



Andrew Gimson on the Conservative Home website responds to David Ruffley standing down – apparently assaulting your partner is like eloping with her.

<http://www.conservativehome.com/thetorydiary/2014/07/once-the-deans-letter-was-published-ruffleys-resignation-was-inevitable.html>

Andrew Gimson is indignant that David Ruffley has been forced to stand down at the next election. In a lengthy article, he expresses this indignation by, initially, comparing the events since March to an Anthony Trollope novel.

Gimson is full of praise for Ruffley, of how his friends find him

a tremendously enjoyable man to talk to about politics: witty, incisive, indiscreet, independent. They like the way in which, unlike some old-style Tories, he lets his emotions show, and admits to personal vulnerability.

I'm guessing that the emotions he shows to his friends are not the "rage and violent behavior" feared by his ex-partner.

It seemed Mr Ruffley's calculation in his latest embarrassment might also turn out to be right. If he said nothing, and his former partner said nothing, and the police saw no reason to press for charges to be brought against him, what more was to be said?

It seems that, to Gimson, committing assault is an "embarrassment". Gimson also seems unable to grasp that accepting a warning from the police is generally seen as an admission of guilt. The fact that Ruffley was not charged is not evidence of his innocence.

But the Dean rose in her wrath. She at least would have the courage to break this despicable conspiracy of silence: this sordid agreement that domestic violence was not really such a serious matter, and we all sometimes did regrettable things on the spur of the moment, and the best thing was to forget about it.

Nice use of sarcasm, Mr Gimson. It appears that you believe the Dean over-reacted and that committing assault *is* nothing more than a "regrettable thing" that we all do "on the spur of the moment".

Even the victim, though distraught, might not thirst for vengeance.

The Dean explicitly states in her letter than she has permission from the victim to send it but it suits Gimson to imply that the Dean acted against Ruffley's victim's wishes and that the Dean



is acting out of vengeance.

Gimson, of, course, gives Guido Fawkes and mainstream media all the credit of publicising the case, with no mention of the Fawcett Society or EVB. I can only assume he's either never heard of feminists or believes that they cannot possibly be effective.

For the avoidance of doubt, I do not support domestic violence. Nor, I would guess, does Mr Ruffley. No one in public life supports domestic violence.

Interesting how many figures in public life find no conflict between stating that they “do not support domestic violence” and still either committing domestic violence or supporting those who do.

Nor does the law of the land, under which Mr Ruffley received a caution, but was not charged.

Someone please explain to Gimson that he is still not making the point he thinks he's making. See above.

But as Trollope would have described so well, the full unanswerable force of moral condemnation was now unleashed against him. He no longer had a private life. His previous public services were of no account. In order to demonstrate how upright our society is, he had to be destroyed.

Nice hyperbole from Mr Gimson. Ruffley still has a private life. Committing assault against a partner is *not* “a private life”, it is a crime and, as such, automatically public. Ruffley is not being destroyed. He is being told, in no uncertain terms, that certain crimes are not acceptable in a member of parliament.

Macaulay saw how unfair this procedure was:

“We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels, pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it

Gimson compares common assault to “elopements, divorces and family quarrels”. To him, apparently, the domestic violence he does not support is no worse than two people running away together to get married.

But once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose



offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice...If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it.”

As Gimson should know, the fact that hundreds of others guilty of domestic violence have been treated with unwarranted leniency is actually no argument for treating everyone guilty of domestic violence with undue leniency. Nor was this some virtuous witch hunt of a mere “libertine”, accused of nothing more than an exciting sex life.

Mr Ruffley is so steeped in politics, one imagines he will find some other way of practising that profession.

So, Mr Gimson, Ruffley has neither been “destroyed” nor been “driven from his profession” after all, then? I suspect Gimson is right, of course, since so many public figures so strong in not supporting domestic violence seem equally as strong in supporting those of their colleagues who commit it.