

= Margaret Thatcher =

Margaret Hilda Thatcher , Baroness Thatcher , LG , OM , PC , FRS , FRIC (née Roberts ; 13 October 1925 ? 8 April 2013) was a British stateswoman and politician who was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990 and the Leader of the Conservative Party from 1975 to 1990 . She was the longest @-@ serving British prime minister of the 20th century and the first woman to have held the office . A Soviet journalist dubbed her the " Iron Lady " , a nickname that became associated with her uncompromising politics and leadership style . As Prime Minister , she implemented policies that have come to be known as Thatcherism .

Originally a research chemist before becoming a barrister , Thatcher was elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Finchley in 1959 . Edward Heath appointed her Secretary of State for Education and Science in his 1970 government . In 1975 , Thatcher defeated Heath in the Conservative Party leadership election to become Leader of the Opposition and became the first woman to lead a major political party in the United Kingdom . She became Prime Minister after winning the 1979 general election .

On moving into 10 Downing Street , Thatcher introduced a series of political and economic initiatives intended to reverse high unemployment and Britain 's struggles in the wake of the Winter of Discontent and an ongoing recession . Her political philosophy and economic policies emphasised deregulation (particularly of the financial sector) , flexible labour markets , the privatisation of state @-@ owned companies , and reducing the power and influence of trade unions . Thatcher 's popularity during her first years in office waned amid recession and high unemployment , until victory in the 1982 Falklands War and the recovering economy brought a resurgence of support , resulting in her re @-@ election in 1983 .

Thatcher was re @-@ elected for a third term in 1987 . During this period her support for a Community Charge (referred to as the " poll tax ") was widely unpopular , and her views on the European Community were not shared by others in her Cabinet . She resigned as Prime Minister and party leader in November 1990 , after Michael Heseltine launched a challenge to her leadership . After retiring from the Commons in 1992 , she was given a life peerage as Baroness Thatcher , of Kesteven in the county of Lincolnshire , which entitled her to sit in the House of Lords . After a series of small strokes in 2002 , she was advised to withdraw from public speaking . Despite this , she managed to prerecord a eulogy to Ronald Reagan prior to his death , which was broadcast at his funeral in 2004 . In 2013 , she died of another stroke in London at the age of 87 .

= = Early life and education = =

Thatcher was born Margaret Hilda Roberts on 13 October 1925 , in Grantham , Lincolnshire . Her father was Alfred Roberts , originally from Northamptonshire , and her mother was Beatrice Ethel (née Stephenson) from Lincolnshire . She spent her childhood in Grantham , where her father owned two grocery shops . She and her older sister Muriel (1921 ? 2004) were raised in the flat above the larger of the two , on North Parade . Her father was active in local politics and the Methodist church , serving as an alderman and a local preacher , and brought up his daughter as a strict Wesleyan Methodist attending the Finkin Street Methodist Church . He came from a Liberal family but stood ? as was then customary in local government ? as an Independent . He was Mayor of Grantham in 1945 ? 46 and lost his position as alderman in 1952 after the Labour Party won its first majority on Grantham Council in 1950 .

Margaret Roberts attended Huntingtower Road Primary School and won a scholarship to Kesteven and Grantham Girls ' School . Her school reports showed hard work and continual improvement ; her extracurricular activities included the piano , field hockey , poetry recitals , swimming and walking . She was head girl in 1942 ? 43 . In her upper sixth year she applied for a scholarship to study chemistry at Somerville College , Oxford , but she was initially rejected and was offered a place only after another candidate withdrew . Roberts arrived at Oxford in 1943 and graduated in 1947 with Second @-@ Class Honours in the four @-@ year Chemistry Bachelor of Science degree , specialising in X @-@ ray crystallography under the supervision of Dorothy Hodgkin . Her

dissertation was on the structure of the antibiotic gramicidin . Even while working on chemistry , she was already thinking towards law and politics . She was reportedly more proud of becoming the first Prime Minister with a science degree than the first female Prime Minister .

Roberts became President of the Oxford University Conservative Association in 1946 . She was influenced at university by political works such as Friedrich Hayek 's The Road to Serfdom (1944) , which condemned economic intervention by government as a precursor to an authoritarian state . After graduating , Roberts moved to Colchester in Essex to work as a research chemist for BX Plastics . In 1948 she applied for a job at ICI , but was rejected after the personnel department assessed her as " headstrong , obstinate and dangerously self @-@ opinionated " . Roberts joined the local Conservative Association and attended the party conference at Llandudno in 1948 , as a representative of the University Graduate Conservative Association . One of her Oxford friends was also a friend of the Chair of the Dartford Conservative Association in Kent , who were looking for candidates . Officials of the association were so impressed by her that they asked her to apply , even though she was not on the Conservative Party 's approved list : she was selected in January 1951 , aged 25 , and added to the approved list post ante . At a dinner following her formal adoption as Conservative candidate for Dartford in February 1951 she met Denis Thatcher , a successful and wealthy divorced businessman , who drove her to her Essex train . In preparation for the election Roberts moved to Dartford , where she supported herself by working as a research chemist for J. Lyons and Co. in Hammersmith , part of a team developing emulsifiers for ice cream .

= = Early political career = =

In the 1950 and 1951 general elections , Roberts was the Conservative candidate for the safe Labour seat of Dartford . The local party selected her as its candidate because , though not a dynamic public speaker , Roberts was well @-@ prepared and fearless in her answers ; another prospective candidate recalled that " Once she opened her mouth , the rest of us began to look rather second @-@ rate " . She attracted media attention as the youngest and the only female candidate . She lost on both occasions to Norman Dodds , but reduced the Labour majority by 6 @,@ 000 , and then a further 1 @,@ 000 . During the campaigns , she was supported by her parents and by Denis Thatcher , whom she married in December 1951 . Denis funded his wife 's studies for the bar ; she qualified as a barrister in 1953 and specialised in taxation . Later that same year their twins Carol and Mark were born , delivered by Caesarean section .

The marriage led to her being referred to as " Mrs Denis Thatcher " ? now considered dated ? by such official sources as selection minutes , travel itineraries , and society publications such as Queen , even after her election as a Member of Parliament , after which she preferred " Mrs Margaret Thatcher " .

= = = Member of Parliament : 1959 ? 70 = = =

In 1954 , Thatcher was defeated when she sought selection to be the Conservative party candidate for the Orpington by @-@ election of January 1955 . She chose not to stand as a candidate in the 1955 general election , in later years stating " I really just felt the twins were ... only two , I really felt that it was too soon . I couldn 't do that . " Afterwards , Thatcher began looking for a Conservative safe seat and was selected as the candidate for Finchley in April 1958 (narrowly beating Ian Montagu Fraser) . She was elected as MP for the seat after a hard campaign in the 1959 election . Benefiting from her fortunate result in a lottery for backbenchers to propose new legislation , Thatcher 's maiden speech was in support of her private member 's bill (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) , requiring local authorities to hold their council meetings in public . In 1961 she went against the Conservative Party 's official position by voting for the restoration of birching as a judicial corporal punishment .

Thatcher 's talent and drive caused her to be mentioned as a future Prime Minister in her early 20s although she herself was more pessimistic , stating as late as 1970 that " There will not be a woman prime minister in my lifetime ? the male population is too prejudiced . " In October 1961 she was

promoted to the front bench as Parliamentary Undersecretary at the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance in Harold Macmillan 's administration . Thatcher was the youngest woman in history to receive such a post , and among the first MPs elected in 1959 to be promoted . After the Conservatives lost the 1964 election she became spokeswoman on Housing and Land , in which position she advocated her party 's policy of allowing tenants to buy their council houses . She moved to the Shadow Treasury team in 1966 and , as Treasury spokeswoman , opposed Labour 's mandatory price and income controls , arguing that they would produce effects contrary to those intended and distort the economy .

By 1966 , party leaders viewed Thatcher as a potential Shadow Cabinet member . James Prior proposed her as a member after the Conservatives ' 1966 defeat , but party leader Edward Heath and Chief Whip Willie Whitelaw chose Mervyn Pike as the shadow cabinet 's sole woman member .

At the Conservative Party Conference of 1966 she criticised the high @-@ tax policies of the Labour Government as being steps " not only towards Socialism , but towards Communism " , arguing that lower taxes served as an incentive to hard work . Thatcher was one of the few Conservative MPs to support Leo Abse 's Bill to decriminalise male homosexuality . She voted in favour of David Steel 's bill to legalise abortion , as well as a ban on hare coursing . She supported the retention of capital punishment and voted against the relaxation of divorce laws .

In 1967 , the United States Embassy in London chose Thatcher to take part in the International Visitor Leadership Program (then called the Foreign Leader Program) , a professional exchange programme that gave her the opportunity to spend about six weeks visiting various US cities and political figures as well as institutions such as the International Monetary Fund . Although she was not yet a cabinet or shadow cabinet member , the embassy reportedly described her to the State Department as a possible future prime minister . The description helped Thatcher meet with many prominent people during a busy itinerary focused on economic issues , including Paul Samuelson , Walt Rostow , Pierre @-@ Paul Schweitzer , and Nelson Rockefeller . After Pike 's retirement , Heath appointed Thatcher later that year to the Shadow Cabinet as Fuel and Power spokesman . Shortly before the 1970 general election , she was promoted to Shadow Transport spokesman and later to Education .

= = = Education Secretary : 1970 ? 74 = = =

The Conservative Party under Edward Heath won the 1970 general election , and Thatcher was subsequently appointed to the Cabinet as Secretary of State for Education and Science . During her first months in office she attracted public attention as a result of the administration 's attempts to cut spending . She gave priority to academic needs in schools . She imposed public expenditure cuts on the state education system , resulting in the abolition of free milk for schoolchildren aged seven to eleven . She held that few children would suffer if schools were charged for milk , but agreed to provide younger children with a third of a pint daily , for nutritional purposes . Cabinet papers later revealed that she opposed the policy but had been forced into it by the Treasury . Her decision provoked a storm of protest from Labour and the press , leading to the moniker " Margaret Thatcher , Milk Snatcher " . She reportedly considered leaving politics in the aftermath and later wrote in her autobiography : " I learned a valuable lesson [from the experience] . I had incurred the maximum of political odium for the minimum of political benefit . "

Thatcher 's term of office was marked by proposals for more local education authorities to close grammar schools and to adopt comprehensive secondary education . Although she was committed to a tiered secondary modern @-@ grammar school system of education and was determined to preserve grammar schools , during her tenure as Education Secretary she turned down only 326 of 3 @, @ 612 proposals for schools to become comprehensives ; the proportion of pupils attending comprehensive schools consequently rose from 32 per cent to 62 per cent .

= = = Leader of the Opposition : 1975 ? 79 = = =

The Heath government continued to experience difficulties with oil embargoes and union demands

for wage increases in 1973 and lost the February 1974 general election . Labour formed a minority government and went on to win a narrow majority in the October 1974 general election . Heath 's leadership of the Conservative Party looked increasingly in doubt . Thatcher was not initially the obvious replacement , but she eventually became the main challenger , promising a fresh start . Her main support came from the Conservative 1922 Committee , but Thatcher 's time in office gave her the reputation of a pragmatist instead of an ideologue . She defeated Heath on the first ballot and he resigned the leadership . In the second ballot she defeated Whitelaw , Heath 's preferred successor . The vote polarised along right @-@ left lines , with the region , experience and education of the MP also having their effects . Thatcher 's support was stronger among MPs on the right , those from southern England , and those who had not attended public schools or Oxbridge .

Thatcher became party leader and Leader of the Opposition on 11 February 1975 ; she appointed Whitelaw as her deputy . Heath was never reconciled to Thatcher 's leadership .

Thatcher began to attend lunches regularly at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) , a think tank founded by the poultry magnate Antony Fisher , a disciple of Friedrich Hayek ; she had been visiting the IEA and reading its publications since the early 1960s . There she was influenced by the ideas of Ralph Harris and Arthur Seldon , and she became the face of the ideological movement opposing the welfare state . Keynesian economics , they believed , was weakening Britain . The institute 's pamphlets proposed less government , lower taxes , and more freedom for business and consumers .

Television critic Clive James , writing in The Observer during the voting for the leadership , compared her voice of 1973 to a cat sliding down a blackboard . Thatcher had already begun to work on her presentation on the advice of Gordon Reece , a former television producer . By chance Reece met the actor Laurence Olivier , who arranged lessons with the National Theatre 's voice coach . Thatcher succeeded in completely suppressing her Lincolnshire dialect except when under stress , notably after provocation from Denis Healey in the House of Commons in April 1983 , when she accused the Labour front bench of being frit .

On 19 January 1976 Thatcher made a speech in Kensington Town Hall in which she made a scathing attack on the Soviet Union :

The Russians are bent on world dominance , and they are rapidly acquiring the means to become the most powerful imperial nation the world has seen . The men in the Soviet Politburo do not have to worry about the ebb and flow of public opinion . They put guns before butter , while we put just about everything before guns .

In response , the Soviet Defence Ministry newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) called her the " Iron Lady , " a sobriquet she gladly adopted .

Margaret Thatcher wanted to prevent the creation of a Scottish assembly . She told Conservative MPs to vote against the Scotland and Wales Bill in December 1976 , which was defeated , and then when new Bills were proposed she supported amending the legislation to allow the English to vote in the 1979 referendum on devolution .

Britain 's economy during the 1970s was so weak that Foreign Minister James Callaghan warned his fellow Labour Cabinet members in 1974 of the possibility of " a breakdown of democracy " , telling them that " If I were a young man , I would emigrate . " In mid @-@ 1978 , the economy began to improve and opinion polls showed Labour in the lead , with a general election being expected later that year and a Labour win a serious possibility . Now Prime Minister , Callaghan surprised many by announcing on 7 September that there would be no general election that year and he would wait until 1979 before going to the polls . Thatcher reacted to this by branding the Labour government " chickens " , and Liberal Party leader David Steel joined in , criticising Labour for " running scared " .

The Labour government then faced fresh public unease about the direction of the country and a damaging series of strikes during the winter of 1978 ? 79 , dubbed the " Winter of Discontent " . The Conservatives attacked the Labour government 's unemployment record , using advertising with the slogan " Labour Isn 't Working " . A general election was called after Callaghan 's government lost a motion of no confidence in early 1979 . The Conservatives won a 44 @-@ seat majority in the House of Commons , and took charge .

= = Premiership of the United Kingdom : 1979 ? 90 = =

Thatcher became Prime Minister on 4 May 1979 . Arriving at 10 Downing Street , she said , in a paraphrase of St. Francis of Assisi 's prayer Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace :

Where there is discord , may we bring harmony . Where there is error , may we bring truth . Where there is doubt , may we bring faith . And where there is despair , may we bring hope .

= = Relations with the Queen = = =

As Prime Minister , Thatcher met weekly with Queen Elizabeth II to discuss government business , and their relationship came under close scrutiny .

In July 1986 , The Sunday Times reported claims attributed to the Queen 's advisers of a " rift " between Buckingham Palace and Downing Street " over a wide range of domestic and international issues " .

The Palace issued an official denial , heading off speculation about a possible constitutional crisis . After Thatcher 's retirement a senior Palace source again dismissed as " nonsense " the " stereotyped idea " that she had not got along with the Queen , or that they had fallen out over Thatcherite policies . Thatcher later wrote : " I always found the Queen 's attitude towards the work of the Government absolutely correct ... stories of clashes between ' two powerful women ' were just too good not to make up . "

= = = Economy and taxation = = = =

Thatcher 's economic policy was influenced by monetarist thinking and economists such as Milton Friedman and Alan Walters . Together with Chancellor of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe , she lowered direct taxes on income and increased indirect taxes . She increased interest rates to slow the growth of the money supply and thereby lower inflation , introduced cash limits on public spending , and reduced expenditure on social services such as education and housing . Her cuts in higher education spending resulted in her being the first Oxford @-@ educated post @-@ war Prime Minister not to be awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Oxford , after a 738 to 319 vote of the governing assembly and a student petition . Her new centrally funded City Technology Colleges did not enjoy much success , and the Funding Agency for Schools was set up to control expenditure by opening and closing schools ; the Social Market Foundation , a centre @-@ left think tank , described it as having " an extraordinary range of dictatorial powers " .

Some Heathite Conservatives in the Cabinet , the so @-@ called " wets " , expressed doubt over Thatcher 's policies . The 1981 England riots resulted in the British media discussing the need for a policy U @-@ turn . At the 1980 Conservative Party conference , Thatcher addressed the issue directly , with a speech written by the playwright Ronald Millar that included the lines : " You turn if you want to . The lady 's not for turning ! "

Thatcher 's job approval rating fell to 23 % by December 1980 , lower than recorded for any previous Prime Minister . As the recession of the early 1980s deepened she increased taxes , despite concerns expressed in a statement signed by 364 leading economists issued towards the end of March 1981 .

By 1982 , the UK began to experience signs of economic recovery ; inflation was down to 8 @.@ 6 % from a high of 18 % , but unemployment was over 3 million for the first time since the 1930s . By 1983 overall economic growth was stronger and inflation and mortgage rates were at their lowest levels since 1970 , although manufacturing output had dropped by 30 % since 1978 and unemployment remained high , peaking at 3 @.@ 3 million in 1984 .

By 1987 , unemployment was falling , the economy was stable and strong , and inflation was low . Opinion polls showed a comfortable Conservative lead , and local council election results had also been successful , prompting Thatcher to call a general election for 11 June that year , despite the deadline for an election still being 12 months away . The election saw Thatcher re @-@ elected for

a third successive term . Throughout the 1980s revenue from the 90 % tax on North Sea oil extraction was used as a short @-@ term funding source to balance the economy and pay the costs of reform .

Thatcher reformed local government taxes by replacing domestic rates ? a tax based on the nominal rental value of a home ? with the Community Charge (or poll tax) in which the same amount was charged to each adult resident . The new tax was introduced in Scotland in 1989 and in England and Wales the following year , and proved to be among the most unpopular policies of her premiership . Public disquiet culminated in a 70 @,@ 000 to 200 @,@ 000 @-@ strong demonstration in London on 31 March 1990 ; the demonstration around Trafalgar Square deteriorated into the Poll Tax Riots , leaving 113 people injured and 340 under arrest . The Community Charge was abolished by her successor , John Major .

= = = = Industrial relations = = = =

Thatcher was committed to reducing the power of the trade unions , whose leadership she accused of undermining parliamentary democracy and economic performance through strike action . Several unions launched strikes in response to legislation introduced to curb their power , but resistance eventually collapsed . Only 39 % of union members voted for Labour in the 1983 general election . According to the BBC , Thatcher " managed to destroy the power of the trade unions for almost a generation " .

The miners ' strike was the biggest confrontation between the unions and the Thatcher government . In March 1984 the National Coal Board (NCB) proposed to close 20 of the 174 state @-@ owned mines and cut 20 @,@ 000 jobs out of 187 @,@ 000 .

Two @-@ thirds of the country 's miners , led by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) under Arthur Scargill , downed tools in protest . Scargill had refused to hold a ballot on the strike , having previously lost three ballots on a national strike (January 1982 , October 1982 , and March 1983) . This led to the strike being declared illegal .

Thatcher refused to meet the union 's demands and compared the miners ' dispute to the Falklands conflict two years earlier , declaring in a speech in 1984 : " We had to fight the enemy without in the Falklands . We always have to be aware of the enemy within , which is much more difficult to fight and more dangerous to liberty . " After a year out on strike , in March 1985 , the NUM leadership conceded without a deal . The cost to the economy was estimated to be at least £ 1 @.@ 5 billion , and the strike was blamed for much of the pound 's fall against the US dollar . The government closed 25 unprofitable coal mines in 1985 , and by 1992 a total of 97 had been closed ; those that remained were privatised in 1994 . The eventual closure of 150 coal mines , not all of which were losing money , resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs and devastated entire communities . Miners had helped bring down the Heath government , and Thatcher was determined to succeed where he had failed . Her strategy of preparing fuel stocks , appointing a union @-@ busting NCB leader in Ian MacGregor , and ensuring police were adequately trained and equipped with riot gear , contributed to her victory .

The number of stoppages across the UK peaked at 4 @,@ 583 in 1979 , when more than 29 million working days were lost . In 1984 , the year of the miners ' strike , there were 1 @,@ 221 , resulting in the loss of more than 27 million working days . Stoppages then fell steadily throughout the rest of Thatcher 's premiership ; in 1990 there were 630 and fewer than 2 million working days lost , and they continued to fall thereafter . Thatcher 's time in office witnessed a sharp decline in trade union density , with the percentage of workers belonging to a trade union falling from 57 @.@ 3 % in 1979 to 49 @.@ 5 % in 1985 . In 1979 up until Thatcher 's last year in office , trade union membership also fell , from 13 @.@ 5 million in 1979 to fewer than 10 million .

= = = = Privatisation = = = =

The policy of privatisation has been called " a crucial ingredient of Thatcherism " . After the 1983 election the sale of state utilities accelerated ; more than £ 29 billion was raised from the sale of

nationalised industries , and another £ 18 billion from the sale of council houses .

The process of privatisation , especially the preparation of nationalised industries for privatisation , was associated with marked improvements in performance , particularly in terms of labour productivity .

Some of the privatised industries , including gas , water , and electricity , were natural monopolies for which privatisation involved little increase in competition . The privatised industries that demonstrated improvement sometimes did so while still under state ownership . British Steel Corporation , for instance , made great gains in profitability while still a nationalised industry under the government . @-@ appointed chairmanship of Ian MacGregor , who faced down trade @-@ union opposition to close plants and reduce the workforce by half . Regulation was also significantly expanded to compensate for the loss of direct government control , with the foundation of regulatory bodies such as Ofgas , Oftel and the National Rivers Authority . There was no clear pattern to the degree of competition , regulation , and performance among the privatised industries ; in most cases privatisation benefited consumers in terms of lower prices and improved efficiency , but the results overall were " mixed " .

Thatcher always resisted rail privatisation and was said to have told Transport Secretary Nicholas Ridley " Railway privatisation will be the Waterloo of this government . Please never mention the railways to me again . " Shortly before her resignation , she accepted the arguments for privatising British Rail , which her successor John Major implemented in 1994 . The effect of privatising the railway is disputed , with large growth in passenger numbers and increasing efficiency matched by large public subsidy and concern about foreign companies running British railways .

The privatisation of public assets was combined with financial deregulation in an attempt to fuel economic growth . Geoffrey Howe abolished Britain 's exchange controls in 1979 , allowing more capital to be invested in foreign markets , and the Big Bang of 1986 removed many restrictions on the London Stock Exchange . The Thatcher government encouraged growth in the finance and service sectors to compensate for Britain 's ailing manufacturing industry .

= = = = Northern Ireland = = = =

In 1980 and 1981 , Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) prisoners in Northern Ireland 's Maze Prison carried out hunger strikes in an effort to regain the status of political prisoners that had been removed in 1976 by the preceding Labour government .

Bobby Sands began the 1981 strike , saying that he would fast until death unless prison inmates won concessions over their living conditions . Thatcher refused to countenance a return to political status for the prisoners , declaring " Crime is crime is crime ; it is not political " , but nevertheless the UK government privately contacted republican leaders in a bid to bring the hunger strikes to an end . After the deaths of Sands and nine others , the strike ended . Some rights were restored to paramilitary prisoners , but not official recognition of political status . Violence in Northern Ireland escalated significantly during the hunger strikes ; in 1982 Sinn Féin politician Danny Morrison described Thatcher as " the biggest bastard we have ever known " .

Thatcher narrowly escaped injury in an IRA assassination attempt at a Brighton hotel early in the morning on 12 October 1984 . Five people were killed , including the wife of Cabinet Minister John Wakeham . Thatcher was staying at the hotel to attend the Conservative Party Conference , which she insisted should open as scheduled the following day . She delivered her speech as planned , a move that was widely supported across the political spectrum and enhanced her popularity with the public .

On 6 November 1981 , Thatcher and Irish Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald had established the Anglo @-@ Irish Inter @-@ Governmental Council , a forum for meetings between the two governments . On 15 November 1985 , Thatcher and FitzGerald signed the Hillsborough Anglo @-@ Irish Agreement , the first time a British government had given the Republic of Ireland an advisory role in the governance of Northern Ireland . In protest the Ulster Says No movement attracted 100 @,@ 000 to a rally in Belfast , Ian Gow resigned as Minister of State in the HM Treasury , and all fifteen

Unionist MPs resigned their parliamentary seats ; only one was not returned in the subsequent by @-@ elections on 23 January 1986 .

= = = Environment = = =

Thatcher supported an active climate protection policy and was instrumental in the creation of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and in founding the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the British Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research in Exeter . Thatcher helped to put climate change , acid rain and general pollution in the British mainstream in the early 1980s . Her speeches included one to Royal Society on 27 September 1988 and to the UN general assembly in November 1989 . She did not visit the Earth Summit 1992 and later became sceptical about climate change policy .

= = = Foreign affairs = = =

Thatcher 's first foreign policy crisis came with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan . She condemned the invasion , said it showed the bankruptcy of a détente policy , and helped convince some British athletes to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics . She gave weak support to American President Jimmy Carter who tried to punish the USSR with economic sanctions . Britain 's economic situation was precarious , and most of NATO was reluctant to cut trade ties . It was reported that her government secretly supplied Saddam Hussein with military equipment as early as 1981 .

Thatcher became closely aligned with the Cold War policies of United States President Ronald Reagan , based on their shared distrust of Communism , although she strongly opposed Reagan 's October 1983 invasion of Grenada . Reagan had assured Thatcher that an invasion was not contemplated , and thereafter Thatcher felt she could never fully trust Reagan again . During her first year as Prime Minister she supported NATO 's decision to deploy US nuclear cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe and permitted the US to station more than 160 cruise missiles at RAF Greenham Common , starting on 14 November 1983 and triggering mass protests by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament . She bought the Trident nuclear missile submarine system from the US to replace Polaris , tripling the UK 's nuclear forces at an eventual cost of more than £ 12 billion (at 1996 ? 97 prices) . Thatcher 's preference for defence ties with the US was demonstrated in the Westland affair of January 1986 , when she acted with colleagues to allow the struggling helicopter manufacturer Westland to refuse a takeover offer from the Italian firm Agusta in favour of the management 's preferred option , a link with Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation . The UK Defence Secretary , Michael Heseltine , who had supported the Agusta deal , resigned in protest .

On 2 April 1982 the ruling military junta in Argentina ordered the invasion of the British @-@ controlled Falkland Islands and South Georgia , triggering the Falklands War . The subsequent crisis was " a defining moment of her [Thatcher 's] premiership " . At the suggestion of Harold Macmillan and Robert Armstrong , she set up and chaired a small War Cabinet (formally called ODSA , Overseas and Defence committee , South Atlantic) to take charge of the conduct of the war , which by 5 ? 6 April had authorised and dispatched a naval task force to retake the islands . Argentina surrendered on 14 June and the operation was hailed a success , notwithstanding the deaths of 255 British servicemen and 3 Falkland Islanders . Argentinian deaths totalled 649 , half of them after the nuclear @-@ powered submarine HMS Conqueror torpedoed and sank the cruiser ARA General Belgrano on 2 May . Thatcher was criticised for the neglect of the Falklands ' defence that led to the war , and especially by Tam Dalyell in parliament for the decision to sink the General Belgrano , but overall she was considered a highly capable and committed war leader . The " Falklands factor " , an economic recovery beginning early in 1982 , and a bitterly divided opposition all contributed to Thatcher 's second election victory in 1983 . Thatcher often referred after the war to the " Falklands Spirit " ; Hastings and Jenkins (1983) suggested that this reflected her preference for the streamlined decision @-@ making of her War Cabinet over the painstaking deal @-@ making of peace @-@ time cabinet government .

In September 1982 she visited China to discuss with Deng Xiaoping the sovereignty of Hong Kong

after 1997 . China was the first communist state Thatcher had visited and she was the first British prime minister to visit China . Throughout their meeting , she sought the PRC 's agreement to a continued British presence in the territory . Deng stated that the PRC 's sovereignty on Hong Kong was non @-@ negotiable , but he was willing to settle the sovereignty issue with Britain through formal negotiations , and both governments promised to maintain Hong Kong 's stability and prosperity . After the two @-@ year negotiations , Thatcher conceded to the PRC government and signed the Sino @-@ British Joint Declaration in Beijing in 1984 , agreeing to hand over Hong Kong 's sovereignty in 1997 .

Although saying that she was in favour of " peaceful negotiations " to end apartheid , Thatcher stood against the sanctions imposed on South Africa by the Commonwealth and the EC . She attempted to preserve trade with South Africa while persuading the government there to abandon apartheid . This included " [c] asting herself as President Botha 's candid friend " , and inviting him to visit the UK in June 1984 , in spite of the " inevitable demonstrations " against his government . Thatcher dismissed the African National Congress (ANC) in October 1987 as " a typical terrorist organisation " .

The Thatcher government supported the Khmer Rouge keeping their seat in the UN after they were ousted from power in Cambodia by the Cambodian ? Vietnamese War . Although denying it at the time they also sent the SAS to train the non @-@ Communist members of the CGDK to fight against the Vietnamese @-@ backed People 's Republic of Kampuchea government .

Thatcher 's antipathy towards European integration became more pronounced during her premiership , particularly after her third election victory in 1987 . During a 1988 speech in Bruges she outlined her opposition to proposals from the European Community (EC) , forerunner of the European Union , for a federal structure and increased centralisation of decision making . Thatcher and her party had supported British membership of the EC in the 1975 national referendum , but she believed that the role of the organisation should be limited to ensuring free trade and effective competition , and feared that the EC 's approach was at odds with her views on smaller government and deregulation ; in 1988 , she remarked , " We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain , only to see them re @-@ imposed at a European level , with a European super @-@ state exercising a new dominance from Brussels " .

Thatcher was firmly opposed to the UK 's membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism , a precursor to European monetary union , believing that it would constrain the British economy , despite the urging of her Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson and Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe , but she was persuaded by John Major to join in October 1990 , at what proved to be too high a rate .

In April 1986 , Thatcher permitted US F @-@ 111s to use Royal Air Force bases for the bombing of Libya in retaliation for the alleged Libyan bombing of a Berlin discothèque , citing the right of self @-@ defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter . Polls suggested that fewer than one in three British citizens approved of Thatcher 's decision . She was in the US on a state visit when Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein invaded neighbouring Kuwait in August 1990 . During her talks with President George H. W. Bush , who had succeeded Reagan in 1989 , she recommended intervention , and put pressure on Bush to deploy troops in the Middle East to drive the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait . Bush was apprehensive about the plan , prompting Thatcher to remark to him during a telephone conversation that " This was no time to go wobbly ! " Thatcher 's government provided military forces to the international coalition in the build @-@ up to the Gulf War , but she had resigned by the time hostilities began on 17 January 1991 .

Thatcher was one of the first Western leaders to respond warmly to reformist Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev . Following Reagan ? Gorbachev summit meetings and reforms enacted by Gorbachev in the USSR , she declared in November 1988 that " We 're not in a Cold War now " , but rather in a " new relationship much wider than the Cold War ever was " . She went on a state visit to the Soviet Union in 1984 and met with Gorbachev and Nikolai Ryzhkov , the Chairman of the Council of Ministers . Thatcher was initially opposed to German reunification , telling Gorbachev that it " would lead to a change to postwar borders , and we cannot allow that because such a development would undermine the stability of the whole international situation and could endanger our security " . She

expressed concern that a united Germany would align itself more closely with the Soviet Union and move away from NATO .

= = = Challenges to leadership and resignation = = =

Thatcher was challenged for the leadership of the Conservative Party by the little @-@ known backbench MP Sir Anthony Meyer in the 1989 leadership election . Of the 374 Conservative MPs eligible to vote , 314 voted for Thatcher and 33 for Meyer . Her supporters in the party viewed the result as a success , and rejected suggestions that there was discontent within the party .

During her premiership Thatcher had the second @-@ lowest average approval rating , at 40 % , of any post @-@ war Prime Minister . Polls consistently showed that she was less popular than her party . A self @-@ described conviction politician , Thatcher always insisted that she did not care about her poll ratings , pointing instead to her unbeaten election record .

Opinion polls in September 1990 reported that Labour had established a 14 % lead over the Conservatives , and by November the Conservatives had been trailing Labour for 18 months . These ratings , together with Thatcher 's combative personality and willingness to override colleagues ' opinions , contributed to discontent within the Conservative Party .

On 1 November 1990 , Geoffrey Howe the last remaining member of Thatcher 's original 1979 cabinet , resigned from his position as Deputy Prime Minister over her refusal to agree to a timetable for Britain to join the European Exchange Rate Mechanism . In his resignation speech on 13 November , Howe commented on Thatcher 's European stance : " It is rather like sending your opening batsmen to the crease only for them to find the moment that the first balls are bowled that their bats have been broken before the game by the team captain . " His resignation was fatal to Thatcher 's premiership .

The next day , Michael Heseltine mounted a challenge for the leadership of the Conservative Party . Opinion polls had indicated that he would give the Conservatives a national lead over Labour . Although Thatcher won the first ballot with 204 : 152 votes and 16 abstentions , Heseltine had attracted sufficient support to force a second ballot . Under party rules , Thatcher not only needed to win a majority , but her margin over Heseltine had to be equivalent to 15 % of the 372 Conservative MPs in order to win the leadership election outright ; with 54 @.@ 8 % against 40 @.@ 9 % for Heseltine , she came up four votes short . Thatcher initially stated that she intended to " fight on and fight to win " the second ballot , but consultation with her Cabinet persuaded her to withdraw . After visiting the Queen , calling other world leaders , and making one final Commons speech , she left Downing Street in tears . She reportedly regarded her ousting as a betrayal .

Thatcher was replaced as Prime Minister and party leader by her Chancellor John Major , who prevailed over Heseltine in the subsequent ballots . Major oversaw an upturn in Conservative support in the 17 months leading up to the 1992 general election and led the Conservatives to their fourth successive victory on 9 April 1992 . Thatcher had favoured Major over Heseltine in the leadership contest , but her support for him weakened in later years .

= = Later life = =

Thatcher returned to the backbenches as MP for Finchley for two years after leaving the premiership . She retired from the House at the 1992 election , aged 66 , saying that leaving the Commons would allow her more freedom to speak her mind .

= = = Post @-@ Commons : 1992 ? 2003 = = =

After leaving the House of Commons , Thatcher became the first former Prime Minister to set up a foundation ; the British wing of the Margaret Thatcher Foundation was dissolved in 2005 because of financial difficulties . She wrote two volumes of memoirs , *The Downing Street Years* (1993) and *The Path to Power* (1995) . In 1991 , she and her husband Denis moved to a house in Chester Square , a residential garden square in central London 's Belgravia district .

In 1992 , Thatcher was hired by the tobacco company Philip Morris as a " geopolitical consultant " for \$ 250 @, @ 000 per year and an annual contribution of \$ 250 @, @ 000 to her foundation . She also earned \$ 50 @, @ 000 for each speech she delivered .

In August 1992 , Thatcher called for NATO to stop the Serbian assault on Gora?de and Sarajevo to end ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian War . She compared the situation in Bosnia to " the worst excesses of the Nazis " , and warned that there could be a " holocaust " . She had been an advocate of Croatian and Slovenian independence .

In a 1991 interview for Croatian Radiotelevision , Thatcher had commented on the Yugoslav Wars ; she was critical of Western governments for not recognising the breakaway republics of Croatia and Slovenia as independent states and for not supplying them with arms after the Serbian @-@ led Yugoslav Army attacked .

She made a series of speeches in the Lords criticising the Maastricht Treaty , describing it as " a treaty too far " and stated " I could never have signed this treaty " . She cited A. V. Dicey when stating that as all three main parties were in favour of the treaty , the people should have their say in a referendum .

Thatcher was honorary Chancellor of the College of William & Mary in Virginia (1993 ? 2000) and also of the University of Buckingham (1992 ? 99) , the UK 's first private university , which she had opened in 1975 .

After Tony Blair 's election as Labour Party leader in 1994 , Thatcher praised Blair in an interview as " probably the most formidable Labour leader since Hugh Gaitskell . I see a lot of socialism behind their front bench , but not in Mr Blair . I think he genuinely has moved " .

In 1998 , Thatcher called for the release of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet when Spain had him arrested and sought to try him for human rights violations . She cited the help he gave Britain during the Falklands War . In 1999 , she visited him while he was under house arrest near London . Pinochet was released in March 2000 on medical grounds by the Home Secretary Jack Straw , without facing trial .

In the 2001 general election , Thatcher supported the Conservative general election campaign , as she had done in 1992 and 1997 , and in the Conservative leadership election shortly after , she supported Iain Duncan Smith over Kenneth Clarke .

In 2002 , Thatcher encouraged President George W. Bush to aggressively tackle the " unfinished business " of Saddam Hussein 's Iraq , and praised Tony Blair for his " strong , bold leadership " in standing with Bush in the Iraq War .

She broached the same subject in her Statecraft : Strategies for a Changing World , which was published that year and dedicated to Ronald Reagan , writing that there would be no peace in the Middle East until Saddam Hussein was toppled . Her book also said that Israel must trade land for peace , and that the European Union (EU) was " fundamentally unreformable " , " a classic utopian project , a monument to the vanity of intellectuals , a programme whose inevitable destiny is failure " . She argued that Britain should renegotiate its terms of membership or else leave the EU and join the North American Free Trade Area .

That same year , she suffered several small strokes and was advised by her doctors not to engage in further public speaking . On 23 March , she announced that on the advice of her doctors she would cancel all planned speaking engagements and accept no more .

= = = Husband 's death : 2003 = = =

Sir Denis Thatcher died of pancreatic cancer on 26 June 2003 and was cremated on 3 July . She had paid tribute to him in The Downing Street Years , writing " Being Prime Minister is a lonely job . In a sense , it ought to be : you cannot lead from the crowd . But with Denis there I was never alone . What a man . What a husband . What a friend . "

= = = Final years : 2003 ? 13 = = =

On 11 June 2004 , Thatcher , against doctor 's orders , attended the state funeral service for

Ronald Reagan . She delivered her eulogy via videotape ; in view of her health , the message had been pre-recorded several months earlier . Thatcher flew to California with the Reagan entourage , and attended the memorial service and interment ceremony for the president at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library .

Thatcher celebrated her 80th birthday at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Hyde Park , London , on 13 October 2005 ; guests included the Queen , the Duke of Edinburgh , Princess Alexandra and Tony Blair . Geoffrey Howe , by then Lord Howe of Aberavon , was also present , and said of his former leader : " Her real triumph was to have transformed not just one party but two , so that when Labour did eventually return , the great bulk of Thatcherism was accepted as irreversible . "

According to a later article in The Daily Telegraph , Thatcher 's daughter Carol first revealed that her mother had dementia in 2005 , saying that " Mum doesn 't read much any more because of her memory loss ... It 's pointless . She can 't remember the beginning of a sentence by the time she reaches the end . " She later recounted how she was first struck by her mother 's dementia when in conversation Thatcher confused the Falklands and Yugoslav conflicts ; she recalled the pain of needing to tell her mother repeatedly that Denis Thatcher was dead .

In 2006 , Thatcher attended the official Washington , D.C. memorial service to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks on the United States . She was a guest of Vice President Dick Cheney , and met Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during her visit .

In February 2007 , Thatcher became the first living British Prime Minister to be honoured with a statue in the Houses of Parliament . The bronze statue stands opposite that of her political hero , Sir Winston Churchill , and was unveiled on 21 February 2007 with Thatcher in attendance ; she made a brief speech in the members ' lobby of the House of Commons , responding : " I might have preferred iron ? but bronze will do ... It won 't rust . "

She was a public supporter of the Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism and the resulting Prague Process , and sent a public letter of support to its preceding conference .

After collapsing at a House of Lords dinner , Thatcher was admitted to St Thomas ' Hospital in central London on 7 March 2008 for tests . In 2009 she was hospitalised again when she fell and broke her arm .

Thatcher returned to 10 Downing Street in late November 2009 for the unveiling of an official portrait by artist Richard Stone , an unusual honour for a living ex-Prime Minister . Stone had previously painted portraits of the Queen and the Queen Mother .

On 4 July 2011 , Thatcher was to attend a ceremony for the unveiling of a 10-foot statue to former American President Ronald Reagan , outside the American Embassy in London , but was unable to attend due to her frail health . On 31 July 2011 , it was announced that her office in the House of Lords had been closed . Earlier that month , Thatcher had been named the most competent British Prime Minister of the past 30 years in an Ipsos MORI poll .

== Death and funeral : 2013 ==

Lady Thatcher died on 8 April 2013 at the age of 87 after suffering a stroke . She had been staying at a suite in the Ritz Hotel in London since December 2012 after having difficulty with stairs at her Chester Square home in Belgravia .

Reactions to the news of Thatcher 's death were mixed in the UK , ranging from tributes lauding her as Britain 's greatest ever peacetime Prime Minister to public celebrations of her death and expressions of personalised vitriol .

Details of Thatcher 's funeral had been agreed with her in advance . She received a ceremonial funeral , including full military honours , with a church service at St Paul 's Cathedral on 17 April .

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip , Duke of Edinburgh , attended the funeral , the second time in the Queen 's reign that she had attended the funeral of a former prime minister (the first being that of Winston Churchill in 1965) .

After the service at St Paul 's Cathedral , Thatcher 's body was cremated at Mortlake Crematorium , where her husband had been cremated . On 28 September a service for Thatcher was held in the All Saints Chapel of the Royal Hospital Chelsea 's Margaret Thatcher Infirmary . In a private

ceremony Thatcher 's ashes were interred in the grounds of the hospital , next to those of her husband .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Political legacy = = =

Thatcherism represented a systematic , decisive rejection and reversal of the post @-@ war consensus , Whereby the major political parties largely agreed on the central themes of Keynesianism , the welfare state , nationalised industry , and close regulation of the economy . There was one major exception : the National Health Service , which was widely popular . She promised Britons in 1982 , the NHS is " safe in our hands . "

Thatcher defined her own political philosophy in a major and controversial break with One Nation Conservatives like her predecessor Edward Heath , in her statement to Douglas Keay , published in Woman 's Own magazine in September 1987 :

I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand " I have a problem , it is the Government 's job to cope with it ! " or " I have a problem , I will go and get a grant to cope with it ! " " I am homeless , the Government must house me ! " and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society ? There is no such thing ! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first . It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbour and life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations .

The number of adults owning shares rose from 7 per cent to 25 per cent during her tenure , and more than a million families bought their council houses , giving an increase from 55 per cent to 67 per cent in owner @-@ occupiers from 1979 to 1990 . The houses were sold at a discount of 33 ? 55 per cent , leading to large profits for some new owners . Personal wealth rose by 80 per cent in real terms during the 1980s , mainly due to rising house prices and increased earnings . Shares in the privatised utilities were sold below their market value to ensure quick and wide sales , rather than maximise national income .

Thatcher 's premiership was also marked by periods of high unemployment and social unrest , and many critics on the left of the political spectrum fault her economic policies for the unemployment level ; many of the areas affected by high unemployment as well as her monetarist economic policies remain blighted by social problems such as drug abuse and family breakdown .

Speaking in Scotland in April 2009 , before the 30th anniversary of her election as Prime Minister , Thatcher insisted she had no regrets and was right to introduce the poll tax , and to withdraw subsidies from " outdated industries , whose markets were in terminal decline " , subsidies that created " the culture of dependency , which had done such damage to Britain " . Political economist Susan Strange called the new financial growth model " casino capitalism " , reflecting her view that speculation and financial trading were becoming more important to the economy than industry .

Critics on the left describe her as " divisive " and claim she promoted greed and selfishness . Michael White , writing in the New Statesman in February 2009 , challenged the view that her reforms had brought a net benefit . Some critics contend that , despite being Britain 's first woman Prime Minister , Thatcher did " little to advance the political cause of women " , either within her party or the government , and some British feminists regarded her as " an enemy " . Her stance on immigration was perceived by some as part of a rising racist public discourse , which Professor Martin Barker called " new racism " .

Influenced at the outset by Keith Joseph , the term " Thatcherism " came to refer to her policies as well as aspects of her ethical outlook and personal style , including moral absolutism , nationalism , interest in the individual , and an uncompromising approach to achieving political goals . The nickname " Iron Lady " , originally given to her by the Soviets , became associated with her uncompromising politics and leadership style .

Thatcher 's tenure of 11 years and 209 days as Prime Minister was the longest since Lord Salisbury (13 years and 252 days in three spells starting in 1885) , and the longest continuous period in office since Lord Liverpool (14 years and 305 days starting in 1812) .

She was voted the fourth @-@ greatest British Prime Minister of the 20th century in a poll of 139 academics organised by MORI , and in 2002 was ranked number 16 in the BBC poll of the 100 Greatest Britons . In 1999 , Time magazine named Thatcher one of the 100 most important people of the 20th century .

Thatcher 's death prompted mixed reactions , including reflections of criticism as well as praise . Groups celebrated her death in Brixton , Leeds , Bristol and Glasgow , and a crowd of 3 @,@ 000 gathered in Trafalgar Square to celebrate her demise and protest against her legacy .

Shortly after Thatcher 's death , Scotland 's First Minister , Alex Salmond , argued that her policies had the " unintended consequence " of encouraging Scottish devolution . Lord Foulkes agreed on Scotland Tonight that she had provided " the impetus " for devolution .

= = = Cultural depictions = = =

One of the earliest satires of Thatcher as Prime Minister involved Wells (as writer / performer) , Janet Brown (voicing Thatcher) and future Spitting Image producer John Lloyd , who in 1979 were teamed up by producer Martin Lewis for the satirical audio album The Iron Lady consisting of skits and songs satirising Thatcher 's rise to power . The album was released in September 1979 , four months after Thatcher became Premier .

Thatcher was the subject or the inspiration for 1980s protest songs . Billy Bragg and Paul Weller helped to form the Red Wedge collective to support Labour in opposition to Thatcher .

Thatcher was lampooned by satirist John Wells in several media . Wells collaborated with Richard Ingrams on the spoof " Dear Bill " letters which ran as a column in Private Eye magazine , were published in book form , and later became a West End stage revue named Anyone for Denis ? , with Wells in the role of Denis Thatcher . The revue was followed by a 1982 TV special , directed by Dick Clement , in which Thatcher was portrayed by Angela Thorne . Spitting Image , a British TV show , satirised Thatcher as a bully who ridiculed her own ministers . She was voiced by Steve Nallon .

Margaret Thatcher has been depicted in many television programmes , documentaries , films and plays . She was played by Patricia Hodge in Ian Curteis 's long unproduced The Falklands Play (2002) , and by Andrea Riseborough in the TV film The Long Walk to Finchley (2008) . She is the title character in two films , portrayed by Lindsay Duncan in Margaret (2009) and by Meryl Streep in The Iron Lady (2011) , in which she is depicted as suffering from dementia or Alzheimer 's disease .

= = Titles , awards and honours = =

Thatcher became a Privy Councillor (PC) upon becoming Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1970 .

She was the first woman entitled to full membership rights as an honorary member of the Carlton Club on becoming leader of the Conservative Party in 1975 . Thatcher became an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry (FRIC) in 1979 .

Thatcher was bestowed with the Grand Cross of the Order of Good Hope , which was , at that time , the highest existing South African award , in 1991 , by President F. W. de Klerk .

Thatcher was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) in 1983 , which caused controversy among some of the then @-@ existing Fellows .

Within two weeks of leaving office in 1990 , Thatcher was appointed a Member of the Order of Merit (OM) (an order within the personal gift of the Queen) . Her husband , Denis Thatcher , was made a Baronet at the same time .

In the Falklands , Margaret Thatcher Day has been marked every 10 January since 1992 , commemorating her visit in 1983 . Thatcher Drive in Stanley is named for her , as is Thatcher Peninsula in South Georgia , where the task force troops first set foot on the Falklands .

She became member of the House of Lords in 1992 with a life peerage as Baroness Thatcher , of Kesteven in the County of Lincolnshire . She was appointed a Lady Companion of the Order of the Garter (LG) , the UK 's highest order of chivalry , in 1995 .

She was a patron of The Heritage Foundation , which established the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom in 2005 .