



# The Importance of Being Awkward: The Autobiography of Tam Dalyell

*Tam Dalyell*

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When veteran Labour MP Tam Dalyell retired as Father of the House in 2005, the Commons lost not only one of its most colourful and outspoken politicians, but also one of its most deeply principled members. In a parliamentary career that spanned 43 years and the administrations of eight Prime Ministers (from Macmillan to Blair), Dalyell was never a stranger to controversy. His vehemently independent and firmly-held views might have denied him a career on the front bench, but have ensured that his name has seldom been out of the headlines. An outspoken critic of both Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair, he famously harried the former over the sinking of the Belgrano during the Falklands conflict, and argued fiercely against the Gulf War of 1990 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He also spoke out against military action in Kosovo, and has been a leading figure in the attempt to uncover the truth about the Lockerbie bombing. In this memoir, based on personal papers as well as official documents - many of them only recently declassified - he looks back over a lifetime of dedicated service as MP for West Lothian and Linlithgow and talks of his family connections to the area: the Dalryells have lived at the historic House of the Binns, near Linlithgow, for almost 400 years. Insightful, witty and urbane, this is a fascinating book which offers a unique perspective on many of the key moments in Britain's political life over the last fifty years.

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