

## GRIST, IAN (1938-2002), Conservative politician

**Name:** Ian Grist  
**Date of birth:** 1938  
**Date of death:** 2002  
**Spouse:** Wendy Anne Grist (née White)  
**Parent:** Leila Helen Grist  
**Parent:** Basil William Grist  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Conservative politician  
**Area of activity:** Politics, Government and Political Movements  
**Author:** John Graham Jones

He was born at Southampton on 5 December 1938, the son of Basil William Grist, MBE, a land agent and garage owner, and Leila Helen Grist. He was educated at Hildersham House preparatory school in Broadstairs, at Repton School and he then won an open scholarship in history to Jesus College, Oxford. While a student he was secretary of the Jesus College Conservative Association. He had joined the Eastleigh Young Conservatives in 1956. He worked briefly as a schoolmaster until 1960, then as plebiscite officer for the South Cameroons within the Colonial Office, 1960-61, and stores manager for the United Africa Co., Nigeria, 1961-63. In 1963, having come to feel that Africa would not offer him a rewarding future career, he took up the position of Conservative Party Research and Information Officer for Wales, working within the Conservative Research Department, 1970-74. Grist stood as the Conservative candidate for Aberavon against John Morris in the general election of June 1970, and subsequently represented Cardiff North, 1974-83, and, following widespread boundary re-distribution, the much more marginal Cardiff Central, 1983-92. In the general election of June 1987 his majority was halved by the Labour candidate. In the general election of 1992, as widely anticipated even by himself, he lost the seat to the Labour candidate Jon Owen Jones - part of the electoral shrivelling of the Conservative Party in Wales.

Tall, genial and generally very popular, Ian Grist was a PPS, 1979-81, to Nicholas Edwards, the Secretary of State for Wales, but he resigned after two years in the post. He was also Under-Secretary of State at the Welsh Office under Peter Walker, 1987-90, appointed to the position, to general surprise, by Mrs Thatcher, many of whose policies he had opposed. In December 1990 he was sacked from this position by the new party leader John Major for having backed Michael Heseltine in the recent party leadership contest, and duly replaced by Nicholas Bennett, the right-wing Conservative MP for Pembrokeshire. At the same time Grist resigned from the House of Commons Select Committee for Welsh Affairs and thus removed the Conservative majority from a committee which had exercised considerable influence in Wales. He was then elected chairman of the Welsh Conservative MPs Group in 1990, and was a member of the Select Committee on Members' Interests, 1984-87. Throughout his political career he was a strong opponent of devolution and the creation of a Welsh Assembly. Grist was a strongly pro-European and always loyal to the Anglo-American alliance. Ahead of fellow Tories on social matters, he opposed bringing back the death penalty and corporal punishment in schools. One of the first to urge banning cigarette advertising, he also opposed curbs on abortion and became a pillar of the Planned Parenthood Federation. He backed low-cost essential drugs for the Third World. Unlike most Tory MPs, his children were educated at local comprehensives. He attacked water privatisation and he was an opponent of the poll tax. He held a number of other offices at Westminster and was prominent in the public life of Wales. He was elected a FRSA in 1984. His hobbies were reading and listening to music. He was chairman of the South Glamorgan Health Authority from 1992. He married in 1962 Wendy Anne White, and they had two sons. He lived at 18 Tydfil Place, Roath, Cardiff. Ian Grist died, following a seizure, on 2 January 2002.

### Author

Dr John Graham Jones

### Sources

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*Welsh Hustings - 1885-2004* (Ammanford 2005)

*Dod's Parliamentary Companion*

*The Times guide to the House of Commons 1987*

*The Times*, 14 January 2002

*The Guardian*, 22 January 2002

### Further Reading

NLW Archives: [Welsh Devolution Referendum, 1979](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Ian Grist](#)

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q5981710](#)

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