



Poole High School Sixth Form

Politics – summer Pre-reading

Podcasts:

We would like to encourage our students to get into podcasts. The free link below is from one of our favourite podcasts 'The Rest is Politics' that we and some of our y12 and y13's listen to. In this episode the regular host is reading an excerpt from his latest book 'But what can I do' which is very much targeted at how young people can get into active politics.

<https://shows.acast.com/the-rest-is-politics/episodes/but-what-can-i-do-extract>

Mhairi Black: Meet the 20-year old who beat Douglas Alexander to become youngest MP since 17th century in the 2015 general election.

Written by The Independent newspaper, May 11th 2015.

She says her friends 'just keep slagging me for having to wear suits all the time.'



It seems unbelievable but Mhairi Black says she hasn't given thought to her place in the history books. "That's the first time I've heard it put like that," said Black, the 20-year-old new MP who made history last week by **becoming the youngest representative at Westminster since the 17th century when she defeated Labour giant Douglas Alexander for the SNP.**

She's responding to suggestions her youth has earned her a unique place in the history books. "I haven't thought about it like that," she said modestly. "I'm extremely humbled the people of Paisley and Renfrewshire South have put their trust in me. And now it's about getting organised and getting down to London to get to work."

She was speaking as SNP party leader Nicola Sturgeon unveiled her party's 56 new MPs in front of the Forth Bridge over the weekend. Among the new in-take Black is, thanks to her youth, one of the most high profile. She's been rapidly catapulted onto the national scene since she defeated Labour's shadow foreign secretary by 5,684 votes, but she is in many ways already an SNP veteran after becoming a key public speaker during the independence referendum campaign last year.

The university student is already an accomplished and well-drilled media performer too and speaking to the *Independent*, she stuck closely to the party line on its new role in Westminster, asking for no more or no less than the "powers Scotland was promised after the referendum."

She said: "I think what we've campaigned on is to make sure the people of Scotland have the largest voice possible. We've just seen the biggest success story in the SNP's history, we have an extremely loud voice now, so that's something I don't think any government can ignore."

Despite her youth she's already been talked of as a key anti-austerity voice in parliament by some, who hope as one of 19 SNP women she will be prominent at Westminster and help connect with younger female voters.

For her party she's very modest about her early political success. She said: "It's an experience, but ultimately it's quite representative of what we've seen on election night across Scotland. People are looking for change and they've voted for the party they think can deliver that change and now it's our job as representatives to deliver that change."

Speaking to journalists on 9 May in Edinburgh, the Paisley native was at ease fielding off questions designed to trip her up. "Aye, of course I've been to London before", she told one, before telling the next that she "hadn't given much thought" to the £67,060 salary she will now be commanding in Westminster, a remarkable sum for a 20-year-old, but surely a reasonable one for an elected representative of the people.

She has a good stock answer to accusations of inexperience too. "As I said through the campaign I would never claim to have the life experience of a 30 or 40 year old but when you look to your representatives, the most important thing is whether you understand what is happening in this area, do you understand what the struggles and problems are, and more importantly do you have the answers.."

Now, she says she's "trying to get organised" and plan her move down to London, where she will now spend most of her working week, though she's yet to find a place to live or it turns out, got used to living in a suit. She said: "I've not got my bags packed just yet, but we wouldn't have put our names forward for this if we were not serious about it."

It was only relatively recently that the final year public policy student handed in her final year dissertation at the University of Glasgow, where many of her friends are currently sitting finals or partying. "They just keep slagging me for having to wear suits all the time," she joked. "That's about as far as it goes with them as I haven't seen any of them for a while." "Hopefully I'll see some of them tonight," she added. Just as long as they don't go to any bars for the over-21s.

Fast forward 8 years after Mhairi Black's victory, not only has she held onto her seat, she is now the Deputy Leader of the SNP in the House of Commons tasked with holding the government's actions to account on a weekly basis during Prime Minister's Question time. See her in action by clicking the link below.

 Full exchange: Mhairi Black questions Dominic Raab over Tory MP's second jobs ...