

The Iron Lady's legacy in many walks of our



Many of the legacies of Margaret Thatcher's 33 years in parliament, 11 of them spent leading Britain, live on to this day. Metro's Political Editor **JOHN HIGGINSON** looks back at some of those that have changed the way we live today for better or worse.

THE LEGACY: Home ownership

	1980	1997	2012
Numbers owning homes	9.7m	13.6m	14.4m
Numbers renting private homes	2m	2.1m	3.8m
Numbers renting social properties	5.4m	4.2m	3.8m

Source: Department for Communities and Local Government: English Housing Survey

THE LEGACY: Privatisation

State controlled companies sold under Thatcher

1982-86: Jaguar, BT, Cable & Wireless, British Aerospace, Britoil and British Gas

1987-91: British Steel, British Petroleum, Rolls Royce, British Airways, water and electricity among utilities for sale

Post-Thatcher

1992-96: British Coal, Powergen, National Power, British Rail

1997-2001: Labour introduces Private Finance Initiative

THE POLL TAX

Designed to replace council tax rates, the community charge was introduced in 1989.

It was deeply unpopular with some because it was based on the number of people living in a house rather than the home's value. The poll tax riots in 1990 were instrumental in toppling Lady Thatcher. They also made successive prime ministers wary about changes to progressive taxes.

HOUSING

Margaret Thatcher believed home ownership should be a dream for everyone. She started the right-to-buy

scheme in the 1980s that allowed council tenants to buy their houses at a discount.

Today an estimated 2million homes have been sold in this way – but critics argue it has led to a shortage of social housing.

THE BIG BANG

British banking was in decline with New York ahead of London in the 1980s. The Thatcher government believed this was because of over-regulation and an elitist old-boy network.

The rules of the FTSE-100 were relaxed on October 27, 1986. This led to London regaining its title as

the financial capital of the world. Many ordinary people can now trade shares without the need for help from expensive stock brokers.

PRIVATISATION

Lady Thatcher was a strong believer in the power of competition.

She sold off many water and electricity providers in the 1980s along

with British Airways and BT. The sell-off raised cash and improved productivity but cost jobs.

EU REBATE

In 1984 Margaret Thatcher demanded a rebate from the European Union because Britain, with its relatively small farming industry, did not benefit as much as other members from

the common agricultural policy. Britain still gets a rebate to this day.

UNIONS

Margaret Thatcher was committed to reducing trade union power.

Several launched strikes in response to legislation introduced to curb their power. The biggest stand-off was with the National Union of Mine-

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workers over plans to close 20 state-owned mines and cut 20,000 jobs.

She won the dispute at a cost of £1.5billion to the economy and the loss of thousands of jobs in communities that have still not recovered.

FALKLANDS WAR

The conflict was sparked when Argentine forces invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands on April 2, 1982. Lady Thatcher dispatched a naval task force to retake them.

The resulting conflict lasted 74 days and ended with the Argentine surrender on 14 June 1982. During the fighting, 649 Argentine military personnel, 255 British military personnel



Conflict: HMS Antelope is attacked during the Falklands War before Lady Thatcher joined troops to celebrate victory against Argentina in 1982. PICTURE: MARTIN CLEAVER



She is a great stateswoman, holding her own among all the statesmen of the world
Ronald Reagan, 1989

and three Falkland Islanders died. Argentina still claims sovereignty of the islands.

COLD WAR

Lady Thatcher allowed then US president Ronald Reagan to place nuclear bombs in Britain after the Soviet Union placed nuclear warheads in Eastern Europe.

But she also formed a bond with Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev that helped to start the disarmament process with the US.

Following one of her speeches criticising the USSR, a Soviet paper called her 'The Iron Lady' – which supporters used as proof of her strength.

THE LEGACY: Women

Female MPs elected in general elections

1979	1997	2010
19	120	142

Pay – hourly earnings

	1979	1997	2009
Men	£2.32	£10.14	£13.11
Women	£1.66	£8.04	£11.91

Female full-time pay as % of male full-time hourly earnings

	72%	79%	91%
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Number of marriages

1979	1997	2009
368,853	272,536	231,490

Sources: ONS; House of Commons

Feminist icon or a barrier to progress?

'I HATE feminism. It is poison,' Margaret Thatcher famously told an adviser. Since her premiership, Britain has not had a female prime minister or opposition leader. And 34 years after her first general election victory, less than a quarter of MPs are women. Some blame Lady Thatcher herself for this because, with the exception of Baroness Young, no women were promoted to her cabinet or to junior minister. Many of her policies are said to have hindered female career progression – she froze child benefit, refused to invest in affordable childcare and attacked working mothers for raising a 'creche generation'. Former Labour minister Patricia Hewitt said yesterday: 'She broke through the glass ceiling in politics. But it is a tragedy that, having become the UK's first woman prime minister, she did so much to undermine the position of women in society.' Novelist Lionel Shriver told the Slate website: 'Margaret Thatcher was a real feminist. Not for what she said but for what she did. She did not pursue justice for her gender – women's rights per se were clearly a low priority for her.'

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