



**Majority:** 7,941 (21.3%) over Labour 4-way

**Description:** The more desirable and Tory residential half of the resort town at the Essex mouth of the Thames, containing Leigh-on-Sea and Westcliff-on-Sea; a third of its residents are pensioners; for 85 years it was the fiefdom of the Guinness-Channon family; recently Labour has just edged out the Liberal Democrats as the second party, splitting the opposition to the Conservatives into equally-impotent halves;

**Position:** On Chairmen's Panel '01-, Health Select Committee '98-; Chairman: all-party Solvents Abuse Group '00-, Fire Safety Group '98-; Vice Chairman: Conservative MPs' Health Committee '99-, Association of Conservative Clubs '97-, all-party Scout

Group '98-, Guides Group '00-; Secretary, Conservative Friends of Israel '97-; ex: Director, Parliamentary Broadcasting Unit '97- 99; PPS: to Michael Portillo '87-97, to Edwina Currie and Lord Skelmersdale '87-88; President, Basildon Dyslexia Association '90-97; Vice President, National Lotteries Council '98; Redbridge Borough Councillor (Vice Chairman of Housing) '82-86;

**Outlook:** The indefatigable, noisy partisan Rightwing Cockney Catholic; "has long been one of Parliament's jesters", "a man who likes to shout when a whisper would suffice" (Robert Hardman, DAILY TELEGRAPH); he cannot refer to the Blair Government without the prefix of "rotten"; his deafened auditors have somewhat recovered through his recent immolation in the Health Select Committee; the former "Basildon Bore" (Andrew Rawnsley, GUARDIAN) now boring for safer Southend West; the cheer-leader of Essex Tory proles and originator of the 'I Love Basildon' campaign, who shrewdly avoided defeat by recognising the significance of the Lib-Lab capture of Basildon's council and the major change in Basildon's boundaries; his importance was elevated temporarily by his early and unexpected victory in that marginal seat in the '92 election, which put paid to Labour's hopes; a Thatcherite Rightwinger, recently a Widdecombeite who was among to last supporters of her leadership bid; in Parkinson's 'Conservative Way Forward' group; the hyperactive, naively enthusiastic, bitterly partisan, articulate voice of local ratepayers; was one of the first to call for a poll tax; the former Redbridge Councillor who has deepened his constituency roots by publicising his over-egged local involvement; anti: litter, hunting; pro: hanging, animal welfare, warm homes for the elderly, Israel and, formerly, Apartheid South Africa; a Catholic opponent of abortion and embryo experimentation; "I'm interested in everything and expert in nothing" (DA); "I do not believe in the equality of men and women"; "if I were pressed, I would probably say that I believe that women are superior to men" (DA); "typical of homo essexus": "an industrious backbencher, but with a slightly less developed brain than Tory MPs further up the evolutionary chain"; "he shares his species' primitive beliefs - they still, for instance, worship Mrs Thatcher; and he is an enthusiast for hanging"; but he developed "a ruthlessly simple technique for securing his re-election: he never completed a sentence without mentioning his constituency" (Andrew Rawnsley, GUARDIAN);

**History:** At the age of 11 I decided that I wanted to be a Member of Parliament"; reacting against Labour's behaviour in Newham, joined the Conservative Party at 16, '69; contested seat on Newham Council May '74; contested GLC seat in Newham NW May '77; became Chairman of Newham NW Conservative Association and Chairman of its Forest Gate ward June '77; contested seat on Newham Council May '78; contested Newham NW against Arthur Lewis May '79; won seat on Redbridge Borough Council May '82; won altered Basildon, (thought to be safely Labour and therefore abandoned by its ex-MP Harvey Proctor), with help of SDP candidate Sue Slipman, who took 25% of vote; was the only victorious Tory

without a Tory councillor in his constituency June '83; supported restoration of death penalty allegedly saying, according to PA's Chris Moncrieff, "I would pull the lever" July '83; attacked unions for blocking Youth Training jobs Sep '83; urged removal of Henry Moore statue in front of Parliament Oct '83; urged privileged position for business ratepayers when councils fix rates Dec '83; strongly defended Rates (Capping of) Bill in Maiden Speech in which he backed a poll tax as an alternative to rates Jan '84; urged tour operators to guarantee safety of hotels they offered Feb '84; opposed further expansion of Basildon Apr '84; warned against dangers of walking into plate glass July '84; attacked Government's 3m subvention to International Planned Parenthood Federation because it accepted abortion Aug '84; urged better protection for Basildon schools because of 1.5m damage by arsonists Nov '84; again attacked abortion Dec '84; co-urged three-tier VAT to avoid increased tax on children clothing and books Jan '85; urged rate-capping Jan '85; voted against big increase in Top People's pay July '85; spoke at SPUC/Pro-Life anti-abortion rally on fringe of Tory Blackpool conference Oct '85; after an adjournment debate, took part in human chain demonstration against moving Basildon Hospital's maternity services to Orsett; he was accused of "hypocrisy" by Labour opponents who alleged move had been forced by Tory Government cuts Dec '85; complained about high cost of local district central heating Apr '86; claimed "research on human embryos cannot supply us with the answers that scientists are rightly seeking for the tragedies of infertility and other inherited disorders" May '86; warned Government: "we are not prepared to see the embryonic human being employed by scientists as guinea pigs" July '86; asked for information on local drug-pushers, which he passed on to Scotland Yard July '86; was one of 48 MPs (all Tories except Enoch Powell and Cyril Smith) who voted for right of parents to withdraw children from any sex education to which they objected Oct '86; supported Kenneth Hind's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill to ban embryo experimentation Oct '86; on eve of visit to Pope, urged more anti-abortion legislation Nov '86; urged more decent and varied housing within Basildon Nov '86; visited Poland Dec '86; again protested concentration of cancer treatment in constituency Mar '87; complained that vote against restoring capital punishment showed that Commons had not done "everything that we could to stop...murder" like that of his cousin's wife a year before Apr '87; in an adjournment debate, fiercely attacked overspending by Basildon district council, until recently Labour-controlled May '87; doubled his majority June '87; urged better provision for special education for those with learning difficulties like dyslexia, especially in Essex July '87; backed Mrs Thatcher's resistance to stiffened sanctions against South Africa Oct '87; co-sponsored Edward Leigh's Bill to report foreign girls having abortions in Britain to their home GPs Oct '87; deplored dangerous practice of driving while talking on carphones Dec '87; urged a taxi alarm system Jan '88; served on committee considering David Alton's abortion-curbing Bill Feb '88; urged taxis be obliged to handle disabled in wheelchairs Feb '88; enthused about the rate-capping of Basildon Feb '88; again introduced his protective Horses, Ponies and Donkeys Bill, this time successfully Mar-May '88; called for tune for "I Love Basildon", which he later recorded May '88; voting records again showed him to be very assiduous May '88; again urged capital punishment June '88; attacked litter-louts Jan '89; introduced Abortion (Right of Conscience) (Amendment) Bill to require doctors and nurses to give a positive indication of assent before being required to perform or assist at an abortion Feb '89; introduced Bill to give honorary British nationality to Raoul Wallenberg Mar '89; local elections showed a cut in the Tory vote by 11% in his constituency, indicating he might lose his seat May '89; again opposed abortion July '89; visited South Africa as guest of its government Sep-Oct '89; criticised televising of Commons debate on Queen's Speech Nov '89; introduced Adoption (Amendment) Bill to set up statutory controls Jan '90; opposed ordination of divorced men Feb '90; urged surcharging of Basildon's Labour-controlled council after it sent every resident a Valentine's card Mar '90; welcomed capping of Basildon's council Apr '90; opposed abortions as late as 24 weeks and foetus experimentation

Apr '90; introduced Dogs Bill to penalise cruel or careless owners or those who kept dangerous dogs Apr '90; visited Israel as guest of its government May-June '90; said it was "appalling" to allow abortion up to time of birth for foetuses of disabled June '90; again opposed televising Commons July '90; said he had not moved his Raoul Wallenberg (Memorial) Bill because Government had agreed to provide land for a memorial July '90; said he would vote to retain Mrs Thatcher as Leader because he owed his seat to her populist policies Nov '90; urged better transport for Basildon Dec '90; criticised timeshare schemes Mar '91; backed the Badgers Bill May '91; disclosed his late-night "anti-vandal" patrols in Basildon May '91; introduced Pet Animals (Amendment) Bill to ban sale of pets to children without parental agreement June '91; led an attack on BR's Sir Bob Reid before media to complain about Fenchurch Street line Nov '91; backed ban on hunting with hounds Feb '92; invited John Major to visit "Basildon - the finest and most exciting town in the country!" Feb '92; called for Basildon to be made a city, as the oldest and largest new town in the country with plans to build a cathedral Mar '92; had many famous visiting supporters, including Mrs Thatcher and fellow East End prole Norman Tebbit, during election campaign; campaigned on 'No More Tax'; TV- watchers knew the Tories had won when he retained his seat with a majority of 1,480 reduced by 1,169 by a swing to Labour of only 1.26% Apr '92; was named PPS to Chief Secretary Michael Portillo Apr '92; in the local elections, Tories swept the board May '92; secured permission from Westminster Council for a bust of Raoul Wallenberg to be placed in Cumberland Place Nov '92; urged a separate frequency for hospital radio Dec '92; introduced Children (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Bill to ban choice of sex at conception Feb '93; having bought Hoover products on their promise of free flights to the USA, was shocked at the subsequent "fiasco" Apr '93; his Children (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Bill was defeated 116 to 86, Apr '93; extensively attacked defeated local Labour councillors Apr '93; complained about "the slaughter of the innocents" in Bosnia Apr '93; complained about Basildon men "moving in and out of relationships with women, producing children and then abandoning those women and the children", thus increasing pressure on housing Apr '93; Conservatives lost control in Basildon, with Essex County Council being split equally among Labour, LibDem and Tories May '93; introduced Voluntary Personal Security Cards Bill to prove identity; it was given a First Reading May '93; strongly urged that no shopworker be forced to work on Sunday against his will Oct '93; introduced Football Matches (Violent and Disorderly Conduct) Bill to restrain hooligans Nov '93; complained about closure of Pitsea Post Office Nov '93; visited as a guest the headquarters in Omaha of First Data Resources, a constituency firm Jan '94; voted in favour of restoring capital punishment, also for killing policemen; voted against homosexual sex at 16, in favour at 18, Feb '94; attacked "the incompetence of the rotten, socialist Essex County Council", "a love affair between the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats" Mar '94; as the father of five children, he was offered a "do-it-yourself vasectomy kit" by Labour MP Tony Banks to reduce the strain he had imposed on the Basildon midwifery services Mar '94; all seven Amesses greeted John Major on his Basildon visit Apr '94; introduced Bill to make new drivers display the newness of their qualification Apr '94; the lobbyist Ian Greer offered a meeting with Amess, as PPS to Chief Secretary Michael Portillo, in the film of a pretend Russo-American company set up by Central TV's 'Cooke Report' to trap lobbyists at work; Amess: "I certainly knew nothing of this and Michael Portillo certainly cannot be seen to be compromised" May '94; complained that Fenchurch Street station had been closed for seven weeks June '94; met with tobacco lobbyists to help avoid a ban on tobacco advertising Nov '94; his wife Julia opposed any curb in Commons hours, since he would only spend them on constituency activities Dec '94; lined up in favour of banning fox-hunting Jan '95; resisted turning a beautiful wood in Basildon into a business park Jan '95; voted for the Bill to ban hunting Mar '95; his new Bill urged UK to withdraw from UN fund financing birth control in China May '95; complained that the Boundary Commission had "raped the town of Basildon" in creating an extra seat in Essex,

although they had made his marginal seat slightly safer June '95; since the LibDems and Labour had captured Basildon Council, he succeeded in being selected for safer Southend West on the retirement of Paul Channon, narrowly beating Eleanor Laing; he was jokingly described as being "the only Tory to have moved closer to Europe" July '95; John Prescott described him as "clucking off to become Southend Fried Chicken" in the 'chicken run' of frightened Tories Oct '95; made a powerful speech extolling Raoul Wallenberg Feb '96; on TV agreed to play noughts and crosses on a young woman's stomach with a marker pen with fellow Tory MP David Martin Feb '96; derided Tony Blair's "sanctimonious humbug" Apr '96; introduced Freezing of Human Embryos Bill to ban the practice Apr '96; backed a 3% cap on MPs' wage increases, opposed basing MPs' pensions on 43,000 July '96; exploded incoherently about attacks on him for sending his son to an RC single-sex school 8 miles outside his constituency Oct '96; was tricked by Channel 4 into putting down a question about a non-existent drug Nov '96; his Abortion (Amendment) Bill tried to tighten the grounds for allowing termination Dec '96; a MORI Poll for The SUN showed that "the Tories have sensationally lost the support of Basildon Man and Woman", plunging to half their '92 support Dec '96; said he opposed a single European currency Apr '97; after a "poisonous, wicked campaign" emanating from his LibDem opponent, retained Southend West with a narrow majority of 2,615 over her, after a 9.1% anti-Tory swing May '97; in his new Maiden, pledged "to establish Southend as the premier seaside resort in the country" May '97; in the Leadership contest he initially supported Peter Lilley June '97; visited Cyprus with costs paid by Greek Cypriots Aug '97; again was guest of Greek Cypriots Sep '97; he sought to reform quarantine regulations to enable pets to be imported more readily Sep '97; he was one of 8 Tory MPs to back Labour MP Mike Foster's anti-hunting Bill Nov '97; his adjournment debate asked for more help for Southend West than asked for by its local authorities Nov '97; accused "this rotten Labour Government" of cutting disability benefits which Harriet Harman insisted had been "crafted, fashioned and consulted on" by her predecessor as Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley Jan '98; he introduced a 10-minute-rule Bill for voluntary personal security cards Feb '98; was named to the Health Select Committee ??? '98; was mistakenly invited by Labour Whips to a briefing to supply him with 'helpful' supplementaries to Home Office questions Mar '98; signed an anti-abortion motion May '98; again visited Cyprus as guest of its Greeks Oct '98; he complained that Britain was being "Americanised" by Tony Blair's "deeply damaging" friendship with lying Bill Clinton Dec '98; was accused by Parliamentary watchdog Sir Gordon Downey of breaking Commons rules by signing pro-Greek motion on Cyprus without declaring his junkets there, as required Feb '99; he backed a motion deploring Russia's ban on Jehovah's Witnesses Mar '99; when invited, Tony Blair replied "I have no plans to visit Southend West and I rather think the hon gentleman didn't either until he saw the writing on the wall in Basildon" May '99; he filibustered for over an hour against Alan Milburn's Bill to reform the NHS June '99; when Michael Portillo confessed to his early homosexuality, Amess, his former PPS, urged his potential leadership backers to concentrate on "his record in Government" Sep '99; with other Tory MPs he signed a letter to the DAILY TELEGRAPH opposing the "emasculatation" of the RUC Oct'99; he came 5th in the ballot for Private Members' Bills, opting for his Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Bill Nov '99; he introduced a 10-minute-rule Bill to prevent cruelty to zoo and circus animals Mar '00; asked: "How can the Foreign Secretary be considering a visit to Iran which actually carries out the gouging of eyes and the amputation of the limbs of its citizens?" Apr '00; his Bill against fuel poverty, backed by Tory environment spokesman Damian Green, was initially threatened by Rightwing Tory MPs David Maclean and Eric Forth who put down 70 amendments to expose its lack of financial commitment; he outwitted his Bill's Tory saboteurs by changing the date it was to be debated at the last minute June '00; after it became an Act, he hailed it as his "proudest achievement"; he produced a bag of chickenfeed to worst Labour MPs clucking like hens to recall his "chicken run" from Basildon to Southend West

when calling attention to Labour's loss of overall control on Basildon Council June '00; he introduced 10-Minute-Rule Bill to raise the minimum age for buying pets from 12 to 16, to avoid wholesale abandonment after Christmas Nov '00; he finally succeeded, after exploiting every recess adjournment debate, in securing funds to reopen his constituency's Palace Theatre Dec '00; he fiercely attacked the "deeply flawed" Health and Social Care Bill as a pre-election gimmick Jan '01; he was one of several MPs and Peers opposing the proscribing of the Iranian Mojahedin as "an insult to the Iranian people" Mar '01; he claimed it was "ridiculous" to set targets for the number of children excluded from school Apr '01; he sought to amend the Consumer Credit Act to protect "vulnerable" customers against misleading 'personal debt service' firms Apr '01; he increased his majority by over 5,000 votes, largely from the fall of 6,000 in the LibDem vote June '01; attacking the "backbiters" around rival Michael Portillo, Ann Widdecombe abandoned her leadership campaign when left with the support only of Amess and another Catholic traditionalist, Julian Brazier June '01; he ridiculed LibDem pretensions in his constituency, where they had lost "more than 6,000 votes" June '01; was named to the Chairmen's Panel July '01; using the same constituency-flattering technique he had used in Basildon, he described Southend as "the finest seaside resort in the country", urging better support for local fishermen July '01; GUARDIAN sketchwriter Simon Hoggart demanded Westminster council "consider a noise abatement order to protect those of us obliged to listen" to his speaking "at a volume slightly higher than Mr Paisley" Nov '01; he attacked the abolition of the Community Health Councils in the Government's NHS Reform and Health Care Professions Bill as "ill thought out and shambolic" and opposed by the best-informed Labour MPs Jan '02; accused the Blair Government of being "in complete disarray", particularly over teaching and education Mar '02; backed a total ban on hunting Mar '02; claimed that "the amount of taxation raised each year is now 110b higher than when this rotten government first came to power" Apr '02; voted for a total ban on hunting Dec '02; voted against David Winnick's motion to abolish the Lords' remaining hereditaries July '03;

**Born:** 26 March 1952, Plaistow, London

**Family:** Son, late James H V Amess, electrician, and Maud Ethel (Martin), dressmaker; "we were very poor and lived in a small terraced house with no bathroom, an outside toilet and a tin bath hanging on the wall"; his cousin's wife was killed by 52 stab wounds in a multi-story carpark in Worcester in '86; m '83 Julia (Arnold), former insurance underwriter; 1s David James '84; 4d Katherine Louise '85, Sarah Elizabeth '88, Alexandra Charlotte Clementine '90, Florence Rebecca '91; "I have five children, which is not unusual for Basildon"; "I attended the birth of every one of the children - in fact, I think I could quite easily deliver a baby by now!"; Ann Widdecombe is the godmother of his daughter Alexandra;

**Education:** St Antony's Junior School, Forest Gate ("I was often in classes of 50 and the teachers still gave us excellent tuition and kept order to a high standard" (DA)); St Bonaventure's Grammar School, Newham ("I was quite bossy and pushy" (DA); he allegedly hit one fellow student over the head with a bicycle pump); Bournemouth College of Technology (BSc Econ Hons lower second);

**Occupation:** Author: *The Basildon Experience* (1994), *The Road to Basildon* (1993); Parliamentary Adviser, to the Caravan Club (5,000) '97-; Spokesman (unpaid), for National Association of Hospital Broadcasting Organisations '87-; ex: Chairman: Accountancy Aims Group (specialist employment agency) '90-97, A & G Executive Search and Selection '85-87; Senior Partner, in Accountancy Aids (specialist employment consultancy) '81-87; Senior Consultant, with Executemps Company Agency '79-81; Head of Temporary Department of Accountancy Personnel '76-79; Underwriter with Leslie Godwin Agency '74-76; Teacher '70-71 ("for 18 months I taught at a junior mixed school, St John the Baptist in Bonner Road, Bethnal Green; I specialised in teaching children who were described as ESN");

**Traits:** Blond hair, frequently re-styled; long face; strong chin; "a split-melon grin" (Andrew Rawnsley, GUARDIAN); "foppishly good-looking" (GUARDIAN); "cheeky Cockney chappie" (Nicholas Timmins, INDEPENDENT); ultra-noisy: "a deaf-Tory voice...like a hooligan's foghorn" without "volume control"; "may not be clinically insane" (Simon Carr, INDEPENDENT) gullible; convivial ("what I'm always impressed by is when some MPs give up alcohol for Lent; that to me is quite astonishing" - DA); "young, smart, upwardly-mobile and distinctly Southern"; has "an Estuary English accent" (Matthew Parris, TIMES); punchy speaker; "ebullient" (Sir David Mitchell ex-MP); "I suspect that Members of Parliament are not, by and large, modest people; you've got to have a high opinion of yourself and you need a vivid imagination to accept the idea that someone pushes you into being a Member of Parliament" (DA); "I am a lifelong supporter of West Ham United and since June 1983 I have been a supporter of Basildon United" (DA); grasshopper conversationalist; hayfever sufferer ("I would try anything to cure hay fever"); ex-dyslexic: "until the age of five I had the nickname of `Double Dutch'; I had a very bad stutter: I could not make the sounds `st' or `th'; the reason that I have no Cockney accent now is that I had to go to a speech therapist for three years"; RC ("confession is very important to me" - DA);

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