**[Michael Portillo](http://www.parliamentspeakers.com/Speaker/Michael%2BPortillo%2B%2BRt%2BHon/)**

**Former Politician**

Michael Portillo brings his vast knowledge and understanding of global issues to conferences around the globe.  He is able to offer a unique insight to the issues that will shape our world, be they economic, political, commercial, or social.

The son of a refugee from the Spanish Civil War, Michael was born in England and attended Harrow County Grammar School, before progressing to Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he gained a first class degree in History.

He left Cambridge in 1975, and for a year worked for a shipping company. He moved to the Conservative Research Department in 1976, where he spent three years. At the General Election in 1979 he was responsible for briefing Margaret Thatcher before her press conferences. For the next two years he was special adviser to the Secretary of State for Energy.

He worked for Kerr McGee Oil (UK) Ltd from 1981 - 1983. He contested the Birmingham Perry Bar seat at the 1983 Election.

Michael returned to politics as a special adviser to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Nigel Lawson) and in December 1984 won the by-election in Enfield Southgate, caused by the murder of Sir Anthony Berry MP in the Brighton bombing. Michael represented the seat for thirteen years but was defeated in the 1997 Election.

He joined the Government in 1986, and remained a member until 1997. He was a whip, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Social Security, Minister of State for Transport, Minister of State for Local Government and Inner Cities; and as a Cabinet Minister was Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Secretary of State for Employment, and Secretary of State for Defence. He was admitted to the Privy Council in 1992.

After his 1997 electoral defeat, Michael returned to Kerr McGee as an adviser. He also turned to journalism. He wrote about walking as a pilgrim on the Santiago Way, and working as a hospital porter. He had a weekly column in *The Scotsman*. He had a three part series for Channel 4 about politics *Portillo’s Progress*, and a programme in BBC2’s *Great Railway Journeys* series, which was partly a biography of his late father, and radio programmes on Wagner and the Spanish Civil War.

Michael was re-elected to Parliament in a by-election in Kensington and Chelsea in November 1999 and was Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer February 2000 - September 2001. Following the Conservatives’ election defeat in 2001, Michael unsuccessfully contested the leadership of the party. In 2005 Michael left the House of Commons.

He has made a number of television programmes for BBC2 including Art that shook the world: Richard Wagner’s Ring, Portillo in Euroland, Elizabeth I in the series Great Britons, When Michael Portillo became a single mum, Portillo Goes Wild in Spain (a natural history programme) and The Science of Killing (for Horizon). There followed documentaries on the unburied bodies from the Spanish Civil War and Guantanamo Bay.  In 2010 BBC Radio 4 carried his 3-part series “Democracy on Trial”. For BBC4 he has made several series of Dinner with Portillo, a discussion programme, and in 2008 The Lady’s not for Spurning (about Margaret Thatcher’s legacy). In 2006 he joined The Moral Maze team on BBC Radio 4. In 2003 he began the weekly political discussion programme This Week on BBC1 with fellow presenters Andrew Neil and Diane Abbott MP. Beginning in 2004 Michael became a frequent columnist on The Sunday Times and was the theatre critic of The New Statesman between 2004 and 2006. In 2008 he chaired the judges of the Man Booker prize.

Michael is a member of the International Commission on Missing Persons in the former Yugoslavia (which organises the identification of massacre victims) under the chairmanship of Jim Kimsey, and sat on of the Board of BAE Systems plc from 2002 to 2006. He joined the board of the Kerr McGee Corporation in 2006.  He is President of DebRA, the national charity working on behalf of people with the genetic skin blistering condition, Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB). He was British chairman of the British-Spanish Tertulias (an annual high level conference) 2004-2008.

In 2009 and 2010 he has made 45 half hour programmes for “Great British Railway Journeys”.  The second series is currently showing on BBC 2.

Feedback from our clients prove Michael to be a most charismatic, eloquent, informed and humorous speaker.  He would be delighted to speak at your conference on any subject in which he has gained experience (see above), or to act as a facilitator, chairman, awards host or after dinner speaker.

[**To book Michael Portillo to speak at your event, please contact Parliament on:
+44(0)1202 24 24 24**](http://www.parliamentspeakers.com/Speaker/Michael%2BPortillo%2B%2BRt%2BHon/FromSearch)