

Four Issues from the Supreme Court

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The Supreme Court judgment on Tuesday was admirably clear and limited. The President Brenda Hale overlapped with me at university. The now-decided cases raised four issues:

- (1) Is the question of whether the Prime Minister's advice to the Queen was lawfully justiciable in a court of law?
- (2) If it is, by what standard is its lawfulness to be judged?
- (3) By that standard, was it lawful?
- (4) If it was not, what remedy should the court grant?

Reading the 24 pages will increase respect for the way the eleven justices limited what could have been thought and said. The government were dished because there was no convincing justification for losing several parliamentary weeks before the EU and UK formally separate, expected on 31st October.

The Supreme Court held that as a part (they used the longer word concomitant) of Parliamentary sovereignty, there are limits that date back over 600 years to the Statute of 1362. The discussion on Parliamentary accountability reconciles the dissenting opinions in the first Gina Miller case.

At the time of the proposed five-week prorogation or suspension, I told government that it was wrong and provocative.

During the past days, I have had important and touching experiences. A public one was the High Sheriff's Worth Abbey Judges' Service with the Abbot and the Bishop. Davina Irwin-Clark's husband and Chaplain told us why he switched from the law to the church. We heard the testimony of a woman police officer and of an ex-prisoner.

My regret was not being able to talk with Stuart McPherson, head master of Worth School, one of the school leaders I most respect. I shared a pew with County Councillor Debbie Kennard. Her singing voice is better than mine.

With two granddaughters away at university and the third on a school field trip, I had two evenings with our five grandsons. There is something about unconditional mutual acceptance that adds much to life. When it was announced that Parliament resumes on Wednesday, I was watching the youngest two, age four and six, climb over the garden wall to meet a newly rescued puppy in the house next door. It reminded me of the years we lived in a small city road with no through traffic: it really was a play street.

For the Coronation, the vicar's wife and my mother organised a tea with tables in the middle of the road. Let us try to have similar gatherings every few years. That way, we share between the generations, between people of every background and varied points of view.

On Wednesday, I received a pleasant message from Krishna Maharaj, still in his Florida prison cell over 30 years since he was wrongly convicted for two murders. I still support his dedicated lawyer Clive Stafford-Smith and I respect his loyal wife Marita.

Coming forward to the issue of how and when we leave the EU, I can see the temptation to use didactic expressions, together with the fun of standing between the television camera and the Houses of Parliament. I turn down most invitations, including the Victoria Derbyshire show on Wednesday. Some of us need to try to knit us all together when decisions have been made. Bind us together.

Looking forward, assuming there is not an emergency Commons session, on Friday I will be at Worthing library from 10 am for an informal advice session, before joining Macmillan coffee gatherings, including at SJM Electrical Services in Tarring road and at the Park View by the Durrington recreation ground. Parliament's recall requires me to miss the Royal British Legion meeting on Thursday at the Egremont pub on Brighton road.