BELL, RONALD MCMILLAN (1914-1982), Conservative politician

Name: Ronald Mcmillan Bell
Date of birth: 1914
Date of death: 1982
Gender: Male
Occupation: Conservative politician
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: John Graham Jones

He was born at Cardiff on 14 April 1914, the son of John Bell. He was educated at Cardiff High School and Magdalene College, Oxford, where he graduated BA in 1936 and MA in 1942. During his university years he served as President of the Oxford University Conservative Association in 1935 and Secretary and Treasurer of the Oxford Union in 1935-36. Bell was called to the bar from Grays Inn in 1938, and served in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve during World War II where he became Lieutenant-Commander. He stood as the Conservative candidate for Caerphilly in the July 1939 by-election, when he was defeated by Ness Edwards (Labour), he captured Newport in a further by-election in May 1945, but lost the seat to Peter Freeman (Labour) in the general election two months later. During these months Bell had lent support to Churchill's caretaker government.

Ronald Bell was the Conservative MP for Buckinghamshire South from 1950 until 1974 and for the re-mapped Beaconsfield division from 1974 until 1982. This was a constituency full of the echoes of Benjamin Disraeli. He thus sat for one of the safest Conservative seats in the whole of the United Kingdom, a fact which gave him freedom to follow his own conscience on political issues. Consequently he never followed political fad or fashion. He was also a member of the Paddington Borough Council, 1947-49, and advisory director to Michael Clark & Associates PR Company, 1960-61. He became a QC in 1956. He was the Conservative spokesman on Labour in 1965 and on Defence, 1965-66. He voted against entry into the EEC on 28 October 1971. He was appointed a member of the Select Committee on European legislation in 1974 and became a member of the Court of the University of Reading in 1975. There is room to doubt whether he had any hidden ministerial ambitions, but no one could doubt his political integrity or his devotion to his constituents. He was knighted in 1980. He was a senior member of the Conservative Monday Club from 1962 until his death, and it was he who led the rebels in the House of Commons against the Race Relations Act of 1965. He was the author of the volume *Crown Proceedings* (1948).

He married in 1954 Elizabeth Audrey, the daughter of Kenneth Gossell, MC of Burwash, Sussex, and they had two sons and two daughters. They lived at First House, West Witheridge, Knotty Green, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, while Bell conducted his practice from 2 Mitre Court Buildings, Temple, London, practising in London and on the south-eastern circuit. He died suddenly at his office at Westminster on 27 February 1982.

Author

Dr John Graham Jones

Sources

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Etholiadau'r Ganrif / Welsh Elections 1885-1997 (Talybont 1999)

Welsh Hustings - 1885-2004 (Ammanford 2005)

Dod's Parliamentary Companion

The Times, 1 and 25 March 1982

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: Ronald Bell

Additional Links

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