

Baroness Altmann reviews 'Political Currency'



'Political Currency' podcast hosts: Ed Balls and George Osborne | Image courtesy of Persephonica



Baroness Altmann

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Given the hateful tone of much of our political debate, Ed Balls and George Osborne's personal chemistry makes this podcast a refreshing listen

Given the hateful tone of much of our political debate these days, it is refreshing to hear sworn political opponents George Osborne and Ed Balls uniting in friendly banter, reminiscences and intellectual exchange on their new podcast, *Political Currency*.

Full of interesting insights into party political history from a policy perspective, it does help listeners understand how big decisions are made, and how policy develops over time, such as the evolution of China-United Kingdom relations from openness under Labour, to increasing security concerns after 2010.

Of course the most interesting part, for me, was about the state pensions triple lock. It was disappointing that neither a former chancellor nor his shadow seemed aware of the policy's details – indicating that political concerns were the key driver of state pension policy, rather than helping Britain's pensioners.



Their discussion about fighting inflation and using the Saudi Arabian crown prince's imminent visit to discuss controlling oil price rises was enlightening

Work and Pensions Secretary Mel Stride's recent hints about watering down the triple lock's earnings-uprating pledge found favour with George Osborne, suggesting this would set a political trap for the Opposition and force Labour to justify funding for higher state pension increases, despite intergenerational "fairness" and affordability concerns.

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Ed Balls disagreed strongly, calling Mel Stride's speech "crackers" – pretty strong language but politically understandable given the triple lock Conservative manifesto pledge and pensioner voting propensities. I did, though, agree when they both suggested a cross-party review of state pension uprating and commended the reduction of pensioner poverty.

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I would prefer more time devoted to audience Q&A, with two hugely experienced politicians helping people understand how government works. Overall, though, Ed and George's chemistry works well, and I would definitely recommend this for anyone interested in politics or policymaking.

Baroness Altmann is a Conservative peer

Political Currency

Hosts: George Osborne & Ed Balls

Broadcaster: Available on all platforms, new episodes each Thursday