP for Weston-super-Mare, died on February 24, 1997. He died on March 12, 2015, aged 78.

Wiggin facing the media at Heathrow in 1995 after a trip to South Africa when the ‘cash for amendments’ scandal broke

Peter Lee

Clairvoyant who predicted Princess Diana’s demise and solved the mystery of a kidnapped Nigerian minister

In 1984 Peter Lee was already a well-known clairvoyant with a roster of famous clients when he was called into the name of a lobbying group for which he was a friend of Dikko’s. Lee realised the singularity of the experience. Lee’s grandmother at the side of his bed since he was a child. Since he was a child. Since he was a child. Since he was a child. Since he was a child. Since he was a child.

He helped Bob Marley come to terms with his imminent death

Calhoun predicted that one of Prince Charles’s sons would be the last reigning monarch and only for a very short time. A sudden tragedy would end the rule, followed by ‘a short and extremely tempestuous regency’ under Prince Andrew. Britain would find itself ‘under a dramatically changed system of government: a republic of intense and possibly extreme political ideas’ before settling into a more middle-of-the-road regime.

Other clients included Bob Marley, who came for readings after he was introduced by a friend. Lee realised the singer was close to death and helped his family to prepare for it. A perhaps unlikely client was Charlie Kray, the elder brother of the Kray twins. Ronnie and Reggie. When they were given life sentences for murder, Charlie got ten years as an accessory, though he always denied involvement. Lee had found him “a total gentleman” and predicted that he would achieve the release from prison of at least one of his brothers. Ronnie died in Broadmoor but Reggie, who had cancer, was released on compassionate grounds a few weeks before he died in 2000. Charlie would not be quite the reformed character Lee claimed. In 1997 he was released on compassionate grounds a few weeks before he died in 2000. Charlie would not be quite the reformed character Lee claimed.

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Peter Lee, clairvoyant, was born in 1937. He died on January 12, 2015, aged 74.