

A tribute to Nigel Spearing MP

A Master of Parliamentary Procedure

Mr. Nigel Spearing

**Born 8th October 1930 – Died 8th January
2017**

A glowing tribute to a man highly respected for his integrity and well known for his boundless energy, enthusiasm and opposition to UK entry to the Common Market and persistent opposition to EU membership

As a Labour MP, Nigel held the Newham South seat from 1974 until 1997 when the constituency was abolished.

A non-conformist Christian, Nigel was my mentor and friend from the days I joined CIB and met him. He was a Vice-President of CIB under Lord Stoddart and Sir Richard Body and before then a well-established elected member of the national executive of our Campaign for an Independent Britain

He was the last Opposition MP to speak before the government minister wound up the debate before the vote was taken to pass the Bill to accept European Communities Act 1972 into UK law, stating at the time that MPs were being asked to sign a blank cheque since the terms of entry had been withheld from them. Nigel made a great play on the Parliamentary democratic bypass still in effect to this day because of Clause 2-1 of ECA 1972. He was without power to have the wording changed from EU legislation being introduced to UK law “without further enactment” to “may with further enactment” to enable full scrutiny and debate by our Parliament. I am quietly proud that

I was able to have two films made of Nigel and his Labour MP colleague, Mr Eric Deakin in Nigel's home, both of them recounting their memories of their opposition to the Common Market in one of the films quoting from Hansard open on their laps. These films can be found on the internet You Tube under Nigel Spearing's name or in the video section of CIB website [here](#) and [here](#). Both films are of historical importance

Nigel was well known for his perilous travelling to all meetings in London on his bicycle as well as his fitness by rowing on the River Thames. Both he and his wife Wendy enjoyed their holidays on their boat on the Norfolk Broads.

I treasure three special memories, including walking the corridors of Parliament with Nigel and being impressed by the way he was so affectionately greeted by older politicians who remembered him. Secondly, I remember as we waited together for a meeting to start he embarked on a long and expert explanation how weather and tidal conditions around the coast of Britain could, and can still, overcome the flood defences and overwhelm London. I wish that day I had a tape recorder with me.

Thirdly, when I was Chairman of CIB Regional Planning Sub-Committee, our meetings were held in an upstairs room in South Kensington in a pub populated downstairs by boisterous Australian back-packers in those far off days. On an occasion the room was packed and I found the meeting difficult to control because of the level of heckling dissenting voices. Nigel sat to one side in the front row listening intently. I noticed his sparkling eyes. Afterwards to my surprise bearing in mind the countless debates he would have attended in his career he told me, "That was one of the most exciting debates I have ever attended". In his final years his mind remained focused upon and stimulated by EU matters of great concern to him

Of the e-mails I have received praising Nigel, I have selected

a few.

*"Nigel Spearing had something of the manner of a benevolent house master. He was very kind and patient with us new boys in explaining the geography, history and procedures of the House of Commons, an institution which he loved deeply. It was this love which drove his resolute opposition to Parliament's subordination to the EU. He was very generous with his time and advice to all who supported the cause. He was unstuffy and realistic about the way politics worked. He once told me "I was brought up in the Evangelical Christian tradition, so I avoided the scrapes which some of my colleagues got into and the whips never had anything on me". He used to cycle to our committee meetings in the House of Commons well past his eightieth birthday. He continued as long as he was able. When we knew his mind was beginning to cloud over, he invited us to tell him when to leave. Of course, we never did. As my colleague Stuart Notholt remarked "Nigel is family" and that is how we remember him" – **Edward Spalton**, Chairman, CIB*

*"I am sorry to hear of Nigel's death. From what I know about him – mostly of all his tenacity and also the disgraceful manner in which the Labour Party removed him as Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee for no reason other than the things which have turned out in the referendum that he was right – his passing is a great loss to the Labour party and the country." – **Sir William Cash MP***

*"I knew Nigel from fringe meetings etc, a 100% good man. Sorry to hear of his death but at least he lived to see his objective within our grasp." **Idris Francis** (outstanding political activist)*

"How sad to see yet another of our fellow-warriors passing away. I too met him in 1999; he sought me out about Corpus Juris, we met several times (he came to Vincent House, he took me to the H o C where he had been an MP and introduced me to another EU-sceptic Labour MP, from Wales, whom I had lunch

with, and we met again in Bournemouth).

It was he (Nigel) who provided me with the Parliamentary Report on the Tampere EU summit, where the EU decided to “replace” the Corpus Juris idea of a single criminal code for all, with the idea of “mutual recognition” which led to the European Arrest Warrant. I say “replaced” but actually it was a stepping stone to the ultimate Corpus Juris destination.”

T.D. Erikson (Journalist)

“I am so sorry to hear of the sad loss of Nigel. He was one of the great parliamentarians, having not only a great knowledge of parliamentary procedures but a great respect for them as well. Having been present in the House of Commons when his colleagues voted away the sovereignty of that esteemed House, he worked tirelessly to recover it. His knowledge and experience have been of immense benefit to the campaign to restore Britain’s sovereignty.” **John Harrison** (previous CIB Treasurer)

“I’m very sorry to hear of this news. I know from the videos you provided that Nigel was a very eloquent speaker who made a passionate and principled stand against the Europhiles. I hope he was able to derive much satisfaction at the referendum result of 2016 and deserves recognition and our gratitude for the significant contribution he made in bringing us to where we are today.” **Nigel Finnis** (Retired television film-maker)

A memorial service will be held in the weeks ahead at a time and place to be later announced

George West, President

The Campaign for an Independent Britain