From youthful member of far-Right group to expenses and bullying scandals, outrage of a... Speaker who’s on one-man mission to destroy Brexit

HEN John Bercow broke his promise about quitting after nine years as Speaker, his officials said he wanted to stay on to ‘see through Brexit’.

While he didn’t address the subject publicly himself, his friends wanted it known that he was not trying to thwart Britain’s departure from the EU, but simply felt ‘very strongly that there must be parliamentary scrutiny’ of the process.

However, it was universally recognised by long-time Bercow-watchers that he was on a one-man mission to delay or scupper Brexit altogether.

For the Speaker has made no secret of his disdain for Brexit and flaunted his contempt for it.

Most notoriously, a bright-yellow ‘Bo***cks to Brexit’ sticker was spotted on the windscreen of a car parked outside his official residence – which he said belonged to his wife.

Most people in Westminster believed he sympathised with the slogan, particularly since he was recorded at about the same time last year telling students: ‘I thought it was better to stay in the EU than not.’ To the same audience at Reading University, he spoke about what he called ‘untruths’ about the pro-Brexit campaign and ‘promises that were made that could not be kept’.

By convention going back centuries, the Speaker is supposed to stay above the party political fray.

But, most notably, he has chided Labour for not doing more to win the referendum and for not ‘striking a very clear resonant Remain note’.

The truth is that during his almost ten years as Speaker, the 56-year-old taxi driver’s son has shamefully degraded the reputation of the Commons.

He was elected in the wake of the MPs’ expenses scandal and it was hoped that there would be a new era of rectitude in the Commons.

BUT, to many, the wrong message had been sent to voters because Bercow himself had repaid £6,500 to the tax authorities after it was disclosed that he had ‘binned’ the designation of his second
SUBSEQUENTLY, BBC2’s Newshight reported that he had bullied a senior Commons clerk, Kate Emms. The bullying was allegedly so sustained that Miss Emms eventually quit with post-traumatic stress disorder. Bercow denied the allegations.

Another former private secretary, Angus Sinclair, told the BBC that Bercow had bullied and intimidated him. Bercow rejected these claims, too.

Cabinet ministers have complained about being abused by Bercow. He is said to have called Leader of the House Andrea Leadsom a ‘stupid woman’ and ‘****** useless’ in the Commons chamber. Bercow tried to defuse the row by admitting he muttered the word ‘stupid’ during a disagreement with her about the time-table of legislation, but denied insulting her personally.

But this was just one of several worrying stories about Bercow. They started when, as a young man, he joined a Conservative youth group that produced ‘Hang Nelson Mandela’ posters. He was an officer of the now-banned Monday Club which backed repatriation for black people.

This was the same organisation that, in 1969, had launched a campaign to make the anti-immigration Tory MP, Enoch Powell, Conservative leader. Interestingly, back then, like Powell, Bercow was a staunch Euro-sceptic.

Over the following years, he proceeded to go on a remarkable political journey from Right to Left. He resigned from the Tory front bench over the party’s refusal to back gay adoption in 2002. It is clear, though, that he had already targeted being Speaker.

Having won election to the green leather ‘throne’, he spent £45,000 on the refurbishment of his official residence, despite being warned by officials it might be seen as excessive. The work included £7,524 on a new sofa and window seat cushions for the drawing room.

Seemingly oblivious to the contradiction, he also spent £367 of taxpayers’ money on a car journey to Luton to deliver a speech on how MPs were restoring their reputation after the expenses scandal. A train fare would have been less than £30.

Such is the anger of ministers with John Bercow this morning, they would happily pay £367,000 out of their own pockets to buy him a single ticket to Timbuktu.
‘I thought it was aimed at our Brexit-wrecking MPs’