



The History of British Cartoons and Caricature

The Rt Hon Lord Baker of Dorking CH

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First, I should congratulate you on coming today, in spite of the tube strike. It is a wonderful example of British grit and determination, and congratulations in beating Mr Bob Crow! Of course, the alternative that you did have available to you was to stay at home and watch the Conservative Party Conference on television. I think, on the whole, you have chosen wisely! Caricature is not an English word. The first time it was used in England was in 1748. It comes from the Italian “caricatura” and there is also a French verb, “carcare”. Those verbs mean to load, to burden, and to exaggerate. There were a few drawings made at the end of the 17th Century in Italy of grotesque figures, exaggerated caricatures, but it did not develop as an art form there at all. There is virtually nothing in 18th Century Italian art that could be described as caricature. It sort of fizzled out. Nor did it get established in France. Indeed, the Kings of France were quite clear that they did not like to be caricatured. One engraver, who depicted Louis XIV, the Sun King, in a disparaging way, was torn apart by four horses. That is a practice, which on the whole, discourages the dedication to a profession. Caricature started in Britain in the 1720s. Graphic satire is the only art form our country has created. You will be thinking, all through my lecture, of another art form which you think we have created. We have done very well at various art forms. I will perhaps ask a few people at the end whether they can think of another art form that we have created. Graphic satire was really created by William Hogarth, who was an artist, who, like all artists, had to earn money to pay the rent and the baker’s bill and the butcher’s bill, and so he decided to start doing social satire. The first image I have is Gin Lane. 18th Century British political and social history was dominated by two things: drinking and gambling, rather like today. The gin shops of London had this saying “drunk for a penny, dead-drunk for tuppence, clean straw for nothing”, and here is Gin Lane. Here is the skeleton on the bottom right and the woman has lost her child altogether. Some people are pawning their goods while another man is being carried home, dead-drunk, in a wheelbarrow. Somebody is being put in a coffin. This is set in Bloomsbury just outside the British Museum. The church is still there - Bloomsbury Church.

Hogarth specialised in depicting the frailty of humankind – Lechery, Drunkenness, Adultery, Marriage-a-la-mode, The Rake’s Progress and The Harlot’s Progress. They were sets of six or eight engravings and they were not bought by the merchant classes and the aristocrats to put in frames and hang up on their walls. They were bought to be put in drawers and be taken out on cold winter evenings, when they had some friends round for dinner and the candles alight. They would be taken out and they would start chatting over them, as people do with videos today. That was the art form. Very quickly, political caricature also developed. The first and most important political caricature is of Sir Robert Walpole who was the first Prime Minister, one of the greatest Prime Ministers and who was in office for 20 years. The caricature is called Idol Worship or the Path to Preferment, and it shows that, to be successful in the early 18th Century, people had to kiss Walpole’s bottom. His government was known as the Robinocracy: government by Robin, for Robin and through Robin. He exerted massive power through patronage and jobs and ran the country successfully for 20 years. Everybody knew that the image was of Walpole so Hogarth did not need to show his face for him to be identified. Walpole did not like it. He did not bring in censorship of cartoons, although he did censor plays in the 1740s, because it is very difficult to censor a caricature. The lack of censorship is one of the reasons why caricature developed in Britain. Walpole used to send a few people out to arrest the print sellers, and hold them overnight or something but they were let off the next day. He tried to be a little threatening but this ploy never really worked. This period developed into the golden age of caricature which was from 1760 to 1830, and the great figure was Gillray. Possibly the most famous

Gillray shows William Pitt the Younger, dividing up the world with Napoleon. At this time, Pitt was considered to be a hero, although he is depicted with the spotted nose. Gillray cartoons Pitt as totally dead-drunk as Prime Minister. However, he galvanised Europe to fight against Napoleon. This was a similar situation to 1940. Britain was the one country standing against the tyrant. This was a very vivid and a very famous cartoon called the Plum-Pudding in Danger. However, there is a slight ambivalence, which is a common theme in some cartoons. Gillray is praising Britain for fighting France, because there were big countries in Europe in that period – Russian, Austria and Prussia had huge armies, which Pitt paid to fight for him. He put together the alliances, but for a time, Britain stood alone. However, while it is flattering to Pitt, at the same time Gillray is suggesting that the plum-pudding is in danger with two people carving up the world.

This is an image that has been used endlessly. Jim Callaghan and Tony Benn were shown to be carving up the Labour Party; Ted Heath and Margaret Thatcher carving up the Conservative Party; and Blair and Brown carving up the Labour Party. This has been an image that has been continued right through, because the good images last. Rowlinson is a famous name and he specialised very much in social satires. One particular caricature shows the Prince Regent in blue, leading a carriage. He did a few similar cartoons as watercolours but towards the end of his life, he took up political caricature because he needed the money. Rowlinson had a weakness for gambling and also drink, so he had actually to do a lot of political caricaturing. George Cruickshank started as a political caricaturist and a social caricaturist in the 1820s. The important thing to appreciate is that this represented the end of separate prints. Previously, cartoons were engravings on copper. The artist would take a copperplate, cover it with wax, and then take a steel bureau, which was like a knife, and cut, through the wax, the design onto the plate. Sometimes, they would draw a preliminary drawing in pencil or charcoal, but not always, because this was a business that had to work overnight. The artists worked at night to do their plate, and it might take between five and eight hours. Their fingers would be bleeding at the end of the exercise, almost certainly. Then, when they had finished, they would take the plate downstairs to a print shop, rub off the wax and ink the plate, because the incisions were through the wax of course. They ran off about 100 copies – never more than 200. Then the artist would, with watercolour, colour the first one. That is what Cruickshank would have done to this one. Following this, a room full of young boys and young girls would colour the rest, and the print would then be put up in the print shop the following morning, priced at sixpence plain, a shilling coloured. The print shops were in St James, Bond Street, the Strand, and the City. It was a business in which the artist had to produce the cartoon quickly. This is Cruickshank doing a lovely social satire. The two fat people are stuck in the middle; a man's sword is picking up the lady's dress; and there is a soldier who has trod on a lady's dress and it has torn. This is the sort of thing that happens at many cocktail parties today. However, it is a lovely picture and quite famous also. The art form changed in the 1820s because the technology changed. The artist discovered that he could actually engrave on boxwood which is a very hard wood. If he made a block of wood and cut it against the grain, he could draw onto it with a sharp knife. Now, the advantage of that was that he could put that alongside print and make a little magazine. This was the beginning of Punch.

Some magazines were started in the 1820s and 1830s. Punch started in 1841 and became the cartoonists' magazine. It was only possible because all the pictures in Punch were wood engravings, on boxwood. John Leech became a famous caricaturist for Punch, and his cartoon 'Substance and Shadow' created the word "cartoon". Cartoons, of course, go back to Raphael. In the V&A today, there are Raphael's cartoons and the exhibitions of the tapestries that have come from the Sistine Chapel. Cartoon was also used in the 1841/42 period for when the House of Commons was being redesigned. There was a competition, and all the designs which were put in were called cartoons. Cartoon Number One, Substance and Shadow, is a social comment. It presents the annual show of the Royal Academy and all the grandees in the pictures – the soldiers, the prelates, the rich ladies, people wearing stars and orders - and there are the poor watching it. Therefore it is the substance and the shadow. Punch became established as the cartooning magazine. The artists would draw with a fine sort of 3H pencil, and then an artisan would actually cut it onto the wooden block. The artist himself very rarely cut onto wooden block himself and the great cartoonist of Punch, Tenniel, did the drawings. They can still be bought and occasionally come up in sale rooms. Each cartoonist became a regular in the 1840s and 1850s. This was now a much more popular art form. Whereas the engravings were only sold in numbers of 100, a magazine could be distributed via railway to Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and Edinburgh, creating a business selling up to 5 or 10 thousand copies. Cartoons in Punch were full of detail and everything was covered. One specific cartoon about the Crimean War had the caption which read "Well, Jack, here's good news from home: we're to have a medal!" with the response "That's very kind – maybe one of these days we'll have a coat to

stick it on.” This could be said of Afghanistan or of Iraq. Some of the jokes are very repetitive, but the key is the intensity of the drawing. The Victorians wanted good value for their money so every inch had to be covered. The most famous of all Punch cartoonists was Tenniel. He was also famous for doing the drawings of Alice in Wonderland, but he was the main cartoonist for Punch, and every week, the editors of Punch and some of their cartoonists sat round a table, called the Punch table, to decide the subject of the main political cartoon. There was one major political cartoon that took up the whole page, because this was like a comment to Victorian society. Everybody had to look – everybody interested in public life had to look at the Punch cartoon. It was a very important event. It was the equivalent of Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman, crystallising a comment upon a political event. Everyone had to listen to it but they only had one chance a week, not three nights a week for half an hour as it is now. Another comment shows Britannia holding back the great dog of starvation from the Irish poor. It was optimistic, because there were the great famines of the 1840s in Ireland, but this was the attempt of Britannia to hold back starvation. It did not work at all well, as an actual event. Britannia is depicted in a very conventional figure with her helmet, long hair and ankle-length dress. George du Maurier was a great social cartoonist. He wrote *Trilby*, the novel about the great singer who could only work when her malevolent, evil influence, Svengali, was in the room.

There were lots of social cartoons satirising behaviour. One of du Maurier’s cartoons shows a maid who has just done her mistress’ hair: The caption reads “And now, Ma’am, I hope that will please you. Sure there’s never a soul who would think it was your own hair.” This was the triumph of art: the maid has done it so well that everybody will think that it is a wig. There is great density and complexity of illustration. Everything had to be covered. This is a very Victorian trait. Indeed, with Victorian furnishing everything had to be covered in the Victorian room so this cartoon is very reflective of the style and character of the age. Punch became an immensely important and popular magazine and the image of Britannia as Britain even survived to 1914. There is a cartoon dating from the beginning of the First World War which shows Britannia hoisting up all the flags of the dominions and empire countries coming in to support Britain. This was by Bernard Partridge, who became a famous Punch cartoonist from about 1890 to about 1915 or 1920. Some fashions do not change, however, by this period there was a move to much greater simplicity. A good example is a cartoon by Phil May showing Gladstone, the Grand Old Man of British politics, in 1893. This was the fourth time he had been Prime Minister - he was in his eighties - and he had just introduced the Irish Home Rule Bill and he had spoken for two hours without a note which for a man in his mid-eighties was quite remarkable. Churchill was not a Member of Parliament at that time but he had gone to the Gallery and listened, and he said it was the most remarkable speech he ever heard. Gladstone is shown as this great, yet quite independent figure, sitting alone on the bench. This cartoon has much greater simplicity of line and is very different from those clustered and cluttered, rather middle class scenes of drawing rooms and social life. Phil May was a working class man who died of drink. Quite a lot of cartoonists died of drink and some even went mad. His cartoons were very much about the working classes and full of very nice ladies in long dresses on street corners, selling flowers and talking to people who were carriers and ostlers. He was immensely popular as a cartoonist in the 1890s and at the turn of the century and was very much a London cartoonist. I am sure the Museum of London will have some cartoons of his. This is a portrait of Oscar Wilde, who is easily recognisable. He is fastidious, elegant, with the buttonhole, the cigarette, the buttoned waistcoat, the striped trousers and the dark suit. This was a posed, perfect picture. Max Beerbohm depicts him somewhat differently.

Of course, the cartoon is much better and this is what a cartoonist does! Max Beerbohm became a cartoonist, though he was also a literary critic and a writer. His drawings now sell for a lot of money, and he started to shake Victorian respectability. I have not shown many of the obscene caricatures of Gillray in the 18th Century, but before 1800 there were bare bottoms, bare breasts, fornication, urination, defecation – everything! However, Victorian middle class morality took over and all that was banished. The Victorian pater familias did not want his daughters and his wife to see naked pictures in their drawing room. They even covered up the bulbous legs of pianos because it was thought to be too worrying and too suggestive. Victorian middle class morality in Punch cleaned up cartooning. All the caricatures of politicians in the 19th Century were immediately recognisable – Gladstone, Disraeli, Peel, Russell, Palmerston were all immediately recognisable but they were not distorted. The beginning of the breakdown was due to Max Beerbohm, and this was a wonderful depiction of Oscar Wilde. He has got Oscar absolutely perfectly, rather better than the official photograph which Oscar wanted to send to everybody. He did some wonderful caricatures. He started to satirise the Royal Family. In the 18th Century, as you will see if you buy one of my books, George III in caricature, or George IV in caricature, still available from the best booksellers, enormous attacks upon Kings and Queens and Prime Ministers. These were great, scurrilous attacks. There was even one depicting George III, who loved farming, defecating on the land in order to

manure the land. In Victorian England, there is not one disparaging cartoon of Queen Victoria! There are quite a few on the Continent, but none in England. Therefore, Max Beerbohm started to roll back into that area. Edward VII used to go to France for three months of the year, and he used to go to a famous brothel in Paris where he had his own chair, where he could sit and select the lady of the night, or the ladies of the night. This was depicted in French caricatures – I have seen several of them. In Britain, however, there was not a murmur of it, not even a possible hint. However, Beerbohm did a wonderful one of Edward VII visiting a French nunnery, and all the nuns are lined up, and he is saying to the Mother Superior “I like the third one down!”

Beerbohm also had satirised George V. He thought George was a dull, boring King and to a large extent he probably was. Beerbohm did this wonderful cartoon of George V and Queen Mary – famous for her big hat, her pearls and all the rest of it – visiting a munitions factory. This cartoon consists of a picture of George V, beautifully kitted out in a general’s uniform, shown as very small, and all that is seen of Queen Mary, walking behind him, is her enormous skirt. Anyway, partly due to this, he did not receive a knighthood for 50 years, but he was a cartoonist of genius. It is very difficult to make jokes out of war, but there were lots of very funny cartoons, by a man called Bill Farnsweather in the First World War. A very famous one shows Old Bill and a fellow soldier in No-Man’s Land, with shells going off around them and bombs falling down. He says “Well, if you knows of a better ‘ole, go to it!”. It has become a great phrase that has stuck in the British language, again, used endlessly. There was one recent one, before the General Election of Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling in the hole – “If you knows a better hole, go to it.” This is an image that has survived, and continues to do so. There is a very famous cartoon by an Australian cartoonist called Will Dyson, who came to live in England. It depicts the Versailles Peace Treaty. He did it in 1919. It shows Clemenceau, the French leader, Wilson, the President of the United States, and Lloyd George leaving the room in Versailles. There is a young little figure and it is called the class of 1940. The caption reads “I seem to hear a child weeping”, which is an incredible forecast. It is very rare that there is that degree of forecasting in a cartoon. Dyson lived in this country, and flourished - he was a very radical cartoonist - but that was a very famous cartoon.

This cartoon was by Bateman who was famous for the horror stories such as the man who passed the port the wrong way, the lady who wouldn’t leave after dinner and similar stories. The caption here is “The guardsman who dropped it: a tragedy at Wellington Barracks” and it is an absolutely tragedy here. Look at the eyes of the rest of the ranks! The horse has bolted, the soldiers are working out what to do and the quivering sergeant major is just waiting to get his hands on this poor wretch! There are many of these. There is a wonderful one of the tennis court at Wimbledon called “the person who found a daisy on centre court”, and things like that – these were very popular in the 1920s through to the 1940s. McGill was another popular cartoonist of the 1920s and 1930s. He did naughty postcards, and one caption says, “Can I show you anything further, Sir?” The innuendo is obvious and he was prosecuted. There are wonderful records of police notebooks, after they have gone round places like Margate and Broadstairs making a note of which cartoons were being sold. He was actually prosecuted, and spent two nights in jail or something similar and was fined because they were deemed obscene. However, they were very popular. They were endlessly bought and sent home to the nearest and dearest. Nowadays, the originals can still be bought – they sell for about three or four hundred pounds. Heath Robinson drew a famous cartoon called a surprise for a cat burglar. The burglar is going to steal the watch. However, if he steals the watch, there is a bit of string which goes under the table, up the wall and triggers the umbrella, so the coal falls down on him. At the same time, there is another bit of string going to the end of the cat’s tail, and then there is another bit of string that goes up here to a soda siphon that squirts water on him. There is a plank of wood and if he treads on that it plays a trumpet. Heath Robinson was a remarkable figure! He has given a word to the English language – a Heath Robinson affair. His cartoons are well collected this day. He was also a very good book illustrator because it was quite difficult for cartoonists to make sufficient money just through cartoons so they had to do other things as well. He was, again, very popular in the 1930s, 1940s and 1940s.

Fougasse was another cartoon. In a specific one set in February 1940 the message is “Careless talk costs lives”. There are two ladies on the bus, and behind them are Hitler and Goering. The caption reads “You never know who’s listening!” and it is absolutely brilliant! I am glad I mentioned Fougasse because there is an exhibition of Fougasse at the moment in London, at the Cartoon Museum, and I am one of the people who started the Cartoon Museum. Now, you have probably never heard of it, but it is situated 100 yards from the main entrance of the British Museum. Outside of the British Museum, there are big gates. Across over the road, along Museum Street for 50 yards, and the Cartoon Museum is on the right. It is the most

successful small museum in the country. We now get over 30,000 visitors a year. We had 90 school visits last year. We get no money from the Government or from Boris. We raise the money ourselves, we charge very modestly, and it has a wonderful exhibition of Fougasse on at the moment. Now, Fougasse was an artist of the 1920s and 1930s. His name was Kenneth Bird and was badly wounded in the First World War. He was trained to be an architect but he could not pursue architecture, so lying in his hospital bed, he started to draw little caricatures and cartoons. He did wonderfully funny things. Fougasse is the name of a French bomb and nobody knows when or where they will explode so he thought that was quite a good description of his cartoons – he did not know whether they were going to go off or when they were going to go off. I do recommend people to drop into that Museum. People have great fun – it is a museum of laughter.

The Cartoon Museum is the only building in the country that aims to send people out happier than when they arrived! Fougasse did lots of lovely cartoons and some people may actually remember the originals. The great cartoonist David Low drew a famous cartoon in 1940. He was a New Zealander who came to this country in the 1930s, and was the great cartoonist against appeasement. When most of the country was in favour of appeasement, he, at the Evening Standard, continuously drew cartoons parodying Hitler, Goering and Goebbels. After Munich, when Chamberlain came back, there was a musical song “God Bless You, Mr Chamberlain” and the whole of the country said that he had saved war. Low, on the other hand, never believed he would ever do it, and therefore, although he was a very radical left-winger, he thought Churchill was the man who got it right, and of course that is what history proved. The cartoon which we have in the Museum shows Churchill, with everybody else marching behind him. Atlee was in the front here with Bevin, Morrison, Leo Amery, Anthony Eden, Neville Chamberlain, before he died, and the Liberal Sinclair. The caption reads “We’re all behind you Winston”, and this was when Britain really did stand alone against Hitler. This depicts the feeling of the time absolutely perfectly. Ronald Searle is still alive, living in France. He is in his eighties.

The Cartoon Museum, earlier this year, had a wonderful exhibition of Ronald Searle, which anyone would have loved to have seen. He started to draw St Trinian’s when he was in a Japanese prisoner of war camp, and the Imperial War Museum has some wonderful drawings of him and of his fellow prisoners. They are now very famous drawings because they are the vivid reminder of how horrible it was to be in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. He started to do St Trinian’s, and one cartoon is “Hand up the girl who burnt down the east wing last night”. He is a great graphic artist, and he very kindly gave the Cartoon Museum this drawing of the working class watching a wrestling match in the 1950s. This is a drawing of genius actually. It is a distinct group of people and this is highlighted with a cloth cap. People remember these sorts of people, wearing those sorts of clothes. There is a wonderful woman down at the right which is a wonderful picture of someone of that sort of class going to watch a wrestling match. It captures it absolutely perfectly! So we do like Ronald Searle a lot, and he should be honoured. I tried to get him a knighthood, and all we could get him was a CBE, which I think is absurd. He is by far Britain’s greatest graphic artist. Anyone who went to the Festival of Britain in 1951 will have seen the Emmett train. Emmett was an extraordinary figure, an inventor of genius, making trains and other such things. He made wonderful models in which he used his wife’s colander, the lampshades, the bits from the kitchen, the bits from the bedroom and everything, and they all worked in an extraordinary way. Again, the Cartoon Museum had a wonderful exhibition of Emmett last year, and we discovered eight working Emmett machines which were up in a garage in Leeds. By the way, he did all the machines for Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang. All of these worked, and we got them all working in the Museum, and they were absolutely fascinating. He was a remarkable figure, even though he has rather dropped out of public recognition today.

There was a change of cartooning, in the 1960s and the bare bottoms returned. Scarfe did a cartoon of Harold Wilson cosying up to LBJ, President of the United States, over Vietnam, and the caption is “I’ve heard of a special relationship, but this is ridiculous.” In fact, this is a bit unfair because Wilson did not send British troops to Vietnam. However, Scarfe did this cartoon, and when he first did it, a little bit was bare bottom. When Richard Ingrams, the Editor, saw this, he said to Scarfe “I can’t print that! You must cover up the bottom a bit. I cannot show the Prime Minister’s naked bottom.” So, he put in a little black bit. Clearly, cartooning was now a much more scurrilous art form. American Presidents were not depicted like this in the 19th Century, and nor were British Prime Ministers. This was the beginning of a new age of satire. Giles kept on going through all these different changes and he became very popular. People might have seen the Giles books, and there are lots of Giles cartoons in the Daily Express. One cartoon was set in the run-up to Christmas and the caption reads “Right, on the show of hands, the turkey gets a reprieve!”

Everybody, including Grandma on skis, one of his famous figures, puts up their hand to save the turkey. Well, the consequence is “One of you go to the shop and get six large tins of corned beef,” which seems less popular. Giles was a very popular cartoonist in his day and a huge collection of his cartoons are now in the University of Kent. We were offered a lot of them but we, as a Museum, do not want thousands of one cartoonist. We want about 12 good cartoons of Giles because we do not want to keep an archive which is far too expensive to maintain. We have some very good cartoons of Giles’ in our own collection. He is dead now of course. Trog is still alive, and he drew a very generous and nice warm-hearted caricature of the Queen, being the barmaid to the country, and he also did little Wally Fawkes. Again, he likes to be paid with a case of claret.

One of the most popular cartoons today is Matt, who draws the pocket cartoon on the front of the Daily Telegraph. The pocket cartoon started off at Lancaster in the 1930s, and the cartoon was tiny on the Daily Express. Each of the broadsheets now has a pocket cartoonist, and the most popular is undoubtedly Matt. He drew a wonderful cartoon of somebody going into a social security office to get unemployment pay, Long John Silver. He is saying “Sail a ship? Are you out of your mind?!” It is, again, a brilliant comment. The great challenge for the cartoonist is to think of something funny to say every day, and the art of cartooning and caricature begins in the mind. The pencil or the pen is the consequence and the wittiest and best are the ones who have the cleverest minds. Andy Capp was a very famous figure in the Daily Mirror. He has drawn a man who has come in late, half-drunk, with a bit of lipstick on his cheek. His wife has the hair up in curlers and he says “They had somebody behind the bar...they had somebody new behind the bar at the Crown tonight, pleasant kind of fellow...!” This is very glib working class satire and links back to Phil May. Margaret Thatcher was a gift for cartoonists.

One cartoon of the 1987 Election shows John Ball about to receive another injection of Thatcherism. It was drawn by a Canadian cartoonist, Kell, who came to live in this country and drew for the Economist very vividly. He still draws, but has gone back to Canada, so he draws lots of politicians I have never heard of but he was very good and very vivid. He has shown her supposedly holding a phial of poison which she is going to inject into John Ball. Gerald Scarfe drew a cartoon of Margaret’s defeat in 1990 which was a brilliant drawing. I was her Party Chairman and am shown to be going down with her, because I stuck with her until the end. I tried to persuade her to go on. I made three programmes for the BBC on the Thatcher years, and these were the cartoons that Gerald Scarfe did for the opening. Again, he was a wonderful graphic artist though I think his earlier works were better than his latest work. He does the Sunday Times cartoon now.

Steve Bell drew this wonderful cartoon of John Major who is the baby at the bottom. Steve Bell was the person, who put John Major wearing M&S aertex naff underpants over his shirt, and it was noticed one day, and these underpants became the symbol for John Major. Sometimes they were his hat, sometimes a bag, sometimes a mat, and John Major did not like it at all. This is the gift of the magi, and it shows Margaret; Tebbit, gnawing Major’s foot off almost; Norman Lamont showing an empty treasury; old Heseltine, Tarzan; Ken Clarke is obvious he has the big tummy; David Mellor, in his Chelsea strip; I am next; Geoffrey Howe, and Malcolm Rifkind. Steve Bell is the cartoonist for the Guardian. He is basically a comic cartoonist – these are comic strips. Although he is left-wing and could not stand Margaret Thatcher or John Major, he could not stand Blair either. He still draws very vigorously. Chris Riddell, of the Observer, is a brilliant illustrator, probably one of Britain’s best illustrators, and he drew Blair as the heir to Thatcher. He is shown to have inherited all of her characteristics, even her bag.

Peter Brookes of the Times drew a cartoon about the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. It shows Alastair Campbell, Jack Straw, and Tony Blair, with the Prime Minister saying “Yes folks, you can trust us,” and of course, it proved that there were no weapons of mass destruction and we were conned into the war. This was done at the time - not as a result of all the inquiries that have gone into the war. Peter Brookes I think has probably got the sharpest mind of any cartoonist. Steve Bell produced another cartoon showing Tony Blair trying to take the Labour Party into the Third Way, and this was this great heavy ball – Gordon Brown - behind him who was trying to stop him. In the distance is a reminder of the great days, the new dawn that collapsed on day one. Peter Brookes drew another cartoon on Iraq with Brown saying “I only signed the cheques!” yet actually signing them in blood. This was drawn just prior to the General Election. Colour has, by this stage, come in absolutely constantly. The black and white Victorian days have disappeared and cartoonists now go for colour, except Matt, who does always black and white? Here is a meeting of the Labour Cabinet. Mandelson in ermine is saying “Can someone wheel him round the room again? I’m busy with my emails.” The Prime Minister Gordon Brown is sitting in the corner. Miliband says, “Me, but I did it this morning; what about Johnson?” Alan Johnson finds an excuse for not doing it until

Harman says that she will do it the next day. Clearly, it was a dysfunctional Cabinet.

This was drawn by Martin Rowson who is, again, a very left-wing figure. I have interviewed him in his house down in South London, and he has an actual statue of Lenin in his drawing room, so he is really a full signed-up member of the left! He is still a Marxist, not even a Trotskyite. He is a wonderful draughtsman actually. Now we come on to Cameron. You might remember Shelley's famous poem about Ozymandias, the great king. All that is left of the statue in the desert of Ozymandias, the man who swayed and controlled the world, is a large foot and the phrase is "Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair." Riddell drew Margaret, fallen down, and all that is left is the head and there is little Cameron saying "I'm a keen student of ancient history as long as it isn't my own." This is the beginning, as it were. You often get this figure of the lesser figure following the greater figure, although Cameron has become quite a strong figure in his own right now.

This cartoon was by Peter Brookes. The cartoonists are having great difficulty satirising Cameron successfully. He does not like Cameron particularly, but shows that he has nice hair, is a jolly good bloke, has lovely skin, sleeps with his wife, and all sorts of other positive qualities. It is disparaging, no doubt about it. Peter Brooke does the Coalition very well. He has Clegg in the middle being strong-armed by Cameron and Osborne who are saying forcefully – "You'll never walk alone", a Liverpool anthem. This came out for the conference of the Liberal Democrats in Liverpool last week. Now we come on to the Labour Party. Rowson depicts the new leader, Ed, on the white horse. Now, this white horse is how the trade unions were depicted in the 1930s. People like shorthand. A cigar was enough for Churchill, a bag for Margaret Thatcher, a carthorse was the trade union movement, and Rowson has the trade union movement jumping out of the grave of New Labour with Ed Miliband on top. Tony Blair is dead Yorick in the grave with the skull and Cameron is either waiting or jumping in. It is unclear but a very interesting cartoon. There was one in the Telegraph which I think, is brilliant! It has Ed Miliband putting and a Trade Union figure kicking his ball in the hole. It says it absolutely perfectly. I do not know the name of the cartoonist as I do not recognise the style, but it is brilliant! It is clear that the unions have won. The last cartoon is by Peter Brookes again. It shows a tragedy actually for the Labour Party, because a younger brother should never go into politics with an older brother – it is always a mistake. He is bound to be compared, there is bound to be rivalry, there is bound to be tension, which there has been, and the lesser man clearly destroyed the greater man, and that cartoon shows that.

That is the end of my talk. British cartooning clearly has an immensely rich heritage, and people can actually tell the story of our country through cartoons. In the 18th Century, it was the only way to tell the history of our country for people to understand. In our schools, the 18th Century is no longer taught, not in the curriculum. I would argue that the latter end of the 18th Century and the beginning of the 19th century was our greatest period. The period from 1780 to 1830, we changed the world: there was the Industrial Revolution; there was the expansion of empire – Australia, India, the West Indies, Canada – was all brought under British control; the spread of the English language; this was the period of our greatest poets; this is the period of our greatest painters; it is the period of our greatest soldier, Wellington, and our greatest sailor, Nelson. This all happened in 50 years yet it is not taught at all in our schools which is absolutely incredible! It is, I would argue, the period in which we affected the world more than any other period in our history, and we stood alone and beat the tyrant Napoleon.

So, I decided to write the history of George III's reign in caricature, and you can tell the whole history – it was a complicated reign, and it can only really be told through pictures. I did the same with the life of George IV as well. These cartoons were like the paparazzi of the day, and again, once again, the politics of the 19th Century can be quite complex and it can be told in pictures, as can a lot of 20th Century history. I think this is one of the ways that history can be brought alive today and made interesting. So, I think we have a lot to be grateful for, because a cartoon or a caricature can say at a flash what it will take 10 column inches of prose to do. A good one - like the one of Ed Miliband and the trade unions deflecting a golf ball rather, into the hole – says it perfectly! You may not agree with it, but it says it very effectively. So, I hope you have enjoyed this. I would ask you to go and visit the Cartoon Museum. We need your money and your support, because this is an art form that needs support. It is flourishing today. We have some of the greatest cartoons drawn today – it is wonderful!