



13 August 2008

A tribute to MP John MacDougall (1947-2008)

Scottish MP John MacDougall died yesterday after a long illness.

Former vice-president and treasurer of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) John was known as a strong pro European politician.

During his vice-presidency within the AER, he was Convenor of Fife Council, before he went into Parliament. His contribution to the AER was not only appreciated during his term between 1994 and 1998, but he continued to be an active supporter of the Assembly throughout the years.

His main interests being in the matters that really concern the citizens, but have an international dimension had a great impact on the work of European regions, including AER itself.

Councillor Brian Greenslade remembers:

"I met John Macdougall in my early AER days when he became our Treasurer. He was one of the very active members representing his region of Fife. I was pleased to follow him as the next Treasurer from the UK. Following his election to the UK Parliament in 2001 John ceased to be an active AER member but he always listed his AER record in his biography. We recall his support for our Assembly with affection and respect".

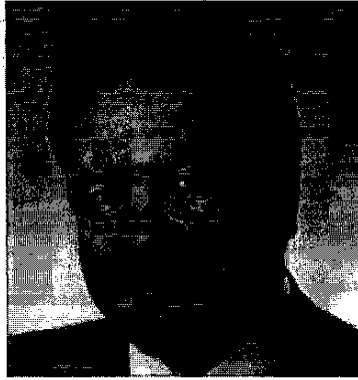
AER will greatly miss him and his contributions.

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John MacDougall: The Times obituary

It was a testament to John MacDougall's loyalty to Gordon Brown and the Labour Party that, despite severe ill health, he travelled from his Scottish constituency to London in June to back Brown's anti-terror laws, helping the Prime Minister to survive a backbench rebellion. MacDougall, suffering from mesothelioma, a cancer caused by asbestos, had had a lung removed shortly before the vote.



A close friend and regional ally of Brown for three decades, he was elected in 2001 as the member for Central Fife, a neighbouring constituency to Brown's seat of Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath. He was re-elected in 2005, this time as the MP for Glenrothes, after the boundaries were redrawn.

MacDougall was a staunch Labour loyalist who campaigned relentlessly on behalf of his constituents and fought for miners' rights. He remained true to his working-class background and kept the party in touch with its Scottish grass roots. As the leader of Fife Council he worked hard to generate jobs after the naval dockyards ceased operation, and to help the disadvantaged in the community.

John William MacDougall was born in 1947 in Dunfermline, Fife, and attended Templehall Secondary Modern School in Kirkcaldy. A boilermaker by trade, he started working at the RGC oil-rig construction yard in Methil in 1964. In 1978 he became a shop steward for the GMBATU. He studied naval architecture at Royal Dockyard College in Rosyth and then attended Fife Technical College.

In 1981 he joined the Labour Party, and rose to chair his local branch before being elected to Fife Regional Council. He was a councillor for nearly 20 years and led the council in 1987-96, when he became civic convener of the council.

A passionate pro-European, MacDougall was vice-president and treasurer of the Assembly of European Regions and developed the East of Scotland European Consortium. He was a member of the Scottish Constitutional Convention and the Scottish Broadcasting Authority. He fought successfully against plans by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for the ship-to-ship transfer of oil on the Firth of Forth waterways which, he argued, could have led to an environmental disaster.

MacDougall was a passionate supporter of Raith Rovers football team and a lover of vintage cars.

Gordon Brown paid tribute to MacDougall's achievements in Fife, where he pioneered free travel for the elderly, led Scotland and Britain with nursery education for 3 and 4-year-olds and was well known for his support for all local causes.

He is survived by his wife, Cathy, and his son and daughter.

John MacDougall, politician, was born on December 8, 1947. He died of cancer on August 13, 2008, aged 60