



# HALL OF MIRRORS

## MI5's Director-Generals resurrected from the past

Between 1909, when the Security Service was founded (as the Secret Service Bureau) and the present day, there have been fifteen Director-Generals. Until 1993, the Prime Minister appointed them in secret, and their names and roles were not disclosed to the general public.

The first Director-General to be publicly named was Dame Stella Rimington, although the names of several previous DGs had become public knowledge before then. Since 1993, it has been the Service's policy to name its Directors General. Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller is the current Director General.

In keeping with its recent policy to present a 'user friendly' service, and on the orders of its current Director-General - Eliza Manningham-Buller, Britain's Security Service (MI5) has published photographs and small biographies of all its previous heads.

After nearly 100 years of trying to keep the identity of its most senior officers secret, the service has taken the welcome decision allowing the public to examine in great detail Britain's domestic spymasters. For a number of them, it's the first time they have ever "appeared in public".

When Dame Stella Rimington was appointed Director-General

in 1993, the government took the unprecedented decision to name her publicly. It's was a world away from the service's early policy. Founded in 1903, it was the Prime Minister who selected a person for the post. Up until Dame Stella's 'keep', the identity of the head of MI5 was kept secret - at least from the public. Indeed, the 1980s had almost expired before Downing Street finally admitted that the service even existed. Since then, MI5 staff recruitment adverts have appeared, and in 2000 the service opened its website. How times have changed.

MI5's website, unlike other government departments, incorporates hi-resolution images of the men and women

who for nearly a century, have engaged in a battle of wits against a plethora of spies, dictators and war mongers. Movie goers expecting a gallery of dashing agents and shadowy characters might be a little disappointed. However, for the true connoisseur of the intelligence world, the move is significant. It also dispels any remaining myths that MI5 are entrapped in 'establishment circles', for clearly not all associated with the service (past and present), would agree with the move. Nevertheless, the website is aimed at the public and business world, thus by providing pictures of those charged with the defence of the realm, MI5 has again provided ample evidence of a modern organisation, despite claims

that it is still not fully accountable to the public.

Some of the names of the fifteen people are legendary, including the original Director-General Captain Vernon Kell who co-founded the Secret Service Bureau, the predecessor of MI5. He remained in the post until the early part of the WWII.

Christopher Andrew, one of the world's leading intelligence

experts said: "What these photographs disguise is the vastly different characters of the former DGs." Professor Andrew, who was appointed by the government to write MI5's official history, said he believes Sir David Petrie, who is pictured for the first time and who battled long and hard against Hitler's spies, was "one of the best heads."

MI5 also feature Sir Roger Hollis. He headed the service between 1956 and 1964. There were allegations that Sir Roger was a Soviet spy, though these have never been proven. Only four former heads are still alive.

LINKS  
[www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page417.html](http://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page417.html)

He oversaw one of the busiest periods in the Service's history, during which the Service carried out many successful intelligence operations against Nazi Germany.

Sir Percy Sillitoe (1888-1962)  
4th Director General, 1946-1953



**1** Major-General Sir Vernon Kell (1873-1942)  
1st Director General, 1909-1940



In 1909, Captain Vernon Kell (as he then was) co-founded the Secret Service Bureau, the first incarnation of the Security Service. He successfully masterminded the dismantling of the German spy network in the UK on the outbreak of World War I.

In 1931, he became the first Director-General of the Security Service and by 1939 had been promoted to the rank of Major-General.

He was retired in June 1940 by the recently-appointed Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.

**2** Brigadier A.W.A. Harker  
2nd Director General, 1940-1941



He became the Service's new Deputy Director General a year later when Sir David Petrie took on the permanent role of Director General.

Brigadier Harker replaced Sir Vernon Kell as Acting Director General of the Security Service, having

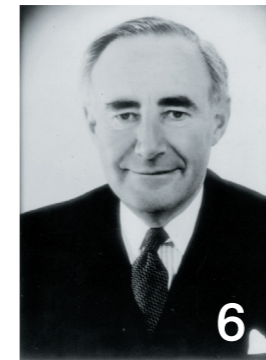
been promoted from the Service's "B" division. He was a long-serving colleague of Kell's who, like the former Director General, had been recruited from the Army.

He became the Service's new Deputy Director General a year later when Sir David Petrie took on the permanent role of Director General.

Sir David Petrie (1879-1961)  
3rd Director General, 1941-1946

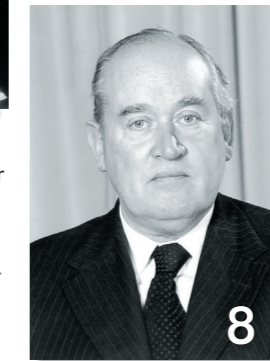
Sir David served in the Indian Police from 1900-

1936, acting in a variety of police intelligence roles, before joining the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). He was transferred from SIS to become head of the Security Service in 1941.



Budapest in 1946. He joined the Security Service in 1948.

He became Deputy Director General in 1971 and was promoted to Director General the following year.

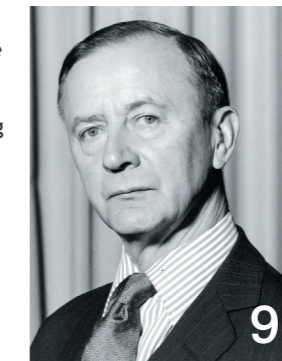


Sir Howard Smith (1919-1996)  
9th Director General, 1978-1981

Sir Howard joined the Service after a long and distinguished career with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

During his 32 years in the Foreign Service he held a variety of posts, including serving as the British ambassador to Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

He became Director General of the Security Service in 1978.



Sir John Jones (1923-1998)  
10th Director General, 1981-1985

Sir John was a former officer in the Royal Artillery and served as a civil servant in the pre-independence Government of Sudan. He joined the Security Service in 1955.



He became Deputy Director General in 1976. He succeeded Sir Howard Smith as Director General in 1981.

In 1983, he was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB) by HM The Queen.

Sir Antony Duff (1920-2000)  
11th Director General, 1985-1987



Like his predecessor-but-one, Sir Antony had a distinguished diplomatic career before joining the Service as its Director General. He served in a variety of high-profile roles with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, serving as the last Deputy Governor of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) before its independence in 1980.

He subsequently became Deputy Secretary at the Cabinet Office before moving to the Security Service, which he headed for two years.

Sir Patrick Walker (1932-)  
12th Director General, 1987-1992

Sir Patrick joined the Security Service in 1963, following a period of service in the pre-independence government of Uganda.

He became Director General in 1987, overseeing the Service's transition through the end of the Cold War before his retirement in 1992.

Dame Stella Rimington (1935-)  
13th Director General, 1992-1996

Dame Stella was the first woman to become Director General of the Security Service and in 1993 became the first publicly acknowledged DG. She joined the Service in 1969 and worked in a variety of roles, including counter-subversion and counter-terrorism.

She was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the Bath in 1996 and published her autobiography, *Open Secret*, in 2001.

Sir Stephen Lander (1947- )  
14th Director General, 1996-2002

Sir Stephen joined the Service in 1975 and became Director General in 1996, serving in that capacity until his retirement from the Service in 2002.

He subsequently became the Law Society's Independent Commissioner.

In 2004 he became the Chairman-Designate of the Serious Organised Crime Agency, a new body which is due to become operational from 1 April 2006.



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