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Graphics & Design: Richard Byrne

ISSN 1744-6996

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LLANELLY HOUSE

(otherwise 'I'm Sure This Wasn't In My Job Description')

Lynn Davies Town Clerk Llanelli Town Council

Viewers of last year's first BBC2 'Restoration' series will no doubt recall that, from the ten entries which got to the final at the Tower of London, the winner was the Victoria Baths, Manchester. But just outside the top three came the sole Welsh finalist, Llanelly House. All of us involved with the project to restore this fine building, though naturally disappointed not to have won, were delighted with the series and the attendant publicity, and with the tremendous level of support which the house had received from far and near.

I don't suppose for a moment that there are any, but - just in case - for the benefit of any readers not familiar with the geography of Wales, Llanelly (the English spelling as used when the house was built) House can be found in the town of Llanelli (the original - and now official - Welsh spelling). A coastal town situated in Carmarthenshire in south-west Wales some twelve miles west of Swansea, Llanelli is historically more synonymous with tinsplate, steel and coal (each now all but gone) and - last but by no means least - rugby.

But close to the town centre opposite the Parish Church, largely forgotten until recent years, stands the architectural gem that is Llanelly House. Now a Grade 1 listed building, this Georgian town house - very unusual for this part of the country - was built in the early 1700's by Thomas Stepney, M.P. for Carmarthenshire and has had a very chequered history, matching that of the Stepney family. One of its claims to fame - apart, that is, from Laurence Llewelyn Bowen's visit earlier this year (of which more later) - is that John Wesley, the Apostle of Wesleyan Methodism, stayed there on several occasions during his visits to the town.

By the mid-1990's the house lay vacant and its condition was rapidly deteriorating, with no prospect of the private owner being in a position to do anything about it. So it was that, in September 1998, Llanelli Town Council took the bold step of purchasing Llanelly House with a view to securing the future of this very important part of the town's heritage, restoring it to its former glory and bringing it into public use as a cultural and heritage centre.

It is fair to say that the project has made very slow progress, which is perhaps not that surprising given the labyrinthine processes and detailed requirements of grant funding bodies. Before application forms can be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders, a great deal of preparatory work is needed and a range of studies and reports put in place. A small team of consultants headed by William Wilkins, CBE was appointed to take the project forward. After the excitement and euphoria of the 'Restoration' series had died down, a two-phase investigative contract was undertaken during the latter part of 2003 and early 2004.



This involved the stripping-off and removal of boarding, partitioning, false ceilings, etc. which had been added to the interior over many years. At the same time an extensive programme of historic paint sampling was completed. This essential work was necessary to reveal and facilitate the study of the historic fabric and finishes of the house interior.

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Dr. Warwick Rodwell, Project Archaeologist, supervised the work, and he has confirmed that the exercise turned out to be very much more complex and interesting than was initially believed. But now the architectural and social history of Llanelly House is broadly understood, and the physical evidence has been assembled for an authentic restoration of this fine building. It will greatly assist in the preparation of the Conservation Plan, an essential element of any grant application.

In the course of this work two rather mysterious over-mantel paintings, which are believed to date back to the completion of this Georgian house in 1714 and which had

miraculously survived intact, were removed and sent to the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Viewers may recall that Ptolemy Dean and Marianne Suhr uncovered one of them when they were filming the programme about the house.

The artist and the scenes depicted have not yet been identified, and the paintings are not considered valuable, but they are an intrinsic part of the house and will be restored as part of the project.

There is evidence of other such paintings having at one time been displayed in the house, and enquiries have been commenced to try to locate their present whereabouts and eventually to return them to the house, if possible.

The house interior is, therefore, effectively gutted which has meant that, for health and safety reasons, members of the public cannot yet be allowed inside. However, this did not prevent a visit to the house in March by our 'Restoration' celebrity advocate Laurence Llewelyn Bowen. He had already shown that he was a passionate supporter of the house and its restoration, and was keeping the promise he made at the final held at the Tower of London. It was a wonderful fillip for everyone involved, and the extensive local media coverage undoubtedly gave the profile of the project a timely boost.

On the fund-raising side, it has been encouraging to see the widespread level of support for the project. The Town Council has opened a special project account, and modest -though much appreciated - donations have been received to date.

No charity has been formed to take the project forward, but the Town Council is currently in negotiation with a local building preservation trust which, as a registered charity, would be able to access a much wider range of potential funders than the Council. If agreement is reached, the intention is to transfer the house to the trust [hopefully by way of a sale/return or lease/return arrangement] so that it can undertake the restoration works instead of the Council, with the restored building returned to the Council some time after completion of the works.

A further boost was received with Carmarthenshire County Council agreeing to give the project its full support. This will manifest itself in a number of ways, not least in the recent submission of a Physical Regeneration Fund application to the National Assembly for Wales for funding to carry out much-needed highway improvements adjacent to the house and to meet the cost of restoring its exterior. The outcome of the application is keenly awaited.

So, while progress has been slow, a lot has been achieved. But a great deal still remains to be done. The project completion date is currently estimated to be 2009 but slippage can easily occur, as has been seen already. Nonetheless, however long it does take, of one thing the people of Llanelli and beyond can be sure - the Town Council's great leap of faith will be vindicated and the project will be successfully completed, for the benefit of Llanelli, Carmarthenshire and preservation and heritage supporters everywhere. ■

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FULL CIRCLE

Journalistic Freedom Troubles a Government

The PEGASUS Article



More than half a century ago, in a backwater of the known world, lived a man called John Meinert who had a number of business interests, among which were two small newspapers: the *Algemeine Zeitung*, a German language newspaper, and the *Windhoek Advertiser*, an independent English-language daily. Both in the same town and in the same state.

Guessed the place? Time's up.

Windhoek is the clue. Once the capital of a territory known as South West Africa, now the capital of modern Namibia. And who is the president of that land? Sam Nujoma, that's who.

If you're beginning to think this is a kind of Trivial Pursuit, hang on. We are pursuing a point, though far from trivial. It's coming. Just bear in mind for the moment that history, and the lessons it teaches us about human nature, is everywhere - in backwaters, too.

It's 1966, a significant year in English history - almost ranking with 1066. This is the year that England won the world cup. (I warned you this was a historical theme).

This momentous event was duly recorded in the *Windhoek Advertiser*. I know because I was there. At the time I was the proof reader for the paper.

Being proof reader meant conducting a daily battle with print room boys. They were a mix of English, Afrikaans or German. But most of them were Germans. I can't deny that they were competent workers and had a very competent command of English. A philosophical race, they had accepted that the country was now a mandate of South Africa and, as such, broadly, a part of the British Empire. But they had their own ideas of proper English and were reasonably happy with it.

Well, part of my job was to descend into this world of Nibilungs and try to persuade them that my version of English was to be preferred over theirs. They could have been very difficult but they weren't. A few grumbles at my radical tendency to introduce modern English eventually gave way to pleasant banter, but acceptance.

However, they did challenge me on one thing. Not being a football enthusiast, I barely realised that at the time a world-shattering contest was taking place; England were to play Germany for the World Cup final.

Being the only real English guy on the paper at the time, I was obliged to place bets on England winning. I had little choice. I placed the bets. To me it was an investment in bonding. I needed these guys to take me as one of their own, so I cravenly invested a major portion of my tiny salary in support of my home team and hoped it would impress them.

The idea was that England would beat Germany and win the World Cup. England did win. And I won - both money and prestige. I had invested and won out. That's how life should be.

But it was not quite the same for the *Windhoek Advertiser*.

While I was there the paper seemed to work tirelessly to applaud local endeavour and to laud grand visitors that dropped in on us from time to time, like heavenly angels who had lost their way. It all helped to give us a sense of meaning and purpose. It was a wonderful little paper in this, almost an epitome of what a local paper should be.

These were the days of apartheid, for the territory was run by South Africa at the time.

Some stories were almost fantastic. One naïve farm labourer complained that his wife had had sex with his Afrikaans boss. This was during the race law era when sex between races was forbidden. The woman confessed, the boss denied it and the husband couldn't prove it. The woman went to jail on her own evidence but the boss went free because the husband couldn't provide sufficient evidence.

The *Windhoek Advertiser* campaigned against this and the judgement was later overthrown by a higher court.

As a campaigning newspaper, the *Advertiser* attracted the attentions of the powerful SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) which was a party, led by Sam Nujoma, the future Namibian president which was bent on winning independence for the indigenous peoples of South West Africa. It happened that the *Windhoek Advertiser* was willing to give them a voice in their homeland. Because of this, the *Advertiser* was read at

FULL CIRCLE

the headquarters of the United Nations in New York. This must have made the paper a little unpopular with the then government, but things went on without serious difficulty. Perhaps they thought the Windhoek Advertiser, as a voice of freedom read in United Nations, was better left alone. It was only small, after all.

I left eventually and moved on. But I remember the newspaper and the people on it with me. Bill, the big, bluff editor, who nearly beat the hell out of me when he came back from holiday and found I left out the comic strips to make place for some big 'stop press' news; Dirkie, not unlike Dirk Bogard, the charming sub-editor whom I replaced when he went to work for the Cape Times. There was Joyce of the Woman's Page. Once asked what she

would do in a revolutionary situation, she giggled 'Lie down and think of England' I don't think it came to that, but I'm sure she'd have stuck to her word. And there was the half mad Smittie, with his homosexual dog that behaved grossly in the beer gardens. An Afrikaner with attitude, Smittie took me for a ride in his plane, suddenly let go of the controls and yelled, 'Take over! It's an emergency'. I didn't freeze but merely assumed the controls calmly. But the sight of the ground rushing up to meet us soon got his attention. He later went on to become the editor of the paper.

It's because I still remember the Windhoek Advertiser as a brave little voice in a precarious world that I was recently moved to look it up on the net.

This is what I saw: **Tuesday Jan 20 1998 - Namibia's oldest English paper closes: WINDHOEK -- Namibia's oldest English-language newspaper, the 79-year-old Windhoek Advertiser, closed down yesterday. The Advertiser ceased publication on the recommendation of Democratic Media Holdings management, because of financial losses suffered, according to a statement by DMH chairman Dirk Mudge issued on Sunday. DMH executive editor Chris Jacobie changed the morning paper into an afternoon daily but the paper was unable to financially break even, Mr Mudge said. The newspaper appeared for the first time on July 4, 1919 and was originally a news sheet for members of the United Club -- a social club for Union of South Africa servicemen stationed in Namibia after the Germans surrendered in 1915. It was bought by Windhoek businessman John Meinert. In the 1970s the paper was run by well-known Namibian newsman, Hannes Smit, now editor-in-chief of the Observer. -- Sapa**

A little further investigation into its sad demise brought up this: I've shortened it but I think the message will be clear enough. As I say, the point pursued is far from trivial.

Namibia - Annual report 2002: The authorities made numerous statements against the independent press throughout the year and the state president severely criticised local media. The country's main daily was the victim of an advertising boycott by the government.

During Unesco ceremonies to celebrate the 10th International Press Freedom Day on 3 May 2001, a note in the press file reminded journalists present that their work was to be limited to coverage of the conference. That day, President Sam Nujoma said he & quote; had had no positive experiences with the media & quote; of his country. The next day the managing editor of the independent daily The Namibian expressed her concern: & quote; It's a bad sign and it's an attempt to discredit the independent media that criticise government corruption in

Namibia & quote; In late May the president ordered the government and state institutions to cancel their subscription to The Namibian. ... During the week of 15 October a member of parliament from the ruling SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) attacked the press: & quote; Some media have become liars [...] We have to strengthen the powers restricting journalist's rights & quote;:

On 10 January 2001 Mocks Shivute, challenged freelance journalist David Kashweka, saying that he did not understand why someone & quote; who, for six years, was a member of the government newspaper New Era, has chosen to write such a malicious article on Namibia. It's as if he bit the hand that fed him & quote; The journalist had published an article in the independent daily The Namibian, stating that border areas with Angola were being plundered by Unita rebels (armed movement at war against the Angolan government) and were economically and socially paralysed.

Mocks Shivute the permanent secretary to the information ministry, reminded official services on 22 March that they had to apply the government's decision to no longer advertise in The Namibian, with & quote; immediate effect & quote; The authorities explained that this decision was related to the tone of the daily, judged too critical. This measure had been decided by the government, the country's main advertiser, in December 2000 but had not been applied. A few years earlier another newspaper, The Windhoek Advertiser, was forced to close due to a lack of income after being struck by the same sanction. The leader of a coalition of opposition parties said in parliament that this measure may be & quote; the first sign of a collapse of democracy & quote; in Namibia. ■

Biography Spotlight:

Eric Pickles MP

Eric was born in 1952. He was educated at Greenhead Grammar School, Keighley, and Leeds Polytechnic. He is married.

He has previously worked as a Consultant in Employment Practice and Local Government Editor for Conservative Newline (1990).

Eric has been Member of Parliament for Brentwood and Ongar since April 1992.

Previous political appointments include: Leader of Bradford Council (1988-1990), Deputy-Leader of the Conservative Group, AMA (1989-1991), National Young Conservative Chairman (1980-81) Member of Yorkshire Regional Health Authority (1982-1990), Vice-Chairman of Keighley Conservative Association (1986-1990), Co-Chairman of the Joint Committee Against Racism (1982-1987), and Member of the Environment Select Committee (1992-1993).

From February 1993 until May 1993, Eric was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Tim Sainsbury MP, Minister for Industry. From May 1993 until June 1997, he was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party, with special responsibility for local government affairs.

In 1996, he was a Member of the Transport Select Committee. In July 1997, Eric became a Member of the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee, Chairman of the All Party Film Group, and Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Parliamentary Environment, Transport and The Regions Committee.

In August 1998, Eric was appointed Frontbench Social Security Spokesman. In September 2001, he was appointed Shadow Minister for Transport and Shadow Minister for London. In June 2002, he was appointed Shadow Secretary of State for Local Government & the Regions. Following the change in Leadership of the Conservative Party in November 2003 Eric remains Shadow Secretary of State for Local Government

Council Funds Football Club Shortfall

Harpenden Town Council is making a donation of £500 to Harpenden Colts Football Club to ensure that the club has access to good facilities.

At the Full Town Council meeting on Monday 11th October, Councillors agreed the Grant Aid Application which will enable Harpenden Colts Football Club to rent pitches from Harpenden Town Football Club until they are able to secure a permanent new base for the club.

Harpenden Colts Football Club are presently working in partnership with Harpenden Town Council to locate a permanent home, and are hopeful this will soon be found.

Harpenden based charities, organisations or residents can apply for grants of up to £500 to help fund projects or events that benefit the people of Harpenden.

For further information or to obtain a grant application form contact Rachael Palmer, on 01582 768278.

COUNCILS TO INVESTIGATE LESS SERIOUS MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS

Councils will be able to investigate allegations of less serious breaches of their code of conduct for members in some circumstances, under new regulations laid in October. Under the regulations, an ethical standards officer, appointed by the Standards Board for England will be able to hand the job of investigating less serious allegations of breaches of the code of conduct to a council's monitoring officer. The regulations also allow standards committees to consider reports made by monitoring officers following these investigations. The regulations complete the standards regime for council members, which has been implemented since the Local Government Act 2000. They follow a three-month consultation on the issue. Local Government Minister Nick Raynsford said: "We want to ensure the highest possible ethical standards

in local government. The regulations will make this process more workable and efficient.

"We have taken on board many of the suggestions raised during our consultation, including strengthening the powers available to authorities to ensure they can undertake their investigation and adjudication roles effectively."

Copies of the Regulations will be available on www.hms.gov.uk.

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PENARTH TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF PENARTH



Councillor Jill Penn, Town Mayor and Members of Penarth Town Council are pleased to support the launch of **Government *WORLD*** and extend best wishes for a successful ALLC conference in Blackpool.

Rubbish - Getting it Sorted

Shepway District Council

A new and extended recycling service for homes across the district will be introduced next year - and help put the brake on the 33,000 tonnes of waste sent to landfill sites every year.

A special meeting of Shepway's Cabinet on Friday (8th October) gave the go-ahead for the new waste management service, which secured a £1.6 million grant from the government for capital costs involved in the scheme.

The new service will extend the current kerbside collection of paper and card to include glass, metal and plastics. Homes across the district will be given plastic boxes to store their recyclables ready for weekly collection. Landfill waste will be collected from wheelie bins or black sacks every fortnight.

Cllr George Bunting, Cabinet Member for the Environment, said: "Every year the average home in the Shepway district produces more than one tonne of waste - and 80 per cent of this ends up in landfill sites. That means we send 33,000 tonnes of waste to rot in a hole in the ground. The new waste management service will give people of the district the opportunity to do their bit to reduce this amount."

Eleven families gave the new scheme a 'test run' for six weeks during August and September. Fiona Jarrett, Shepway Council's Environmental Officer, said trial had been very successful and nearly 650 kilogrammes of recycling material had been collected.

"The volunteers enjoyed the convenience of the weekly collection. By making use of the boxes they reduced the amount they put in their wheelie bins and the fortnightly collection of landfill waste was not a problem."

The new scheme will be introduced by the beginning of April next year and should be district wide by September. Before the collection is introduced, the council will launch a public awareness campaign, so that everyone has the chance to learn more about the scheme and to discuss any potential issues.

Rob Beck, Project Manager, said the reaction from the volunteers had been very heartening but he understood that some people might still have some questions. "We will be talking to parish councils and community groups as well as organising our own events across the district so that people can come and find out more about the new scheme," he said.




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Disabled Access to Allotment

Following a request by a disabled plot-holder at the Pickford Hill allotment site in Harpenden, Harpenden Town Council has agreed funding to ensure the site is easily accessible for the disabled.

At the Full Town Council Meeting on Monday 11th October, the Town Council agreed to refurbish and retarmac the entranceway to the allotments thereby ensuring easy access.

This is the latest example of Harpenden Town Council's commitment and support of the Disability Discrimination Act, which came into effect in October this year. Other developments have included improved contrasting decoration of skirting boards in Town Council properties to assist the visually impaired and improved surfaces in many outdoor communal areas in Harpenden particularly around park benches.

The entrance doors to the Town Hall Information Point and Park Hall are to be altered shortly to ensure easy access by wheelchair users.

Biography Spotlight:

Matthew Green MP

PERSONAL DETAILS

Date of Birth: 12.04.1970
 Occupation: MP
 Education: Priory School, Shrewsbury; Birmingham University
 Experience: Formerly sales and marketing manager in the timber industry

LIBDEM majority: 1,630 (4%)

Constituency: Ludlow
 Region: West Midlands
 PA Number: 385

BIOGRAPHY

Matthew Green was first elected to Parliament in 2001, taking the seat of Ludlow from the Conservatives.



Previously, he set up and was managing director of the West Midlands media relations and training consultancy, after working as a sales and marketing manager in the timber industry.

He is a Vice-President of the Parliamentary Candidates Association and Chairman of the Joins States Candidates' Committee. In November 2001, Matthew was appointed the party's spokesman for Young People. He is an honours graduate from Birmingham University and relaxes by hill walking and playing cricket.

2001 election
 Seat:
 Ludlow
 Turnout:
 43,124 (68%)

Liberal Democrats
 18,620 (43%)

Conservative
 16,990 (39%)

Labour
 5,785 (13%)

Swing:
 8.3% Con to LD

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Statty Fair Harpenden Town Council

At the Full Town Council meeting held on Monday 11th October the Town Councillors voted to continue allowing the Statty Fair to operate five days on the Common each year. Following previous complaints from local residents prior to the event this year, including complaints about noise from PA systems, the Town Clerk liaised with the fair Organisers to discuss a new layout for the Fair that addressed various issues. It was agreed that the Organisers had made an exceptional effort to overcome local concerns and as there had been no further

problems at the Fair in 2004 it was agreed that the Fair should continue to operate for five days each September. Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Clennel Collingwood commented 'the Fair has been enjoyed by Harpenden residents for years and we are very pleased that by working together Harpenden Town Council and the Statty Fair Organisers have been able to overcome local residents concerns and therefore ensure the future of this annual event'.

I HEARD THE NEWS TODAY, OH BOY!

By Rex Oswin

Now that the main parties have declared themselves through speeches and manifestos we can get some idea of what they want us to believe, and even, perhaps, of what they really intend, though we'll have to dig that one out of them by stages.

Until further notice it looks like it's still a choice between Labour and the Conservatives. What's on offer? What can they give a sceptical electorate?

It seems they both want to make amends to the electorate. Both are contrite, and claim they have learned from their past errors. Both are keen to show how intent they are now on restoring the public's trust in government. And both, coincidentally, offer their ten key utterances to encapsulate their new ideas.

Exploring the Labour Manifesto is an experience. To anybody of a Utopian turn of mind, it is like opening a treasure chest. The whole thing glitters and sparkles and you can barely read it without blinking as in bright sunlight. There are pictures of Tony, and pictures of children, and more of Tony. Everywhere there are words of wisdom, words of kindness and understanding, words of deep conviction and determination, words of promise, and on every page, we sense the urgency of joining the march onwards towards that wonderful future just around the corner. Not got there yet - a lot to do, two terms not enough. But not to worry! Tony's young and gutsy. He's willing to

fight on indefinitely, regardless of the heavy international responsibilities he has to bear for the sake of World Freedom!

Gosh! How lucky we feel! How enchanted we are as we watch the words dance across our vision like little butterflies in a meadow.

Tony, true to form, is expansive and optimistic, and boyishly cheeky, bless him!

He promises a lot; in fact he promises everything. Imagine anything you might want for Christmas. Imagine Paradise. He'll deliver. It seems a little daring but, after all, our Tony is designing a British state that will last a thousand years, not as a backwater of the Franco-German Empire (Just a joke, we mean Europe, of course), but as a 'key player'.

One can't help but wonder how he will achieve this amazing project of total happiness for the British

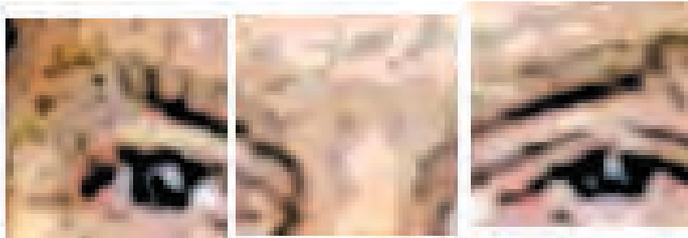
within his lifetime. We have to admit that he has got quite a lot of it up and running. He isn't idle in pursuing his vision. It's all there in the Manifesto, the targets, the methods of achieving them and the myriad agencies he has to set up to persuade a stubborn minority that he is right and never wrong; and all so imaginatively described. Amazingly, we're told that he only needs another term to achieve them. (Or was it another two terms?)

Never mind. The message is plain to all his followers. He wants to move Britain into the modern age. No Progressive in the world could fault such a noble aspiration. He needs our support. So what if we do have to keep electing him; if that's the only way we'll ever get a properly functioning society where things like the NHS and public transport work efficiently, well, so be it. Give the man time! The Conservatives, on the other hand, soberly fight shy of committing themselves too strongly to any of the more obvious targets, arguing very reasonably that it would be wrong to promise something they cannot guarantee to deliver. It doesn't occur to them that whatever they offer, or don't offer hardly matters to those who have become victims of Tony's enthusiasm - those thousands of exhausted weaklings who have collapsed on the job from an excess of paperwork.



These people will vote Tory, Lib Dem, - anything just to get a good night's sleep and a chance to dream of better days, when England was a gentle and coherent place. They'll know that the Tories are the only valid way out of the hell that is the future - electronic tagging of everybody in an Orwellian Europe.

English? Law abiding? Prove it! Lose your ID card and get flung into jail. Yes, we really need to think very slowly and carefully whether we want to belong to a federal republic of republics, the break up of everything familiar. The bleak future of living our lives in the mind of one megalomaniac, whose rational and clear thinking tells him that Britain is best served by decomposing and being re-absorbed in a monolithic structure of bureaucracy and remoteness.



Remember Charlie Chaplin giving his speech in 'The Great Dictator'. How difficult it seems for authoritarian minds to understand that people find their freedom in just being left alone to do things in their own way.

Rationality! Let's imagine our current democratic dictator. He has the largest and most undemocratic majority in memory. He has enormous power. One day, he wakes up. His eyes sparkle. Yes. All bicycles should be painted bright yellow! Who can argue with that? Yellow is easy to see in foggy weather or any other time. Who can argue? Nobody! His mind is clear. The law is thrust brutally past the Upper House.

So, what does everybody do? Well, they don't want problems. They paint their bikes yellow. But when Cromwell moves on, and Charles II takes over, there is universal rejoicing. Everybody repaints their bikes black or red or green or blue, because they like different colours. No utilitarian arguments here; just people being themselves.

Was he right? Well, do we always have to be right? Give a bit of leeway.

But, is he right about joining Europe? This is a tough world. Never mind England, the Queen, history, the United Kingdom. We must be realistic. Huge economic nations are mushrooming up as we stand here. India, China, Brazil, Indonesia. How are we to survive if we do not join Europe?

Coward! No faith in the people of Britain. It is a pluralistic world, more so by the very plurality of the new mushrooms. We have prestige and intelligence. We will always survive. We do not need to sell ourselves into a state of nonentity.

People who do not love us, for historical reasons, will not be our true friends, and will try to do us down. Therefore, in Churchillian tones, let us brace ourselves and do what we know we can do, as only we, the British, can do it. (Gulp! We've just remembered the transport and

communications system. Never mind. We'll work on it!)

Yes. The Conservatives, if they have the courage, might have a chance to catch some votes, even though they waver about policy.

Remember! We just want to escape. Help us!

Has it occurred to anyone that Left and Right are silly misnomers? All the people of this country want is to be left alone to be themselves, to make a few changes here and there, yes - but gradually, not to rock the boat and all drown. A bit of comfort and prosperity, a bit of high-spiritedness, even naughtiness, is fine. But true and tested human values should also be allowed - sobriety, firmness, duty - all entirely voluntary, of course, do tend to lend colour in a universally vulgar world.



Well. The Conservatives need do nothing but be sensible. They know the British people inherently recoil from messianic leaders when they get above themselves, whatever party they represent. The British people have this odd notion that a leader exists to serve their aims and not his, or her, own.

So, hang in there, Mr Howard.

Why do we have to be so adversarial? Why do we have to listen to that cacophony of schoolboy bickering in the Commons, when we can hear gentle and considered debate from far more mature people in the Upper House? Why does Blair blare on so? Why is Howard a coward? Just reach out to the people and find what they want. Don't manipulate them. No spin. No lies. Just do, as you're required to, and represent the interests of the people, as they require. It is so simple.

Oh! Sorry. We seem to be displaying our credentials. What are they? Neither Left nor Right. Not Lib-Dem either; just a desire for something in harmony with our tradition, our hopes, our past and our future.

We do need a rest from this frenzied Fuhrerprinzip approach.

Thank God for the Opposition, whoever they may be! ■

A black and white photograph of a staircase. The staircase is on the left side of the frame, with a dark wooden handrail. The walls are paneled with large, rectangular panels. A sign is mounted on the wall above the staircase, reading "THE STAIRS W15 Greater London Borough". The sign is rectangular with a decorative border. The text "THE STAIRS" is in large, bold, serif letters. "W15" is in smaller letters to the right of "THE". "Greater London Borough" is in smaller letters below "STAIRS".

THE W15
STAIRS
Greater London Borough

**A child is more likely to be murdered
in the home than on the street.**

One to two children are killed every week in England and Wales. With our minds so focused on threats outside the home, it's shocking to realise that the majority of these deaths are at the hands of parents or carers. This is unacceptable. Which is why the NSPCC is urging the Government to make reforms. Reforms which ensure child protection professionals work closer together, and receive improved training and resources. And reforms which strengthen local child safe-guards. Only then can we work towards ending all child abuse deaths.

Child abuse deaths must stop. FULL STOP ● NSPCC™

If you think a child is at risk, call the NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000. For information & donations visit www.nspcc.org.uk

Sexual Offences Act Media Briefing

Christine Atkinson, policy advisor at the NSPCC, says: "This is the most significant package of sex offences legislation in the last 50 years. **The legislation sends out a strong message that those who sexually harm children will feel the full force of the law.**

"However, clearer laws and tougher sentencing is only one side of the coin. The NSPCC believes that if sexual abuse of children is to be addressed effectively, a broad approach is required to ensure that children are supported to talk about abuse, that adults take responsibility to stop abuse and potential abusers themselves are provided with help before they abuse.

"To better protect children, the Government must now move to ensure that preventative measures are put in place. A major element of this is to ensure that children who engage in harmful sexual behaviour receive support and comprehensive treatment."

The full recommendations that the NSPCC is making to Government in light of the Sexual Offences Act are as follows:

Prevention services:

The NSPCC would like to see services at local level to:

- Ensure that adults and communities are provided with information to be able to recognise the warning signs of sexual abuse and report their concerns.
- Provide potential abusers with help before they abuse.
- Enable children and young people to talk about abuse so they have someone to turn to.

Children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour:

The NSPCC has been concerned about children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour for a number of years. Research suggests that juveniles commit at least a quarter of all sexual offences, therefore any effort to lower the level of child sexual abuse must address the problem of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour. As such the NSPCC is calling for:

- An awareness campaign targeted at children and young people to ensure they are aware of how the changes in the law affects them in relation to sexual behaviour and relationships.
- A prevention programme to run in parallel with the legal process to bring together education, health, social services and youth justice system to develop a range of services to respond to the continuum of sexual behaviour. This must include protocols for care arrangements and treatment. The roll-out of the strategy must also be evaluated for an on-going basis for effectiveness.

- The NSPCC recognises that teenagers experiment with sexual activity and that children can and do coerce and abuse other children. Laws need to be in place to protect children from sex abusers of any age. These must be supported by a proper strategy for the assessment, referral and treatment of children and young people who display sexually harmful behaviour.

An understanding of the implications of the new act:

The NSPCC recommends that there is increased training and awareness for everyone who comes into contact with children. The new laws are very complex and it is important that anyone who works for and with children has a good understanding of what laws have changed and how. This will help adults contextualise their relationships with children and be more confident in assessing if a child they know is involved in an inappropriate relationship.

Protecting children from sexually harmful adults:

The NSPCC recommends that there should be:

- Comprehensive assessment and treatment provision throughout the UK for convicted and non-convicted sex offenders. There should be enough places available on sex offender programmes for those in prison and those in the community. A relapse service should also be available.
- A national integrated policy and procedures on child safeguarding across all secure settings.

Specific comments on the act

Sexual activity between under 16s:

The law in relation to sexual activity between under 16s (13-15 year olds) has been further clarified. It remains illegal for under 16s to have sex. This has also been extended to include other 'sexual touching'. Theoretically this could include sexual kissing but this is not the intention. The Home Office will release guidelines to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) instructing it not to prosecute under 16s involved in consensual experimentation. The criminal law must cover under-age sexual activity in order to protect those who are victims of abuse. The guidance to the CPS will outline this further.

Tougher sentences for adults:

The adult penalties for engaging in sexual activity with anyone aged between 13 and 16 is now much more severe: A maximum of life for rape/penetrative assault and 14 years for non-penetrative assault.

Previously, the maximum sentence for unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl aged between 13 and 16 years was two years. There have been a number of high profile cases where paedophiles have deliberately waited until their victims have turned 13 before having sex with them.

For example: Michael Wheeler was found guilty of sexually abusing two 13 year-old girls in October 2003 was given a three year sentence, the maximum term allowed under the previous law.

Christine Atkinson, policy advisor at the NSPCC, says: "The clearer laws around sexual activity and children and young people sends out a clear message to adults that sexual intercourse and sexual activity with under 16s wrong. No longer will sex offenders be able to get away with their crimes by protesting ignorance about a child's age or by saying that a child wanted to have sex. Tougher sentences will at last ensure they are suitably punished for their horrific crimes.

"Children who display harmful sexual behaviour must be treated as children first and foremost. This means that they should be supported and receive treatment. The NSPCC has a number of projects that work with children who display sexually harmful behaviour, such as the AIM project in Manchester and we would like the Government to roll out programmes on a national basis."

The AIM project and the NSPCC

The NSCC is helping to fund and manage The AIM Project, (Assessment, Intervention and Moving On), a scheme to help teachers distinguish between normal sexual experimentation between children and child abuse. The project has been piloted in Greater Manchester where it has developed teacher training and guidelines on how to identify and manage sexually problematic behaviour in school children. It enables teachers to distinguish between normal exploration such as 'peeing competitions' but also to recognise worrying behaviour such as when a child may be coercing another.

The minimal child protection training teachers normally receive does not include how to identify children who may be developing worrying sexual behaviour.

Internet grooming

The Act includes a new offence of sexual grooming, which makes it a crime to befriend a child on the internet or by any other means with the intention of abusing them. A new civil order also prohibits adults from engaging in inappropriate behaviour such as sexual conversations with children online.

Christine Atkinson, policy advisor at the NSPCC says: "Conversations in a chatroom by individuals seeking to abuse children can move very quickly to mobile phone contact and then face-to-face meeting and so the NSPCC is pleased that the Government has taken action to protect children who use the internet.

"Chatrooms are not the only internet medium which can be exploited to abuse children. An image of a child on a pornographic website means an innocent child has been horrifically abused. This abuse continues the endless cycle of supply and demand that every organisation involved in child protection must work towards stopping."

The Sex Offenders Register

The regulations surrounding the Sex Offenders Register are being significantly tightened as follows:

- Convicted sex offenders will have to register with their local police every year instead of every five years.
- Registrants will have to inform the police if they change their name or address within three days instead of 14 at present and disclose if they spend seven days or more away from their home.
- The police will be able to photograph offenders every time they register.

Christine, Atkinson, policy advisor at the NSPCC says: "More regular registration will prevent even more offenders disappearing 'underground'".



P-P-P Pick Up A Penguin (A talking one!)

Young litter louts are being encouraged to help keep Britain tidy with the help of a rather talkative Antarctic visitor.

Talking penguins are about to start popping up in the most unlikely of places around the UK in an effort to reward children for p p p picking up their litter.

The unique, talking-penguin bins offer a verbal congratulation to anyone who 'feeds' them with litter and are seen as the ideal innovation to promote the message to young people that caring for the environment can be fun and rewarding.

The litter bins, made by East Midlands-based manufacturer Amberol Ltd, are proving so popular the company has recently taken on their largest order for the product from Renfrewshire Council.

For a generation who count talking animals such as Barney the Dinosaur and Scooby Doo as their role models, the fact that the penguins are talking to them won't be as big a surprise as to how the famous flightless birds got over here in the first place!



Energywatch and Postwatch: Helping and Protecting Consumers

Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General

Sir John Bourn, Head of the National Audit Office, told Parliament in October that Energywatch and Postwatch have achieved benefits for consumers but they need to do more to show the extent of these benefits. Over their first three years, Energywatch and Postwatch have successfully established their organisations, developed efficient systems to handle customer complaints and sought to address major consumer problems in the energy and postal sectors. But today's report highlights that there is scope to increase and demonstrate more clearly those benefits, and reduce costs.

Energywatch and Postwatch's biggest single task has been to investigate complaints referred by consumers who are not satisfied with their service provider's response. In 2003-04 Energywatch received 87,600 complaints, showing that consumers faced problems with the accuracy and timeliness of their bills, and the process of switching supplier. Postwatch received 27,500 complaints, showing particular problems with lost mail and mis-delivery. Both have developed efficient systems for handling complaints and have added value for consumers. However, neither body evaluates the consumer benefit from this work in a systematic manner, such as the level of compensation achieved.

Energywatch and Postwatch have no regulatory powers and have to rely on influence to affect the decisions of service providers, the sector regulators and government. Each has sought to address the major issues faced by consumers in the energy and postal markets; for example, Energywatch has campaigned to eradicate selling malpractices and Postwatch has reviewed the Government's programme to reduce the number of urban post offices. However, neither has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of consumer needs, or the factors which influence consumer behaviour.

As a result, there is a risk of failing to focus on all of the important areas for consumers and particular sub-groups such as the elderly or low income groups, or the needs of small businesses.

In their first three years, Energywatch has spent £57 million, including £12 million on closing down its predecessor bodies. Postwatch has spent £27 million. There is scope to reduce annual running costs; for example, by sharing the provision of administrative and support functions between consumer bodies. Energywatch and Postwatch have a network of regional offices and today's report encourages them to evaluate whether the benefits of consumer representation in the regions could be achieved at a lower cost.

Sir John Bourn said today:

"I applaud the efforts of Energywatch and Postwatch to protect and speak up for consumers. It is important now that these bodies seek to evaluate their impact more fully to learn lessons for their future. I am encouraged that they have adopted a positive response to the recommendations and are taking action to improve their performance."

Energywatch and Postwatch were established in 2000 as independent bodies to promote and protect the consumer interests in their respective markets. They were established to strengthen consumer representation in the energy and postal markets and to ensure that consumers have an effective and influential voice within the regulatory system. Their statutory duties are to: investigate complaints referred by consumers not satisfied with a company's response; to represent the views of consumers; and to provide advice and information for consumers.

London NHS Travel Plan Guide - the perfect decongestant

Transport for London (TfL) has launched the London NHS Travel Plan Good Practice Guide to promote the advantages for NHS staff of using sustainable transport for their journeys to and from hospitals in the capital.

The London NHS Travel Plan Good Practice Guide addresses the travel needs of staff, patients, visitors and contractors and offers a practical variety of travel options to help reduce congestion.

The London Health Strategy, developed by the London Health Commission, has identified transport as one of four priority areas for action. The strategy acknowledges that the health sector has a substantial effect on transport in London because of the concentration of NHS hospitals, primary care facilities and research institutions.

The Government introduced the concept of travel plans a few years ago to focus attention on the need for better travel arrangements to large workplaces, such as hospitals and universities. Without concerted action to ensure that people have the opportunity to use alternatives to the car, where appropriate, the problems of congestion and parking will get progressively worse.

By encouraging walking and cycling, car sharing where possible, and greater use of public transport, Travel Plans can help staff and visitors lessen the impact of traffic on the local community. TfL's Principal Travel Advisor Patrick Allcorn said of the Guide; 'This Guide will show NHS staff and visitors that there are viable alternative travel options they can take to reduce congestion and improve their health.'

HSC looks to the future



Selwyn Samuel Centre -

A purpose built six rink indoor bowling stadium open daily during October to April. Also available for conferences, exhibitions, concerts, meetings, etc., with a maximum permitted seated audience of 1200 persons.

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The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) held an open meeting at the Mermaid Conference Centre, Blackfriars, London to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HSWA).

The HSWA resulted in the creation of the HSC. Working with others in the health and safety system in Great Britain, the HSC and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have seen and contributed to major advances in reducing injuries and ill health including established occupational diseases. Throughout that time, consultation with industry, unions, local government and other stakeholders has been a core principle of the way the HSC/E works and the open meeting provides an opportunity for that relationship to develop further.

The HSC has held previous meetings in public, however, this was the first time that Commission business has been discussed in full view of the public.

The HSC, Chaired by Bill Callaghan, received presentations and discussed:

- The recently published HSC Strategy;
- Work at height regulations;
- The Hampton Review; and
- Science strategy.

Both Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and Jane Kennedy, Minister of State for Work, attended and addressed the audience focusing on the new HSC strategy during the day.

The HSC also launched a new booklet focusing on the future [214kb] . The booklet will look at how HSC has evolved over the past 30 years as industry in Britain has changed, and also looks ahead at the new challenges that the Commission.

During the afternoon, breakout sessions allowed attendees to debate a number of issues with Commissioners and HSE officials on topics such as the implementation of EU directives, HSC's role in public protection and HSC's intervention strategy and working with other regulators.

Bill Callaghan, Chair of the Health and Safety Commission, said: "The meeting provides an opportunity to open our work to ordinary members of the public and those dealing with health and safety on a day to day basis. "It is a good occasion to get our vision across to a range of organisations. We want to see health and safety as a cornerstone of a civilised society and, with that, to achieve a record of workplace health and safety that leads the world.

"HSC/E is a modern and trusted regulator. If it is to maintain the trust of the public and our stakeholders, our work should be open to public scrutiny."

A Hard Copy of the Booklet is available by contacting Susan Daly at susan.daly@hse.gsi.gov.uk

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GREENER, SAFER, HEALTHIER ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Local education authorities will be able to bring school transport into the 21st century as Education & Skills Secretary Charles Clarke and Transport Secretary Alistair Darling today unveiled plans for greener, safer and healthier ways to travel to school.

Mr Darling announced £10 million of Department for Transport funding to develop hundreds of safe walking and cycling routes to schools. The Links to Schools programme will extend the National Cycle Network, bringing it closer to schools and making it easier and safer for pupils to walk or cycle.

More than 230 schools will directly benefit via the funding to 100 local authorities. The grant is to be made to Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, which has built the 8,000-mile National Cycle Network, and which will oversee the building of new links from the Network to schools around England.

Mr Clarke confirmed that a School Transport Bill will be introduced to Parliament today to enable up to 20 local education authorities to introduce new schemes to tackle the congestion caused by the traditional 'school run,' developing innovative ways for pupils to travel to school tailored to their local circumstances, with up to £200,000 Government funding to kick start each scheme.

The School Transport Bill would bring the first changes to school transport legislation in over 60 years, allowing local education authorities to develop innovative solutions to school transport problems, reducing traffic congestion and cutting pollution, through the use of, for example:

- safe cycle routes to schools, plugged into the national cycle network, with secure storage for bicycles at schools;
- 'walking buses' where pupils are collected from an agreed location, and then walk together to school escorted in safe groups by volunteers, with other pupils joining them en route;
- 'park & stride' schemes where parents drop children off at an agreed location to be escorted into school;
- more high quality school buses catering for more pupils, with features such as CCTV and well-trained drivers; as well as extra buses catering for pupils attending after school activities;
- staggered starting times with different schools in the same area staggering their starting times to reduce the number of cars on the road at any one time.

Mr Darling said:

"As well as being fun, cycling improves health, reduces school-gate congestion and pollution and provides our children with a sense of independence. But we need to persuade more children, and their parents, that they can

cycle to school safely. Today's announcement is a real step in the right direction to persuade more children to cycle more safely, more often.

"School children across the country are set to benefit from the Links to Schools programme, made possible by a £10 million grant from my department, the largest ever cash injection for a project of this kind. The funding will help to develop hundreds of safe walking and cycling routes to schools around the country.

"We are determined to ensure that cycling and walking to school become a safe and healthy option for children and reassure parents that their children are safe when travelling to and from school. This investment builds upon the annual investment of more than £20 million a year which the Departments for Transport and Education are making in the Travelling to School initiative and will provide further help to children and parents who want to come to school without their cars."

Mr Clarke said:

"Twice as many children are driven to school now in comparison with 20 years ago - around 40% of primary pupils and 20% of secondary pupils. Most of these journeys are less than 2 miles, meaning decreasing numbers of children walking or cycling with serious health implications in terms of lack of daily exercise and the growing proportion of children who are overweight. "Our proposals would encourage local education authorities to come up with 21st century solutions to make walking, cycling and bus travel safe, green, healthy options for more schools and their pupils, while allowing authorities who are content with their current arrangements to retain them."

Today's announcements build on innovative work to modernise school transport schemes across England which have been established under Travelling to School: An Action Plan. Launched in September 2003, the Action Plan has already spent £14 million in local education authorities and 2,400 schools to develop:

- dedicated school travel plans which offer safer routes to school, road crossings, local speed restrictions, dedicated cycle ways, secure cycle storage, sufficient locker space and improved public transport provision;
- road safety skills for pupils, particularly at primary schools, and cycle training;
- positive behaviour by pupils on public transport on their journeys to and from school;
- lessons through geography, PSHE, and citizenship to explain the benefits of sustainable travel;
- a network of over 250 school travel advisers in local authorities in England to provide expert advice to schools engaged in travel planning.

HSE Updates costs to Britain of workplace accidents and work-related ill health

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has prepared interim updated estimates of the costs to Britain of workplace accidents and work-related ill health. These indicate that in 2001/02 health and safety failures cost

- employers between £3.9 - £7.8 billion,
- individuals between £10.1 - £14.7 billion,
- the economy between £13.1 - £22.2 billion, and
- society as a whole between £20 - £31.8 billion.

The new estimates also quantify the major cost categories that make up the totals. For employers, figures are given by industry sector, occupation and region. HSE has published two previous sets of cost estimates using data from 1990 and 1995/96. These have been used widely within HSE to inform strategic policy, new programme development, appraisals of policy proposals (e.g. Regulatory Impact Assessments) and, more recently, evaluations of HSE's impact. The information has also been used to answer enquiries from other government departments, the private sector, employer organisations, trade unions, academics and the public.

To carry out these detailed calculations, HSE needs to draw on a large amount of data from many different sources. The full set of data required will not be available until 2005, so HSE has produced an interim update using the best available occupational injury and illness data from 2001/02. Where there are gaps in the data, assumptions have been made and changes in prices and incomes have also been taken into account.

The updated figures carry some limitations. The estimates are only meant as broad indications of cost and a review of the previous update has led to HSE adopting proportionately wider ranges for many of them. This better reflects the uncertainty in the figures.

Finally, only broad comparisons can be made between the 1995/96 and 2001/02 estimates, and even these must be treated with caution as there are differences in the design of the 1995 and the 2001/02 Self-reported Work-related Illness surveys (part of the ONS Labour Force Survey) that provided the bulk of the data used in calculating the ill health cost estimates.

Interim update of 'The costs to Britain of workplace accidents and work-related ill health in 1995/96' can be found on HSE's website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/dayslost.htm>

New contracts for the electronic monitoring of offenders were awarded by the Home Office

On the 15th October 2004 new contracts for the electronic monitoring of offenders were awarded by the Home Office.

The new contracts have been awarded to Securicor Justice Services Ltd, and Premier Monitoring Services Ltd. They become operational from 1 April 2005, and cover the whole of England and Wales in five contract areas. The length of contracts are for five years, with a possible extension of up to two further years.

The new contracts represent a saving for the Home Office of about 35% on current volumes and will help the government achieve the 2008 goal of doubling capacity for the electronic monitoring of offenders.

Home Office Minister, Paul Goggins said: "Since electronic monitoring was extended to the whole of England and Wales in 1999, more than 175,000 offenders have been electronically monitored either as a sentence or on release from prison. "We are committed to using new technology where it can provide greater protection to the public and help offenders resettle to lead law-abiding lives. "The new contracts represent a success for the Home Office and the suppliers and we will continue to invest in this effective method of monitoring offenders."

Both suppliers already have significant experience in providing monitoring services and the new contracts represent good value for money for the Home Office.

Electronic monitoring was piloted in England and Wales for a short period in 1989 to 1990, and then again from 1995 until 1999 when it was extended to the whole of England and Wales. It can be imposed by a court as part of a community sentence, or as part of the licence conditions imposed on an offender when they are released from prison.

Electronic monitoring is the use of any technology to monitor offender compliance with a licence or court order. It is mostly used in the form of tagging, to monitor an offender's compliance with a curfew requirement. It is also used in the form of biometrics, on a small scale, to monitor attendance at programmes.

In September the government started to pilot satellite tracking to monitor offenders in three areas: Greater Manchester, West Midlands and Hampshire.

More information about electronic monitoring is available on the Home Office website at: <http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/output/page137.asp>.

welters Manufacturing



The company has been developing and manufacturing cold cast products for a wide variety of purposes for many years, from large industrial projects to high volume productions of single design components for building and domestic markets. It is a family based business with a legacy of artistic, architectural and creative manufacturing experience. **welters** are also productive in design and facilities consultancy and land management areas. **welters** experience and success within the industry is a result of the commitment they have invested in research and development.

Using a marriage of 'old and new' the company can create modern alternatives to historically high cost processes, delivering low cost products of creative design and high quality build.

Today the company provides cold cast products for industry and local government. The company prides itself on its reputation as being adaptable, providing specialist services for clients who require unusual products for specific purposes.

Continued Development

www.welters-worldwide.com

welters continue to develop their on-line presence and have recently completed a major restructure of their website. With easy to follow menus for fast navigation, the newly designed website provides details of Direct Sales Products, Facilities Management Products and Services available to the industry.

In 2003 there was yet more pressure on the industry to regulate itself and formulate solutions to its "big issues" such as health and safety and the general lack of burial space, all of which are being brought more sharply into public focus.

Our land management consultancy and manufacturing experience has helped us over the years to develop cost effective space saving safe systems specifically designed for the industry. This has enabled re-use of inaccessible, water logged or contaminated land to create low maintenance premier burial facilities for future generations of all religious denominations.

Last year we continued to invest heavily in developing our manufacturing premises and plant based on a desire for improvement in both a creative and productive capacity.

We also continue to invest heavily in research involving naturally reoccurring aggregates and polymer synthetics, refining and creating new compound technologies for high volume mould and cast production providing cost effective quality systems for the market place.

Problem solving and the pioneering of innovative and lateral thought continue to be the life blood of our business. This demonstrates our commitment to the industry.



DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT ART? BE AN ARTIST.

Mike Keane admires his Rice Krispies packet and ponders dead sharks and dead dictators

The Cromwell Road in London is one of my favourite art galleries. Not the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is at the Thurloe Place end, closer to the tourist throng of Knightsbridge geographically and culturally. No, I'm talking about the Earls Court Road end, where the traffic organises itself before the chaos of the Hammersmith flyover. The stretch of road lined by a most sensitive barometer of what is happening in the country. The Posters.

Usually when I get to see them I'm travelling at forty miles an hour so I have to concentrate. But not too hard, because these works are designed to be assimilated quickly. It is still easier to get a decent view than in an exhibition at the Royal Academy. No heads with large grey plastic personal art historians attached bobbing around in front of the work.

In 1923 the Russian Constructivist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote 'Art must not be concentrated in dead shrines called museums. It must be spread everywhere-on the streets in the trams, factories, workshops and in the workers homes.' He didn't just talk a good game. As he was writing his most famous love poem 'Pro eto,' published in the first issue of the Constructivist journal LEF, he was also writing copy for advertisements for everything from cars to bars.

So what's wrong with making a few roubles out of advertising? Well, nothing, but this wasn't how the Constructivists regarded their commercial projects. Their slogan was 'Art into production.' For Mayakovsky and his artistic collaborator Alexander Rodchenko, and the other leading lights, Malevich, El Lissitsky Popova and Stepenova, the major goal of their art was to communicate with the majority of the people. The best way to do that was through the new industrial printing processes. The best place to see their work was the street.

You may think this public art is just the voice of big business telling us what they think we need, or need more of. That's because of the large amounts of money involved in creating the work, the cost of employing photographers, typographers and printers. The cost of buying the media, i.e. the poster sites, is even more expensive. The account for the insurer 'Direct Line' went up for pitch recently. Campaign, the advertising industry's magazine put the value of its advertising budget at around £40,000, 000. So if you want to do an ad to stop developers concreting over your local pond in order to build luxury flats you've got to have deep pockets.



Big companies like Proctor and Gamble, Volkswagen, British Airways, Mars, Johnson and Johnson are among the biggest spenders. This has led to writers and artists working for the advertising agencies who service them. As they are only ever credited in the industry trade press you won't remember them. But you may remember their work. What refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach? Gone for a What? Happiness is a cigar called what? What is good for you? What is as good for you today as it's always been? What does exactly what it says on the tin? Some of these slogans are decades old and part of the vernacular. Sometimes the advertising outlasts the product it is made for.

Political advertising has a controversial history and the line between the two has often become blurred. Accusations of spin doctoring go back way before the current Labour Government. Once again it is the groups with the money to pay, for media and talent who often reap the dividends. A self-promotional ad for a design company had a picture of a Swastika and the headline 'Never underestimate the value of a good corporate identity.' Former artist Adolf Hitler made good use of art to further his political ambitions. Saatchi and Saatchi's

We are surrounded by design. CD covers, magazines, books, direct marketing, club fliers, road signs, your mobile phone display, this page, have all been designed by someone.

powerful advertising for the Conservative party was a major force in Mrs Thatcher's first General Election victory.

Seen as the party of big business, the Tories¹ received generous funding from it. 'Labour isn't working' with a picture of people in a dole queue is a classic piece of communication. The headline 'Foot Pump' with 'Inflation' written across over-expanded balloon didn't do the reputation of the man in the donkey jacket any favours.

But it's not all one-way traffic. Throughout the twentieth century there have been notable examples of the ostensibly financially powerless putting their beliefs across. The Conservatives didn't get it all their own way

in the battle for hearts and minds when they abolished the G.L.C. Ken Livingstone mounted a spirited PR campaign in its defence with the remainder of it's funding. A picture of the man himself with the headline 'If you want me out you should have the right to vote me out,' is a double-edged sword of implacable logic which attacks the Government while speaking of Livingstone's own sense of fair play.

The cash strapped with a point to make have other precedents they can look to. In the Paris rising of May 1968 the primarily student radicals formed the 'Atelier Populaire.' They had their own workshop with facilities for a dark room, silkscreen printing, lithography and stencilling from which they produced powerful posters putting forward reasons for their rejection of materialistic consumer society. They made such an impact the government resorted to the police to gag them.

The attitude of the mainstream Art world was interesting. Gallery officials barricaded themselves into their museums. If such general dissatisfaction were expressed today, I can't imagine any East or West End gallery owners, or their artists showing anti-establishment support. The white walls would not be besmirched. Yet on a recent visit to Waterstones the number of shelves devoted to monographs on gallery artists struck me. In any bookshop for every book on design you will find ten about gallery art. Yet we are surrounded by design. CD covers, magazines, books, direct marketing, club fliers, road signs, your mobile phone display, this page have all been designed by someone. When the quantity of gallery art is comparatively small, why is there continuing demand for information about it?

Perhaps its survival depends on it being a minority interest. In England we like art for the few. John Berger says 'The bogus religiosity which now surrounds original works of art, and which is ultimately dependent on their market value, has become the substitute for what paintings lost when the camera made them reproducible. Its function is nostalgic. It is the final empty claim for the continuing values of an oligarchic, undemocratic culture.'

Yet many of the Young British Artists use the techniques of advertising and PR to promote themselves in the same way soap powder is sold. Damien Hirst (shark in formaldehyde) Tracey Emin (unmade bed) Rachael Whiteread (cast of East end house). I give their descriptors because that is how they register in the public mind. Chris Ofili came to prominence not because of his undoubted, but rather traditional talent, but from the short lived use of elephant dung in the creation of his paintings. The search for fame, money and beautiful lovers, which is, according to Freud the aim of the artist, continues.

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Design

The explanations of their work doesn't always sit easily with the simplicity with which the artists themselves are regarded. Quotes explaining their *raison d'être* could fill 'Pseudos Corner' a million times over. The Lyrical Abstractionist Georges Mathieu explains 'The poetic, being irrepressible, had to take refuge in a sort of atonal superpoetic in order to find, in our western mentality, a few traces of justification. It allowed the signifier to invade almost every area (even its own) at the expense of any secondary gratuitousness. This signifier, for its part, can no longer merely signify: It attempts to transcend meaning in order to attain effectiveness.' Is it any wonder that to the majority modern art is merely tried and tested material to raise a titter at the end of the depressing section of the news.

In 'The Art of the Sixties' exhibition currently running at Tate Britain, the work that stood up best to the test of time is ironically the transient medium of photography. Don McCullen's pictures of Vietnam are about something more than the ego of the artist. They make much of the surrounding work seem like navel gazing. What is ironic is that many of these artists tried to embrace popular culture. Much as I admire Peter Blake's painting, his cover for the Beatles Sgt Pepper Album said more when it needed to be said than any number of subsequent viewings of his work to an affluent educated minority in an art gallery.

So what happened to Mayakovsky's dream of art for the majority? Well in the short term Lenin found the ideas of the Constructivists a bit too advanced. He sent many of them into exile or to the labour camps. It seems suffering for your art isn't confined to the 'fine artists' whose work stocks our galleries. In the long term I think he would be amazed by one change in particular. In the 1920's it was impossible to imagine people with little or no training could make art or publicity. The artist was at the centre of proceedings not just because of superior talent but because of the technical know how involved in production. Today, almost a century later, an invention that Mayakovsky could never have envisaged has made this possible.

The computer.

By 1990 the proliferation of desktop technology, particularly the Apple Macintosh liberated designers from the need to work for large organisations in order



to see their work produced. Where only a couple of years before entire studios had been devoted to letter spacing by hand, suddenly it could be done by one person with a computer. Not only that. Ideas had previously to be visualised in advance. Mistakes were incredibly expensive to correct. Now they could be tried out and

abandoned if they weren't working. The effect was immediate. Designers began to stray into areas formerly the preserve of specialists. Digital filmmaking, sound design, text editing and type design were all up for grabs. A multidisciplinary studio like Tomato founded in London in 1991 gave music concerts with flashing type shows superimposed. Neville Brody, former art director of 'The Face' a very influential magazine in the 1980's said 'The distinction between amateur and professional design is becoming blurred because of the computer, which is great. I'm all for that; I'm really in support of everyone having access to the technology and everyone becoming visually educated.'

As Western governments are discovering to their cost, a two-way channel of communication is very difficult to control.

New advances in software mean the situation is continually changing. It has allowed broadcast quality programmes to be shot and edited by home enthusiasts very quickly. With a digital stills or video camera and design or editing software you have far more effective communication tools in your hands for less money than anyone has ever had before.

Not only has the computer provided the means with which to communicate it has also provided a channel of communication. The World Wide Web has enabled anyone to place virtually anything on it to be seen by anyone. Web pages are bright, colourful pages of text, images, sound and animation. Just as in the more traditional media, businesses sell their wares. But on the web the range of what can be sold it is much greater. Groceries, pornography, ideology. As Western governments are discovering to their cost a two-way channel of communication is very difficult to control.

This is a unique situation. Suddenly more money doesn't necessarily mean you have a louder voice. Technology has levelled the playing field more than ever before. So the Constructivist dream, that art would 'spread everywhere-on the streets in the trams, factories, workshops and in the workers homes' is already happening without anyone noticing. Not only are they consumers of this art they can now be protagonists.

So if you've got a point of view, let someone know about it. Get a website. Make a video. Show your work. Write a Newsletter. Design it. Make a flyer. Go create. ■

New structure found deep within West Antarctic Ice Sheet

Scientists have found a remarkable new structure deep within the West Antarctic Ice Sheet which suggests that the whole ice sheet is more susceptible to future change than previously thought. The discovery, by scientists from Bristol University and the British Antarctic Survey in collaboration with US colleagues, is reported this week (September 24) in the international journal *Science*.

The stability of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet has been hotly debated since the 1960s because of its potential to raise global sea level by around 5 m over several centuries. The potential impacts of a major change in the West Antarctic ice sheet are severe - sea level rise will be fantastically expensive for developed nations with coastal cities and dire for poor populations in low-lying coastal areas.

Lead author Prof Martin Siegert of Bristol University said, 'There is a great deal of speculation that global warming may cause sea levels to rise due to the melting of ice sheets. Until now, scientific observations suggested that change to the West Antarctic Ice Sheet would be restricted to the edges implying that large-scale instability of the ice sheet is unlikely. This new discovery deep within the ice means that we need to re-think our current assessment of the risk of collapse of this ice sheet.'

The structure - a distinctive fold in the ice, 800m deep by 50 km long - was detected using ice-penetrating radar. Ice sheets normally consist of flat layers of ice, so finding this huge fold was a complete surprise. Its presence suggests that a few thousand years ago surface ice at the centre of the ice sheet was moving rapidly and being 'drawn down' towards the bottom of the ice sheet.

More recently the rate of the ice flow has changed from fast to slow. The direction of flow has also changed. The most likely explanation for these changes is the 'switching-off' of a large ice stream at the margin of the ice sheet several centuries ago. These changes imply that the centre of the ice sheet is more mobile than scientists previously realised, requiring them to rethink existing models.

Ice sheet

The Antarctic ice sheet is the layer of ice up to 5000 m thick covering the Antarctic continent. It is formed from snow falling in the interior of the Antarctic which compacts into ice. The ice sheet slowly moves towards the coast, eventually breaking away as icebergs which gradually melt into the sea. The ice sheet covering East Antarctica is very stable, because it lies on rock that is above sea level and is thought unlikely to collapse. The West Antarctic is less stable, because it sits on rock below sea level. If the ice sheet does collapse, it is more likely to be part of a natural collapse cycle, or as a response to climatic change that occurred many thousands of years ago, rather than a response to current climatic change.

British Antarctic Survey is responsible for most of the UK's research in Antarctica. It is a component of the Natural Environment Research Council. More information about the work of the Survey can be found on our website: www.antarctica.ac.uk

Salford says 'I do' to freedom of choice

As an inclusive city that promotes diversity, Salford offers its residents more freedom in the way they mark rites of passage thanks to positive changes to be introduced by the city council's registration service.

The introduction of new legislation will mean that in the future couples will no longer be asked to give notice of their intention to marry to the Superintendent Registrar where they live.

In fact, further steps have been taken to ensure that wedded bliss can be achieved with the introduction of additional services such as marriage re-affirmation. This will be possible in the registration office's refurbished premises which include a new marriage room furnished in contemporary style. Consideration is also being given to the idea of providing a wedding co-ordinator service to relieve the burden that comes with planning the big day. Partnership ceremonies have also been introduced as a positive move for same sex couples wishing to celebrate their special day.

The delivery of a new and improved service responds to customer demand and reflects one of the city council's core pledges, to enhance life in Salford. Additional services are also set to be introduced with the aim of reflecting the diverse and cosmopolitan nature of the city, including baby naming ceremonies and secular funerals. Commenting on the new plans, lead member for customer service and finance at Salford City Council, Councillor Hinds said: "Partnership working and consultation with communities continues to be essential to driving this service forward.

"The rationale is to reflect customer demand and enable people to make key decisions about rites of passage by offering more choice and a more comprehensive service." For further information on the registration service in Salford call 0161-909 6501 or visit the website at www.salford.gov.uk/bmd.

Safety First at Harpenden Council

Harpenden Town Council has developed a Major Incident Emergency plan to help local residents in the event of a major incident in the area.

The plan was adopted at a Full Town Council meeting in October and aims to reduce loss of life, protect property and restore normality as quickly as possible in the event of a disaster, such as freak weather conditions, a plane crash or terrorist activity.

The plan has brought together services provided by the District, County and Town Council as well as the Emergency Services and other Agencies. It also outlines key responsibilities, providing detailed information about local resources that would be called upon in the event of a disaster.

Hertfordshire Emergency Services Major Incident Committee (HESMIC) has advised that Harpenden Town Council's Plan is "First Class" and exactly what they had hoped to see from Town and Parish Councils across the county.

The Plan will now form the framework for other Town Councils throughout Hertfordshire to develop their own local strategies.

Rising IQs and Falling Voters: Are We Getting Too Smart to Vote?

In recent years the Government has pushed to get more people voting. Voting booths and online voting have been employed to widen political participation, particularly at local level. These attempts remain ineffectual. Only half the population votes in General Elections, giving rise to concern that elected bodies lack popular legitimacy.

John F Keane presents an unusual explanation for the phenomenon of political self-exclusion. Can participatory democracy survive it?

In *Brave New World*, Huxley describes an island full of Alphas endowed with high IQs. Nothing works. Striking, dissent and disorder reign. The thinking minority with IQs in the top five percent simply refuses to take orders. Every directive is questioned. During the Korean War, the Koreans were able to neutralize American POWs simply by excluding their leader figures, their officers. This automatically halted all attempts at escape.

For this reason, every functional society has had avenues of social mobility for its most intelligent and spirited subordinates. Think of Europe in the Middle Ages: the Catholic Church allowed the most intelligent peasant children access to patrician society via the Monasteries, thus neutralizing them and depriving the poor of their natural leaders. This is as much the result of social self-organization as social planning. However, it seems to be a necessary feature of any functional society. A pressure release, if you will.

In Britain throughout the Twentieth Century it will be noted that social dissent diminished in tandem with expanded opportunities for working class advancement. Foremost of these were the Grammar Schools. Although only a small minority of the working class attended them, these were the most intelligent. Their removal and embourgeoisment consequently had a neutralizing effect out of all proportion to their actual numbers.

Then sections of the middle class (those with unintelligent children, essentially) began to agitate against the Grammars. Comprehensives were introduced. In itself this was not initially that damaging to proletarian life chances. Bright, poor children could still advance to university and into the middle class. But it was noted that these schools did not develop bright pupils socially, only academically. In a society where accent, manners and morals are still highly significant markers of status, proletarian children, however intelligent, were inherently damaged by this selfish act of sabotage.

Then the affluent began to pull their children out of State education or buy it by postcode. Public education in deprived areas began to lose its capacity to nurture the brightest of the poor. Corporal punishment was abolished, fine in schools with polite suburban children but a recipe for pandemonium when trying to deal with the angry urban proletariat. Now, we have the worst State education system in Western Europe. Social mobility is less than it was forty years ago, economic inequality greater.

And here we come to the crux of the matter. State education can no longer help the best or brightest of the disenfranchised. They are left to fester in sink schools and housing estates. Where once there was a fast

The far right no longer seems intellectually ridiculous in Britain or across Europe. Its arguments are coherent.

track out of urban poverty, now there is nothing. All escape routes, save crime, are blocked. This, I believe, is one major reason for the rise of the radical right in blighted urban communities. The most intelligent of the disenfranchised are trapped there, now, blaming and agitating. And their intelligence is transforming the far right: rationale increasingly underpins its theories and methods.

The far right no longer seems intellectually ridiculous in Britain or across Europe. Its arguments are coherent. Many of its opinions are actually majority opinions, particularly on issues like globalization, the liberal hegemony or the absolute indifference of the 'mainstream' political parties to social problems like poverty and low pay. There is clearly a rational cogency relatively absent from previous incarnations of the far right. This, I aver, is the working class intelligence that was wasted by liberal mismanagement of education. For the first time in many decades, sections of the white urban poor can articulate their discontent.

Liberals, always seeking the answer to 'hate' could do no better than reintroduce Grammar Schools and allow bright working class children into them. But that would not be liberal, would it?

German academic Klaus Theweleit has linked the rise of the Nazis in large part to a feeling of blocked social mobility among the most spirited and ambitious of the disenfranchised. People who felt denied what was 'due' them in the chaos of Weimar Germany. This group included bright working class boys who had won scholarships; landowners ruined by new farming methods; displaced university Graduates toiling for a pittance.

All of these felt that life owed them more. Such people are dangerous in a way the authentic underclasses are not. They are less likely to accept their lot and more capable of contesting it. Additionally, their sense of injustice against economic and political disenfranchisement burns infinitely brighter.

Interestingly, many of the groups described by Theweleit abound in modern Britain. State school Graduates without the confidence or connections to escape the Dole queue; unemployed workers in ailing industries; the disenfranchised intelligent deprived of educational opportunity by liberal paternalism.

Most of those who vote or organize for the BNP are no more intolerant than most in their socio-economic circumstances. They vote for the far right more in protest against the wildly unrepresentative liberal oligarchy, upper-middle class self-exemption from multicultural responsibility and paternalistic mismanagement of society.

However, the problem (if it is a problem) may have another root. While far right-wing activists have probably emerged due to blocked social mobility, the staggering success of Michael Moore and Ann Coulter in the US shows that a mass movement of resistance to elite domination has spontaneously emerged in the West. Ever declining numbers vote in all Western democracies, presenting a widespread crisis of political legitimacy. Peter Hitchens cites evidence that 80% of British people under 40 despise their own country's political institutions. Could there be a more comprehensive explanation for this mass alienation other than merely blocked mobility?

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The Flynn Effect and the End of Paternalism

James R. Flynn, the professor of political science at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand, declares that intelligence quotients, as measured by certain tests, have been steadily growing since the turn of the century.

"It is transforming work," comments Ulric Neisser of Cornell University, editor of *The Rising Curve*. This book, emerging from a 1996 American Psychological Association symposium, reviews the Flynn effect and various explanations for it. These include better nutrition, more extensive schooling, test-taking practice, and the visual and spatial enrichment that accompanies a world laden with television and complex video-games.

**...in 14 countries IQ
was growing anywhere
from five to 25 points
in one generation.**

Flynn discovered that certain IQ tests - specifically, the Stanford-Binet and Wechsler series - had new and old versions and that both were sometimes given to the same group of people. In the case of one of the Wechsler tests, for instance, the two versions had been given to the same set of children. The children did much better on the 1949 test than they did on the 1974 one. Everywhere Flynn looked, he noticed that groups performed much more intelligently on older tests. Americans had gained about 13.8 IQ points in 46 years, Flynn reported in 1984. Nor is this merely an American phenomenon. Flynn observed that in 14 countries IQ was growing anywhere from five to 25 points in one generation.

What, then, are the political implications of the *Rising Curve*? As we have seen, certain factors characterise contemporary Western society. There is mass alienation and defection from social and political institutions. It is increasingly difficult to get indigenous people to do dead end jobs - they prefer benefit dependence: or to get young, poor males to enlist in the Armed forces. Contempt for patrician culture is commonplace. Above all, fewer and fewer people vote.

It is usual for the Establishmentarian academics (both liberal and conservative) to equate intelligence with organized religion, 'rational voting', abiding by the law and conformity to 'societal' (i.e. patrician values). Misalignment with these values denotes, for them, declining rationale and education. To these observers, the explanation offered for these phenomena in this article might ruffle a few feathers with its reverse logic. However, it is eminently plausible when examined in depth: people are becoming more intelligent. And because the IQ curve is steadily rising, the hackneyed ploys devised by the elite to deceive the masses are failing.

Take voting. In contemporary Britain we know only around half the population votes. But non-voting is rational. There is no real difference between the major Western political parties, who have a preoccupation with the highly paid upper-middle class and complete indifference to the concerns of the vast majority (largely because they are themselves so wildly unrepresentative). On top of which, it is not really a democracy, anyway. In Britain the majority consistently favour the death penalty, and the liberal elite continually deny them. This is not space plasma physics: a primary school child can see that mass opinion is ignored in Britain on virtually every issue. Hence non-voting is a wholly rational response to a largely non-democratic society. The rise of the BNP is probably not the emergence of political racism so often described; rather, it represents a rational protest vote on the part of the disenfranchised that forces the oligarchy to listen. And it works: only since the white working class started voting BNP has their very existence received grudging acceptance by the elite after an infinity of neglect. No behaviour could be more rational.

Associated with non-voting is a rising tide of contempt for the elite and their interests. Furthermore, this contempt is completely rational. It extends to high art - where the game is truly up. Listening to someone like Tracey Emin makes any rational person realise that modern art is utter nonsense. As Jean Gimpel cites in *The Cult of Art*, modern art largely exists to exclude the masses from the cultural life. Its vaunted conceptual content is completely spurious, a farrago of Freudian nonsense.

In intellectual terms, the game is up with Freud, Marx, and Feminism. Most educated people today wonder how these irrational anachronisms lasted so long. The rising IQ of the general population has cut through them, leaving their smashed remnants around its iron shod feet. The demolition of feminism, Freud and Marx by socio-biology is common knowledge among all thinking people.

The final collapse of organised religion in the West coincides neatly with the Flynn Effect. The textual discrepancies in the New Testament are highlighted in best sellers like *The Jesus Mysteries*. The fact that Church going (like voting) is now the preserve of the elderly is not without significance in relation to Flynn's arguments.

The use of national Lottery funds - overwhelmingly provided by the poor - to finance the pleasures of the rich (opera houses and abstract art galleries) now provokes an enormous outcry. Even a generation ago such upper-middle class effrontery would have been met by dumb acquiescence - not today.

Consider also mass resentment at having to pay a TV Licence - effectively a levy on the general population to give patronising Public Schoolboys careers.

The explosion in crime in recent years can also be explained by Flynn's findings. Crime is rational. Crime is the best way for disenfranchised males to get money and its attendant pleasures. While once, only the most spirited and intelligent of the poor would opt for a criminal lifestyle (something pointed out by H.G. Wells a century ago), the Flynn Effect has secured the mass criminality so normal today.

We have looked specifically at mass disenchantment with the meaningless fanfare of 'democratic' politics and the eccentric injunctions of the elite in general. On issues like sentencing, immigration, Asylum Seekers and so on the broad masses remain deeply critical. No one is fooled by elites who promote multiculturalism while sending their children to traditional private schools, any more. Other signs of burgeoning mass intelligence (than merely not voting and the other issues we have considered) include:

- Men not getting married (they don't want to be destitute after divorce).
- People not breeding (a child is now to best way to spend one's best years in penury).
- Contempt for formal education (liberal education being little more than a ludicrous attempt to impose elite values and experience outside a moneyed lifestyle - as many an unemployed Graduate has discovered).
- (In the UK) not enlisting in the armed forces. Why should the disenfranchised defend a socio-political system that has utterly rejected them? In fact, most people favour a period of National Service to give elite youth some taste of consensus reality and develop understanding between the different social strata.
- Rejection of insulated elite opinion on a vast range of issues including law, politics, psychology, healthcare, victim's rights and the Welfare State. The rising IQ curve has been like awakening from a dream in many respects. We live in an exciting intellectual age where various elite Sacred Cows - Freud, Marx, artistic Modernism, left-liberalism, environmentalism, multiculturalism, child-centred learning and paternalism - have been challenged and comprehensively refuted after decades of tired hegemony.
- Mass concern about the misapplication of liberal values to unsuitable social groups. Upper middle class liberal values permeate all social groups, especially those to whom they are most harmful (the urban poor). Without their traditional internal thrift and discipline, the poor are rapidly collapsing into barbarism.

People have disengaged with electoral politics. However, the massive success of writers like Ann Coulter and Michael Moore paradoxically show that mass interest in political debate is alive and well. Neither of these political celebrities has anything positive to say. Their entire function is to attack the liberal (Coulter) and conservative (Moore) upper-middle class. Viewed as a total phenomenon, they have achieved celebrity by critiquing the snobbery, remoteness, elitism and hypocrisy of the elite. Hatred of the elite seems to be the dominant political factor in America. This is increasingly shared in mainland Europe and Britain. Hence the conceptual fireworks detonated by the success of right-wing populists like Pym Fortuyn are common to most Western nations.

The older democratic political structures no longer mean much. All parties - nominal liberals/conservatives in the West - seem completely out of touch with intelligent mass opinion. For example, probably 90% of Americans, Britons (or whoever) now want drugs legalized. But no way will they ever be. Nominal Western democracies grossly underestimate the intelligence and maturity of their populations. Political parties are woodenly partisan and out of touch. A new mood is growing in the masses - a radical liberalism, if you will - which wants commonsense on issues like drugs/pornography/prostitution, an end to upper-middle class exemption from societal obligations, an end to liberal elitist hypocrisy (multiculturalism for the poor but not for leafy suburbs). Until this movement finds active political expression the alienation of most from 'democratic politics' (i.e. upper-middle class eccentricity and hypocrisy) will worsen. In other words we need democracy that treats people like grown-ups, not infants.

'Democratic' politics no longer reflects mass opinion in any Western nation. In fact, the international political class is still rooted in the 1950s, assuming everyone goes to Church, is married and has 2.4 children. You only have to listen to the panel on Question Time to realise this is so. The brute fact that Britain is now secular, for example, seldom impinges on their eccentric discourse.

Some would say the mass social criticism I describe as characteristic of the West. Perhaps, but half the population (or more) not voting is new. Also, the discontent is with the general remoteness of the elites, not specific issues. There is mass awareness that Western societies are run by a self-serving, remote and uninformed upper-middle class cadre. This is quite distinct from the bourgeois 'radicalism' of the Sixties. A specific, probably Flynn-related crisis in Anglo Saxon culture is the collapse of mass faith in upper-middle class opinion. Most people bluntly do not accept that mass killers are 'ill', that multiculturalism works or that non-selective education is fair. In fact, low voting levels and general political disengagement owe much to mass dissatisfaction with such unfounded elite assumptions.

What is key to the problem is the lack of contact between classes in the West. In real terms, elites are no more accepting of pedophiles, immigrants or Asylum Seekers than the poor. Their liberalism depends on the distance afforded from these issues by high incomes.

The rise of mass alienation from 'democracy' is symptomatic of a collapse of faith in the sanctity of upper-middle class opinion. It is self-evident that the elite are too detached from mass experience to pass meaningful social comment or formulate constructive social policy. The commonweal no longer listen to elite opinion - and justifiably so. The Rising Curve that frees the majority from intellectual deference has crossed its Rubicon. ■

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HFEA grants the first therapeutic cloning licence for research

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has granted the first licence to create human embryonic stem cells using cell nuclear transfer - a technique also known as therapeutic cloning. The licence will be held by Newcastle Centre for Life. Stem cells created under this licence will be used for research purposes only.

Suzi Leather, HFEA Chair says:

“After careful consideration of all the scientific, ethical, legal and medical aspects of the project, the HFEA Licence Committee agreed to grant an initial one year research licence to the Newcastle Centre for Life. This is an important area of research and a responsible use of technology. The HFEA is there to make sure any research involving human embryos is scrutinised and properly regulated.”

This licence allows scientists to create human embryos by inserting the nuclei from human skin or stem cells into human eggs. In the UK, research on human embryos is only permitted for certain purposes. The purpose of this research is to increase knowledge about the development of embryos and enable this knowledge to be applied in developing treatments for serious disease. This research is preliminary, it is not aimed at specific illnesses, but is the foundation for further development in the treatment of serious disease.

The cloning technique, cell nuclear replacement (CNR) involves removing the nucleus of a human egg cell and replacing it with the nucleus from a human body cell, such as a skin cell. The egg is then artificially stimulated. This causes the egg to divide and behave in a similar way to a standard embryo fertilised by sperm.

Research on human embryos is only allowed for certain purposes. Under the initial Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990) the HFEA could only grant licences if it was satisfied the use of human embryos was for one of the following purposes:

- To promote advances in the treatment of infertility
- To increase knowledge about the causes of congenital disease
- To increase knowledge about the causes of miscarriages
- To develop more effective techniques of contraception
- To develop methods for detecting the presence of gene or chromosome abnormalities

In 2001 new regulations (The Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Research Purposes) Regulations 2001) were passed, adding three further purposes for research to the list above:

- Increasing knowledge about the development of embryos
- Increasing knowledge about serious disease
- Enabling any such knowledge to be applied in developing treatments for serious disease

Human reproductive cloning is illegal in the UK. As a result of the Human Reproductive Cloning Act (2001) nobody in the UK is allowed to use cell nuclear replacement, or any other technique, to create a child. The HFEA was set up in August 1991 as part of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990. The HFEA's principal tasks are to license and monitor clinics that carry out in vitro fertilisation (IVF), donor insemination (DI) and human embryo research. The HFEA also regulates the storage of gametes (eggs and sperm) and embryos.

FSA announces major progress towards streamlining anti-money-laundering customer identification

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has issued a progress report on the work it has been leading to simplify the UK's customer identification verification (ID) regime for anti-money-laundering (AML) purposes. The report reflects the discussions of the FSA's ID working group, which has representation from all major stakeholders including law enforcement, consumers and the industry.

Philip Robinson, financial crime sector leader at the FSA, said:

"In April I issued a challenge to all stakeholders to join together to defuse the ID issue. This includes customers' apparent lack of support for the process and firms' concerns over cost.

"We believe that it is crucial to the effective fight against all crime, not just financial crime, that key anti-money laundering controls, such as verification of ID, have the support of industry and customers. To that end, the ID working group was established to involve all stakeholders in the ID process.

"Our discussions have shown a common commitment to achieve an ID regime that is effective and that all stakeholders can support. All agree that there are ways to streamline the regime without reducing its effectiveness." Key propositions in this report are being offered to the JMLSG, who are redrafting their guidance notes and will issue a consultation draft by the end of this year. They include:

1. Increased reliance on a single identification document Discussions in the group indicated that the provision of a second document gives limited additional corroborative value. For example utility bills can be easily forged and a large number of customers do not receive a utility bill in their own name. On this basis, either a passport or a photocard driving licence should meet the need in the case of a majority of customers. Those who cannot provide either document could produce a letter to satisfy ID, for example from a benefits agency or government agency.

2. Recognition of the benefits of electronic verification The group recognised that electronic verification - which involves confirming identity via a credit reference agency - can be used instead of, or in addition to, documentary evidence. The industry is now making increasing use of electronic verification, particularly for UK-based personal customers. Advantages include: it is a straightforward way of accessing multiple corroborative sources, it is particularly useful for non-face-to-face customers because they do not need to provide documents unless the firm considers it is necessary, it can be cheaper than the documentary approach.

3. Greater reliance on ID done by other firms The legal and regulatory obligations to conduct ID checks apply to all firms. There is scope for more extensive reliance in the industry on other firms' ID of a customer.

4. The need for a more tailored approach for non-personal customers and wholesale business ID is also required for non-personal customers such as corporates and trusts. There are concerns that the current ID checks for non-personal customers are disproportionate and insufficiently risk based. The JMLSG is working with a group of principal wholesale and institutional trade associations to develop a revised regime.

Other issues on which progress is being made include: Customer Understanding Customers should see the identification process as a sensible contribution to the fight against crime and terrorism and not as a burdensome and deliberate barrier to the access to financial services. To promote this understanding, ID needs to be done in a customer-friendly way and firm procedures and staff training should be designed accordingly.

There also needs to be effective communication of the reasons for ID and what it normally involves. Progress has been made by the Treasury, the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and the FSA on promoting customer awareness. The industry strongly believes that this activity needs to be reinforced by more visible government support. The government recognises the work done and will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure effective communications.

Tackling the 'fear factor' The group recognises that firms' behaviours could be distorted by their interpretation of the FSA's supervisory approach. To tackle this, the FSA will set out shortly its approach to the use of its supervisory and enforcement tools. The FSA will also revise the guidance and training provided to its supervisors in the light of the revision of the JMLSG guidance notes and the work to refine risk assessment (ARROW) methodology,

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Sustainable Development Fund for National Parks Gets Independent Seal of Approval

An innovative fund helping individuals, community groups, and businesses in England's National Parks has been judged a success after its first 18 months.

An independent report published in October, and completed by the Centre for European Protected Areas Research at the University of London, has monitored the English National Parks Sustainable Development Fund over its first year and a half of operation.

The Fund, which was the personal initiative of Rural Affairs Minister Alun Michael, has also won the strong endorsement of the National Park Authorities. It aims to foster the principles of sustainability within the National Parks and supports a huge variety of projects, from wildlife to recreation and activity centres; from green transport to educational facilities; from developing alternative energy sources to sourcing produce locally; and from training in traditional countryside skills to developing ecological and affordable housing. Over three hundred such projects have been helped to date.

Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs, said today:

"This report shows the great commitment of the communities of the National Parks to building upon their environmental and cultural heritage with innovative ideas. It is reinforcing Defra's key principle of sustainable development by enabling people to come up with ideas that benefit the environment, the community and the economy.

"The recipients have been tremendously resourceful in using a relatively small amount of money to lever in funds from elsewhere and make some tangible changes on the ground. In just eighteen months the Fund has secured match funding of over £13million.

"But there is plenty of room for improvement. I hope to see more projects linking urban and rural communities and encouraging the involvement of young people, disabled people, and groups who are traditionally less likely to benefit from the Parks".

Pam Warhurst, Deputy Chair of the Countryside Agency, commented: "For me the most interesting of the fringe benefits associated with the scheme is the way it has broken down barriers and brought an entirely

new constituency of local people into contact with the National Parks". On qualifying the success of the Fund, the report's authors at the Centre for European Protected Areas Research conclude that:

"Sustainability is an idea, not a recipe, and raises questions to which there are no universal or immediate answers. [The Sustainable Development Fund] has amply proved its worth, not just for the immediate benefits that projects have brought to their participants and local communities, but in identifying possibilities for delivering on the fundamentals of sustainability which may subsequently be developed elsewhere."

Defra will now work with the National Parks' Sustainable Development Officers' and the Countryside Agency to consider how 20 detailed recommendations about the future of the Fund should be taken forward.

The report was commissioned by the Countryside Agency, on behalf of Defra, and produced by independent

consultants at the Centre for European Protected Areas Research (CEPAR). A copy can be found on the Defra website National Parks pages at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/issues/landscap/natparks.htm#susdev>. The Sustainable Development Fund Prospectus reflects Defra's objectives of sustainable development, partnership and social inclusion. The Fund aims to develop and test new ways of achieving a more sustainable way of living in these areas of great natural beauty and diversity, whilst enhancing and conserving local culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and communities. The Fund is open to individuals or organisations from the public, private or voluntary sectors, from within or outside the National Park. Details of the Fund, including funding criteria, are set out in the prospectus, which can be found on the Defra website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/issues/landscap/natparks.htm#susdev>.

Biography Spotlight:

William Cash MP

William was born in 1940. He was educated at Stonyhurst College, and Lincoln College, Oxford. He is married to Biddy, and they have two sons and a daughter.

William is a qualified solicitor, and has his own practice in London - William Cash and Co.

Bill's Experience

William was Member of Parliament for Stafford from 1984 until 1997, when he was elected Member of Parliament for Stone.

Previous Parliamentary appointments include: Chairman of the Conservative Backbench Committee on European Affairs (1989-1991), Chairman of the All Party Committee on East Africa (1988), Joint Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Committee on Alternative Medicine, and Vice-President of the Conservative Small Business Bureau (1984).

He has also been a Member of the Select Committee on European Legislation (1985), the Standing Committee on Financial Services (1985-1986), the Standing Committee on Banking (1986-1987), and the Standing Committee on Broadcasting Bill (1990).

William has campaigned against federalism in Europe but supports British membership of the European Union. He has campaigned for the reduction of red tape and co-ordination of government activity relating to small businesses (drafted the Small Businesses Bill), and has introduced The Protection of Shareholders Bill 1987. He has promoted competitive sport in schools, and was the first MP to put down an EDM in 1984 drawing attention to AIDS. He has also campaigned for fair play for British farmers and for improvements in the rural economy. His Right of Privacy Bill, which has the support of 307 MPs, is intent on curbing the growing invasion of privacy by the Press. William has also campaigned against the dangers of genetic engineering, and against violence and obscenity on television. From 2001 to 2003, he served as Shadow Attorney General and has also been responsible for shadowing Constitutional Affairs in the House of Commons.



Harpenden In Bloom 'planting' to win in 2005

Following on from its Silver Gilt award in the Anglia in Bloom 2004 campaign, the Harpenden In Bloom working party have launched its 2005 campaign with the determination to win!



The launch was marked by the holding of a planting day on Sunday 17th October 2004. Many volunteers turned up to help plant all the small flowerbeds in the Town Centre including the 1st Harpenden Brownies Pack.

A Bulb Planting day at Sherwood Rice/ Dark Lane was also held on the 24th October.

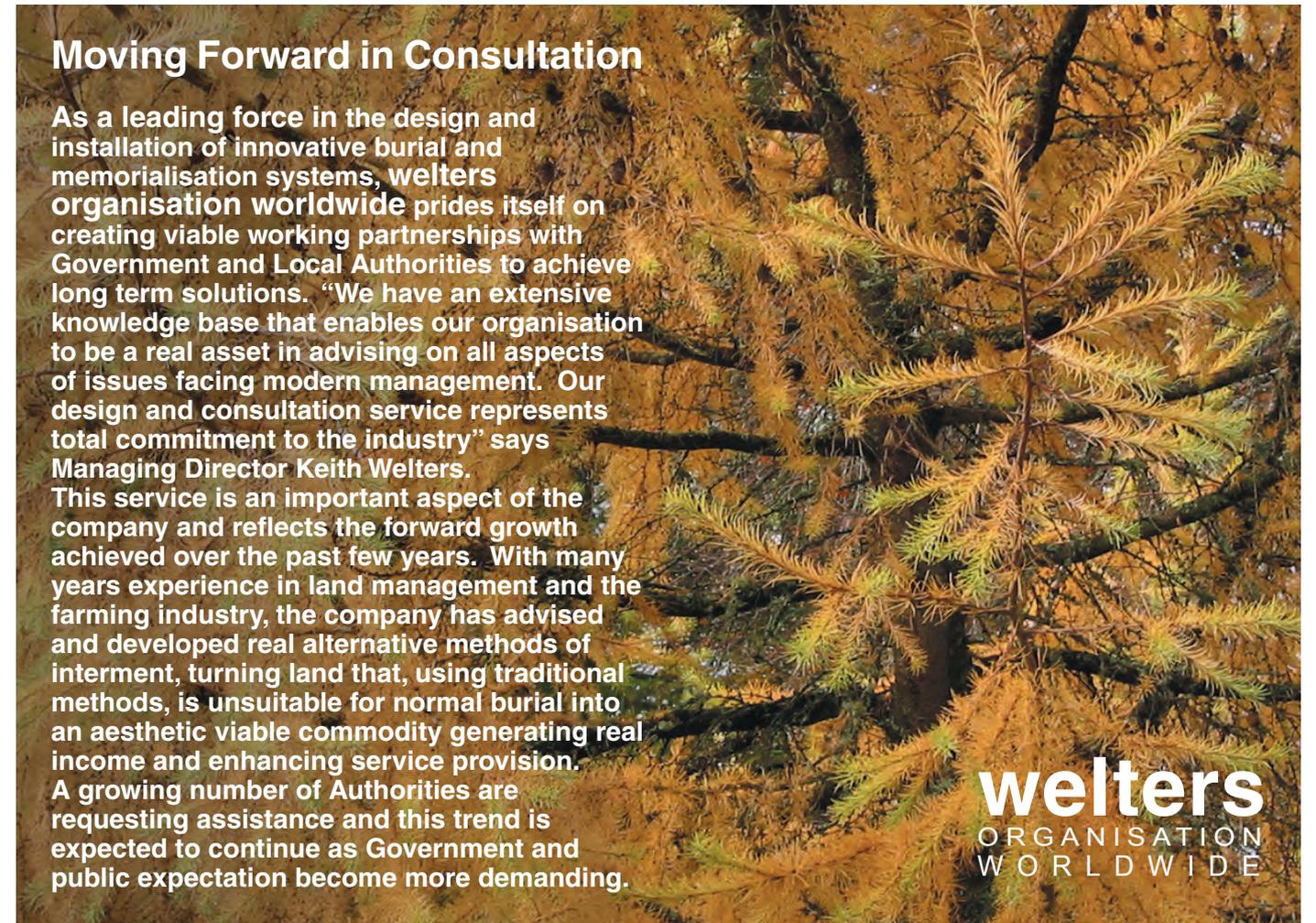
Volunteers turned up to join members and local residents representing Harpenden In Bloom to help plant a 1,000 bulbs, which will help make this year's floral displays even better than last year.



Moving Forward in Consultation

As a leading force in the design and installation of innovative burial and memorialisation systems, **welters organisation worldwide** prides itself on creating viable working partnerships with Government and Local Authorities to achieve long term solutions. "We have an extensive knowledge base that enables our organisation to be a real asset in advising on all aspects of issues facing modern management. Our design and consultation service represents total commitment to the industry" says Managing Director Keith Welters.

This service is an important aspect of the company and reflects the forward growth achieved over the past few years. With many years experience in land management and the farming industry, the company has advised and developed real alternative methods of interment, turning land that, using traditional methods, is unsuitable for normal burial into an aesthetic viable commodity generating real income and enhancing service provision. A growing number of Authorities are requesting assistance and this trend is expected to continue as Government and public expectation become more demanding.



welters
ORGANISATION
WORLDWIDE

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DESERVES RESPECT

Many thousands of years ago, villages and their surrounding woods and meadows must have formed the primary environment for human society, where families united into communities, and communities into larger villages in what might be seen as a clan area.

From the earliest times, village elders would choose a chieftain to rule over the clan villages in a region. He (or she) would be the guardian of tradition, the arbiter in disputes, the leader in local wars. If he wasn't good at it, he'd be retired and another one would be chosen. This was power from the ground up.

Alternatively, a warlord with his armed riders would turn up in the area, offering protection in exchange for tribute and services. Deals would be made and soon villagers found themselves with a king. This was power from the top down.

An evil king, an ideologue or a religious maniac, might enslave the local community or force them to follow his every whim, in which case they'd cheat him, plot against him and do deals with other rulers. A decent king, on the other hand, who left them alone to get on with their lives unmolested, as long as the fair tribute was forthcoming, would be quite appreciated.

The villagers would reserve their special affections for their local area, their own traditions and culture. But they would also recognise the value of paying homage and respect to the king for his protection and for the higher justice he dispensed between the areas.

In Britain, for some four hundred years after the Norman Conquest, local areas were dominated by the local lord, to whom the king had granted title to land. The kings were often weak and ineffectual against the combined lords, and local communities had to knuckle under. But as years passed villages grew into towns and began to trade and produce wealth.

In alliance the towns and the monarch were able to break the power of the lords and together form a mutually beneficial relationship. Wealthy towns could grant the king money, and in exchange the king would grant them freedom to trade, create wealth and run their own affairs. The ruler says to local: that which you do in your own way and can do well, we leave to you. The rest, we will take care of, and you pay. Big issues were for the ruler: foreign policy, state affairs, defence of the realm, and certain prerogatives of the realm like royal forests, palaces, expenses of office for his minions. Local issues were for the towns people

By sharing a king they shared another, higher identity with other distant towns and villages, yet kept affection for their place of birth and nurture. By living in denser concentrations in large towns they learned to live with and even thrive on the variety and stress, yet retained the fondness for village and translated this into a fondness for neighbourhood and community.

We are now a country that is 80% urban. And we know that cities can be a hell to people living alone. Yes, they can provide us with anonymity, individuality and choice. But most of us need something like the village. We want a place where we can see familiar faces, exchange

stories about people we know, feel part of, where we can help and be helped. Without this, in the huge, bleak, depersonalised, conurbations people find themselves living in, there is a serious danger of alienation and disorientation, when we see only faces we do not know, and receive cold looks. That is why people are still driven almost by instinct to find a local centre, where they can relate to somebody or something at ground level. The local pub, the local leisure centre, any kind of club, a job.

Local government in England has a pedigree. Many towns - not cities - towns, of just a few thousand people, were making England prosperous even before we had a proper parliament. Of course there was no universal suffrage, but the principle of local dignity and competence was re-affirmed.

The villages, towns and cities of England and much of Europe made the state possible, not the other way round. In democracies like America and Switzerland there is a healthy acknowledgement of this. It is an accepted principle of democracy to devolve to local communities as much local power as is compatible with national security and welfare. Not here, in Britain.

It is a curious irony about the towns. First they allied with the Monarch against the barons, then with Parliament against the Monarch.

Who knows, if their government persist in trying to do away with their rights to self-government, their history and their nation, they might appeal to the history books, and beg the Monarch to protect them against a rapacious, overbearing, unpatriotic robber-baron governments.

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The Agony and the Ecstasy Renaissance

by Keith Welters

Managing Principal of welters organisation worldwide



The year was 1990; we had been looking at the cemetery service for some time. In many ways, the decision to enter the industry was a logical one, for the cemetery encompasses

many aspects of craftsmanship inherent within my family for over four generations. With a background in land management, architectural and product design, construction and manufacturing, it is not hard to understand why I was drawn to examine the role of the cemetery and how my company might contribute to its continuance.



From the start, our main goal has been to provide products that inspire, both spiritually and visually. In the 1800's cemeteries and the bereaved alike, were proud to exhibit ways of life, trade skills, and make statements about who we are, or were. An ideal sadly lacking in most post-war additions.

You may say that, "Those nice big fancy memorials were for the rich people, not for Joe Public. They made do with unpurchased graves, but after the war that was all sorted, it may be a bit boring and monotonous but at least now most people can afford a grave or cremation."

This is true, BUT these issues can now be resolved. Aided by modern technology - yes **TECHNOLOGY** - all the flare and creativity of the



past is available today plus much, much more. We could make it affordable and available to everyone. We could introduce excitement and imagination into our post-war cemeteries with their monotonous lawn sections and wobbling headstones that are as uninspired as a 1960's council estate. We could

reintroduce the concept that nothing was impossible, and that all materials beautifully engineered should be permissible, that stone and granite and marble should not be dominant and that once again, bronze, Ferro-work, glass, ceramic & mosaics, sculpture and casting would be available in varying materials - including synthetics.

We started out determined to reintroduce artistry and inspirational systems for the bereaved. But, somewhere along the way, we took our eye off the ball.

Well, where are we after twelve years of dedication, and what's changed? There's been a lot of talk about change. I read about it in the *Journal*. About 'new

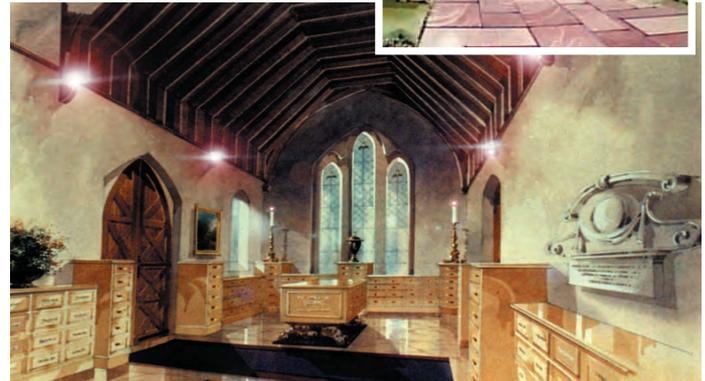
ideas' - the Government talks about change, about increasing variety, about partnerships. People talk about 'forward planning' and 'innovations' but in broad terms there really isn't a lot happening. A common request from cemetery authorities is for our concrete burial chamber. True, it resolves a lot of ground issues and is a very important product to us, but future generations will not be inspired by its style or design. Our frustration extends to what goes on above the ground, on top of our chambers, in the places where we lay our cremated remains, our mausolea, and in the chapels where we mourn.



This 'change' needs a kick-start.

A Team with a Vision

So we went back and looked at the industry and



asked a couple of basic questions: What is the most concerning issue for cemeteries at this point in time? **The answer has to be memorial safety**, purely because of the scale of the problem and the potential for injury or loss of life. What was the cause? Well, our first assumption was *age*, and although this is a factor, a surprisingly high amount of 'modern' post-war lawn type headstones had become hazardous mainly due to poor workmanship and design, poor fixing and ground instability. So, this gave us the opportunity not only to resolve the future issue of unsafe memorials but also to design, create and introduce a completely new range of memorials. We also avoided the need to prove that it is possible to stand tall thin pieces of stone on end without them falling over! Two highly acclaimed sculptors have joined our team to focus on design and aesthetics, whilst the **HERITAGE LIST** system creates engineering solutions to transform safety and provide excitement and vigour into our cemeteries.



EDITORIAL

'It is a known fact of human nature that its affections grow weak in proportion to the distance or diffuseness of the object. Upon the same principle that a man is more attached to his family than to his neighbourhood, to his neighbourhood than to the community at large, the people of each State would be apt to feel a stronger bias towards their own local government than towards the government of the Union; unless the force of that principle should be destroyed by a much better administration of the latter.'

Alexander Hamilton: from the Federalist Papers.

The introductory paragraph from Hamilton is illustrative of an earlier concern with an issue very much with us today: the relationship between small local societies, where democracy should be close enough to touch, and society at large, whose interest is taken care of by large central government.

For people of a certain disposition, the root meaning of democracy is having a say in things that most immediately affect our lives, and having been listened to, being allowed to cast a vote. Local democracy is as near as we can get to this, and this is achieved most efficiently through local self-government.

At the basic level this can be realised directly, but even at the next level, representatives will be people from our locality and with the interests of our locality at heart. Central government is, of course, as the repository of state power, the prime mover in bringing about increased participation at ground root level and it seems clear that, in a democracy, a government should make strenuous efforts to empower people at local level and facilitate local self-government.

For people of another disposition, efficient and fair government for the people at large is best achieved through a centralised state. Local self-government is not seen as necessarily efficient at fulfilling people's real needs - and might even be regarded as an unnecessary distraction from the common purpose.

In this view, a fair-minded but centralising government, on its ideological credentials and at the higher level able to access the most informed opinion and utilise the best brains in the land, is better equipped to decide what will most benefit the people of all localities.

This is the ultimate joined-up system, with a bureaucracy running like a smooth machine, ensuring that people get what is good for them and the nation.

Britain, at present, appears to be experiencing the second system. It is a centralised state, which is moving even further in the direction of what is euphemistically called a 'nanny state'. Power flows from the state. The national electoral system, relying on First-Past-The-Post, perpetuates the adversarial politics of the two big parties. If one of them gets too big a vote they assume almost dictatorial powers. Where is the participation in that!

To both of them it must be clear by now that the general public is heartily sick of them. This is not only because they seem only able to lie and squabble and bully; it is because the general public can see that central government does not, after all, for all the expertise at its command, know best.

The British experience, hitherto, has been of the nation state. It hasn't always been bad. And it isn't even utterly bad at present - plenty of food on the table, lots of toys

to buy. What would it be like in the Union, that is, fully governed from top to bottom by Brussels? Would we be better off without our current effete leaders, leaders who cannot even talk in normal language anymore but only in some form of code, leaders who...well, lead us not into temptation.

We are now contemplating a gigantic step, undoubtedly the biggest in our entire history, and that is to join the European Union once and for all, lock, stock and barrel, and with the sure knowledge that it is to be a confederation of states with all that it entails.

How sure are we that this will happen? It seems as inevitable as gravity, especially as our own prime minister seems hell bent on signing us up for good. Mr Howard doesn't want to leave the Union, but wants reform it. He wants to re-negotiate our powers within the system while we still can, for it is still possible to withdraw intact from the community - at least we think so.

But once we sign that document, accept the European Constitution as binding, we will be in up to our necks and have even less control of our own affairs than we have now. It may still be possible to leave the Union, but even an outright withdrawal will have to be 'negotiated'. That has an ominous sound to it. Perhaps part of the dowry we brought with us, our fishing grounds, will be retained. There is the feeling of loss. Roman, Saxon and Norman conquests, English victories over continental tyrants like Philip II, Napoleon or Hitler, and all the blood and sweat and tears of the many wars, will now be subsumed by membership of the Union.

The United Kingdom itself will become just a note in European history books. England, will live on as a state. We might even be a key player in the internal struggle for advantage. And if, one day, national names are dropped in favour of regional names, (who knows) the word 'English' may appear on the map as, 'The English Midlands', together with Scotland and Wales.

These are early days yet. A Constitution may be amended. The Union will surely seek to ensure that no state has the slightest chance to secede if it doesn't like the club. It will naturally seek to replace 'local' law, as it will seek to replace other national institutions: police, military, social. With nations as diverse as Britain and Turkey, Sweden and Greece, the aim will be to 'harmonise' as much as possible and iron out extreme differences, so that we have a one-size-fits-all diversity that neatly dovetails into the bureaucratic machinery.

And here we have the inevitable march of bureaucracy, where we serve the interests of the 'state' rather than the 'state' serving our interests - as Seidenberg describes it: a world with justice for all and freedom for none.

And again we have the two ways of thinking. Some will be nostalgic for the old nation, with its feeling of freedom in spite of all. Others will see the big picture: the need to build up a federation that can take on America, China, India or Brazil on their own terms.

This is coupled with the idea of all European nations blending into a grand European brotherhood - the great culmination of European history. What use is all this tradition and mythology in the modern urban age, when people the world over are growing together under the irresistible force of globalisation?

Better to move on quickly and design a society for the future.

Still, there may be wonderful things about being in such a community. It is more diverse than we think and we only need to take a trip over to the continent to see all those healthy, smiling people in Holland, Italy or France. We hear that the English Regions are a preparation to fit into the scheme of local government the Union will adopt. But

there are still quite a selection of systems. The French is very centralised; the German one is so democratic that every tier has its own constitution. Perhaps, as British, we should just stop thinking for ourselves, and go along with the inevitable.

KEY TERMS

Hamilton speaks in the context of an emerging United States of America. The fight for independence just over, the Founding Fathers had to think hard about what kind of country they wanted theirs to be. Living in the days of the Enlightenment, which put much stress on the ideals of human rights, liberty and equality, and owing much to the ground roots support of local towns and villages, they must have considered the notion of local self-government as fundamental to democracy- as if acknowledging that, in some way, the nation was founded on the communities. The stubborn ex-colonies were now to become States in a new American Union, a republic. In their system they opted for a bicameral system, as the British had. Congressmen represented the population as a whole; senators were State delegates, the same number of senators for each state, regardless of size. But instead of lords, they people it with State delegates, each State having the same number of senators. Here he gives a very clear idea of what he means by the terms, 'local' and, 'local government'. We can also discern an allusion to what we now call, 'subsidiarity'. Let's take a look at some of the common terms we are using on a daily basis these days. This is just a useful exercise since politicians tend to prefer to use terms in a more flexible or abstract manner.

Local

One thing that Hamilton makes clear is that local means small. In England, there's the local pub, the local library, the local brewery, local industries, local fishing spots, local town hall, local towns, all to be found within fairly close range, say the area of a small county. Beyond that, as we pass into new areas, things begin to look and sound less familiar the further away they are. It happens to be the way people feel - not by any means the only way we feel, but it does echo common sentiment over the centuries.

Local Government and Local Self-Government

When we hear the Government promising 'extra cash' for Local Government, we should remind ourselves of the distinction between 'local government' (LG) and 'local self-government' (LSG). The first, we take to mean the local government is merely acting as a local administrative unit of central government. In this role they are subject to central administrative officers who are responsible to central government - not to the local people. The Government defines and funds (not always generously) their obligatory duties. The second, in complete contrast, means that local people govern themselves, through their own elected officials, in affairs to do with the locality, and accountable to the local electorate. They may get discretionary funding for their local projects but these will be less than generous. In some more democratic countries like Switzerland or the USA, local self-governments are encouraged to flesh their grants by looking for other ways of funding themselves, that do not mean increasing local taxes and victimising car users.

Devolution

Two main meanings. Both are granted by central government, who contrived in the last few centuries to assume almost total power, and now have quite a lot they could give back. Not that the word means giving back anything. For local government as defined above, 'devolution' means that central government has delegated a certain set of duties to the local centre, to be carried out on behalf of central government. This is a process of de-concentration, whereby the government has its officers operating locally and making use of the local infrastructure instead of concentrating everything in Whitehall. As we pointed out earlier, the activities are administered by people who represent central government, and are responsible to it - not to the locality. For local self-government 'devolution' means something quite different: it means that actual power has been transferred from central government to the locality, whereby locally elected officials have authority to deal with local issues and to be innovative, and are responsible to the locality and its electorate. This is a process of de-centralisation.

Subsidiarity

Essentially a deal hammered out with central government and local government, or, on a higher level, between, say, Britain and the European Union. Hamilton recognised the benefit of central power, but thought of local forces as influential in controlling the appetite for power that may afflict people with state centrist tendencies of a quasi-totalitarian nature. If we think of Subsidiarity as practised the traditional (and modern) American way, where towns and counties are positively encouraged to develop a local ethos and responsibility, we see it contrasts rather bleakly with that of the EU Constitution, where Subsidiarity seems to mean, 'if we think you locals (meaning, regions, and eventually nations) can do something well enough on your own, we'll let you get on with it. Otherwise, we'll take over those responsibilities. And we think that's what we'll do, anyway, as it facilitates our social programme'.

Representation

On the subject of local government and its elected councillors, let's see how numbers stack up if Britain were fully and irretrievably inside the European Union's frontiers. These are very roughly averaged figures of the populations involved.

1	The EU	x 7	460, 000, 000
2	Britain	x 12	60, 000, 000
3	Region	x 5	5, 000,000
4	County	x 10	1 ,000,000
LBC/MDC/ joined districts/ UC's			
5	District	x 10	1 00, 000
6	Parish/town	x 10	10, 000

In the first place, English Regions, will have, as in Scotland and Wales, only one lower tier - the unitary council, formed from joined up County and District councils. These councils will determine matters for those smaller areas within their sphere, which once had councils of their own.

The Region, with an Assembly of around thirty members, elected by proportional representation (to ensure a plurality of viewpoints) will take from Westminster large chunks of responsibility for its area including: economic development, planning, transport, regeneration, housing and culture. The councils will retain their present responsibilities.

The theory is that the Region and the councils will work in harmony, through joint committees and talking shops so that Regions are not seen to impose initiatives, as central government does now, but to consult and involve the councils in the decision-making process.

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Chesham, for all its modern vibrancy, has successfully managed to retain the charm of its 1000 year history. Whilst it successfully strives to meet the needs of its businesses and its residents the town has survived the developers and mixes admirably the old and the new, combining country town, industrial centre, commuter dormitory into one bustling community.

The third largest town in the county with a population of 20,000, Chesham is located in south-eastern Buckinghamshire, 28 miles northwest of London, only 7 miles from J18 on the M25 and 9 miles from J8 on the M1. Local towns comprise neighbouring Amersham, Rickmansworth, Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, High Wycombe and Slough. The Chess Valley Walk, which begins at Chesham Metropolitan Line Underground station, encapsulates some of the inherent charms of this historic town and its surroundings.

Chesham has a twice-weekly market; a monthly producers' market; a twice-yearly French market; a visiting fair three times a year; a wealth of organisations and societies; churches of most denominations; a comprehensive selection of shops; a diversity of large and small scale industry; local restaurants and public houses both in town and in the surrounding villages. It is graced by Lowndes Park, which is close to The Elgiva Theatre, Chesham's main entertainment and cultural venue. Other facilities available in the town include the Chesham Leisure Centre, located in the grounds of Chesham High School in White Hill and a modern, open-air heated swimming pool and adjoining multi-purpose recreational facilities on The Moor.

Annual attractions in the town include colourful Schools' Carnival in June, which culminates in Lowndes Park, a Fireworks Display at Chesham United's ground and, during Advent, the nightly visits around the town by Father Christmas. Late night Christmas shopping on 26 November, when the Christmas lights are switched on, completes an eventful programme for residents and visitors alike.

Who would have foreseen the changes that were to follow when the Metropolitan Line arrived in Chesham in 1889? With easy access to London increasing numbers of people saw the advantages of living in this outpost of 'Metroland'. To accommodate new residents - and visitors - a great deal of development took place and thus Chesham spread itself wider along the valley. Inevitably pedestrianisation and new road systems left their mark on the town, leaving behind them a trail of demolished older properties. However, modern buildings have sprung up in their stead, bequeathing us the Town Hall, the Elgiva theatre, supermarkets and town centre parking. And yet in the face of modernisation and revitalisation, the town has maintained its identity. As drawn to Chesham, as they were when the Metropolitan Line first opened, people continue to be attracted to the town, asserting now as then that to retreat here from a City office remains a most appealing way of life indeed.

The Town Council plays a central role in developing and



Chesham Community Vision launch day - listening to ALL our residents

shaping much of the recreational infrastructure within the town. We own and manage the 300 seater Elgiva Theatre; 203 Allotment Plots on 3 sites; Chesham Cemetery and Garden of Remembrance and maintain St Mary's

Closed Churchyard; Lowndes Park, a central park in town; Meades Water Gardens and 11 Recreation Grounds (including 61 items of children's play equipment) with the associated sports pitches and pavilions. The Open Air Swimming Pool, gymnasium and solarium, tennis courts and football on the Moor are managed on our behalf by Chess Valley Sports and Leisure Association, a not-for-profit organisation. The Little Theatre by the Park, a far smaller theatre/community hall is managed on our behalf by Trustees. We are also a Best Value Council.

The coming year 2004/05 should be an exciting one for the Council with many flagship projects being proposed. Foremost among these will be the completion of the 'Chesham Community Vision' that should set a blueprint for the town's future direction over the next 10 years. Based on the Countryside Agency's 'Market Town Health Check' initiative, the Town Council is a key and willing partner among several town organisations attempting to elicit the views of all the people in the town as to how they would like to see the town develop in the future.

Our launch day in February was hugely successful with over 400 people expressing their thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of community life in Chesham. Once the review is completed, it is hoped that a realistic action plan can be developed that will result in making a real difference to the town.

We are also committed to the rebuilding of Lowndes Park public conveniences; the installation of a multi-sports play-area at Marston Field; undertaking a major safety review of the cemetery; being a major partner in the 'One Town, One World' Chesham Festival; the introduction of Police Community Support Officers to the town and developing a project plan for Lowndes Park. We have now received Quality Status.

In an ever-changing world for first tier authorities, Chesham Town Council is pleased to be an active member of ALLC. Indeed it is honoured to have one of our Councillors, Mrs Patricia Lindsley, serving as Chair of the organisation in 2004. It is essential for larger Councils to have an effective voice among the numerous parish and town councils that exist across the country.

There is often an assumption that all first tier authorities are the same and they are marginal to local government and the fabric of their local community. In Chesham's case this is patently not true and we run a multitude of services much needed and appreciated by our residents. With regional government becoming close to reality and the future of all tiers of local government uncertain, Chesham Town Council will be fighting hard to ensure Whitehall is aware of the important job we do and we are confident that ALLC will continue to play its part in selling that message. ■

Biography Spotlight:

David Hanson MP

Born: 5th July 1957 in Liverpool

Political career

From 1992: MP for Delyn, having contested the seat in 1987, Cheshire West

(Euro) in 1984 and Eddisbury in 1983

2001-Present Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

1999-2001 Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales

1998-1999 Junior Government Whip

1997-1998 Parliamentary Prive Secretary to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury

1994-1997 Leader's campaign team with responsibility for National Heritage

1995-1997 Member of the Public Service Select Committee



1992-1997 Member of the Welsh Affairs Committee

1989-1991 Leader Labour Group & Chair Economic Development, Vale Royal Borough Council

1983-1991 Councillor, Vale Royal Borough Council

1978-1979: Vice-President, Hull University Students' Union

Non-political career

National Director of Re-Solve, Society for the Prevention of Solvent Abuse

Regional Manager for the Spastics Society (Scope)

Retail Manager Co-operative Society Education

Hull University

Verdin Comprehensive School, Winsford

Other

Political Interests: Foreign Affairs, Health, Heritage, Local Government, South Africa, Solvent Abuse

Non-Political Interests: Cinema, Football and Reading

Married to Margaret and has two sons and two daughters

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near miss might not
miss.

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Blackpool Conference 2004

Chairman's Report

In welcoming everyone to our conference, I want to continue the convention of reviewing the past year in which I have held the office of chairman. I also want to look ahead and share my thoughts with you as to the future of the Association.

Let me begin by saying unequivocally that this has been a pivotal year in the Association's history, I say that because as you will know, John Dixon-Dawson resigned his post as Executive Director early in 2004. His work commitments meant that he could not give the time needed to undertake the duties of the post to the level that he wished. At the same time the Association decided to review and reappraise its position.

The Executive Committee received a report in May of this year drafted by James Sheerin, Peter Shepherd and Kevin Kiely (the advisors of the Association). The background to the Report was, based on the views of the clerks' Group who

I believe it is to the credit of the clerk's group that they raised the issue of the direction of the Association

were concerned, quite properly, as to how the Association was proceeding. Indeed I believe it is to the credit of the clerk's group that they raised the issue of the direction of the Association. It is to their credit because it showed a confidence in believing that the Association could succeed. They produced their own Report, which has as its *raison d'être* the desire to move forward.

The Report of the Advisors to which I have alluded to earlier formed the catalyst for the Business Plan which all of you have. The Report set out the difficult decisions which were required to be taken. These included, *inter alia*, a crucial need to look at the finances of the Association and how best to replace John Dixon-Dawson. We were delighted that in March of this year, Kevin Kiely, our human resources Advisor, agreed to take on the duties of the Executive Director at his own expense. Following on from the Report, the Executive Committee authorised the Town Clerk of Chesham, Penarth and Seaham together with Kevin Kiely to prepare a Business Plan. I do not need to dwell everlong on the Business Plan because all of you have had a copy of it. I know you will concur that it represents an enormous amount of work for it to be produced. I am confident that when implemented, it will strengthen The Association's position.

I want now to look ahead.



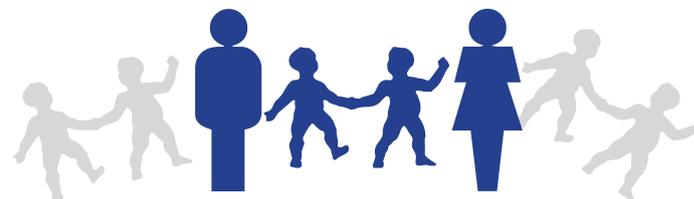
Cllr. Patricia Lindsley, Chairman of the ALLC with Keith Welters, Principal Director Welters Organisation

The Association has needed for reasons I have already mentioned to look inward over the last twelve months. In effect it has held an inquiry as to its efficiency and effectiveness. It has been honest enough - as the Business Plan makes clear - to acknowledge that errors have taken place. Any Inquiry is only of use if its recommendations takes matters forward. The business plan does so.

On the financial side, if implemented and with current membership maintained, there is every reason to believe subscription levels can be maintained for two or three years at their current level. The Association now has an excellent opportunity of producing a sound financial base.

On the administrative side the Executive Committee has appointed Kevin kiely as the new Chief executive. Kevin has, as I have already indicated, been undertaking the duties of the post since March and he will take up his post at the appropriate salary on 1st January 2005. Barbara Rothwell whose loyalty and dedication have been exemplary will continue in her new role as Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive. Discussions are being held at present to retain James Sheerin as our Legal Advisor. Peter Shepherd has accepted our offer to continue as Auditor.

The Executive Committee has agreed to authorise our Chief Executive to discuss with his counterpart of NALC the possibility of a Forum.



The Forum would consist of members of both our organisations meeting to discuss matters of mutual interest. The details of the Forum (e.g. number of meetings, numbers of councillors sitting on it, venue, secretarial arrangements etc) are now being discussed with the Chief Executives.

I want to stress one factor about this forum. It is not to be the forerunner to a merger of the Associations. The Forum is seen by the Executive Committee as an entity in itself; it is not to be construed in any other way.

Given the difficult year with which the Association has been faced, I have been heartened by the positive approach of the Executive Committee including Member Councils from Wales. They could not have been more supportive. I want to pay a particular tribute to James Sheerin, particularly

ALLC/NALC forum: It is not to be the forerunner to a merger of the Associations.

for all his work early in the year when he helped to dovetail various solutions that were t that time being discussed.

I would also like to thank the Chair Elect. Her support has been steadfast. I know that she will take the Association forward during her years of office.

It would be remiss of me if I did not thank our President David Hanson whose commitment and interest in the Association is unrivalled and to welcome our new Vice President Carl Sergeant. I also want to thank Keith Welters, Principal Director of Welters Organisation Worldwide. His deep interest and financial support to the Associations Conference and other functions is greatly

appreciated.

Perhaps I could end my year of office with a personal thought.

It is generally acknowledged that the third tier of local government may well become meaningful. I base that belief on the abolition of County councils - particularly in areas where a Referendum is being held or to be held - and the creation of Unitary authorities will seek to devolve some of their powers to third tier Councils. That philosophy is endearing but we must ensure that any devolving of functions must carry with it the resources for those powers to be undertaken. I see that issue as one of interest to the proposed Forum. If we can make the Forum meaningful and productive we will enhance the standards of Local Government and thereby bring a better standard of living for our electorate. In the final analysis, if local government is about anything, it is about improving the quality of life of our electors. If we succeed in that objective we can rightly be proud of our Association.

I have greatly enjoyed being your chairman. I consider it to have been a great privilege.

Cllr. P.Lindsley
Chesham Town Council.

ALLC conference venue: Imperial Hotel, Blackpool





**Association of Larger Local Councils
Nomination for Appointment of Chair
Elect 2004 Councillor Mrs Sadie Mason -
Seaham, Town Council**

Councillor Mrs Sadie Mason has been a member of Seaham Town Council in County Durham for more than 20 years and has been the Council's representative on the A.L.L.C. Executive for a number of years.



She is one of her Council's most politically experienced members and is particularly proud to have been involved with the successful development of her Council from inception in 1983. She served as Mayor in 1990 and 2000 and is actively involved in helping her beloved Seaham in its transformation from a proud but struggling mining town into a thriving, modern community.

Sadie is a former College Manager with a husband and three grown up daughters. "My Council has always been a strong supporter of A.L.L.C. I believe that a strong representative voice at national level through A.L.L.C. is essential to my Council if we are to make progress locally on many important issues. As Chairman I would do my best to ensure that both the Association and its Member Council are well promoted and represented in every available corridor."

**Councillor Mrs Maxine Callow JP, Mayor
of Blackpool, 2004 - 2005**

Councillor Maxine Callow was born in Blackpool and is a third generation "Sand Grown' Un". She is married to Peter, who is also a Councillor and Leader of the Conservative Group on Blackpool Borough Council.



Their daughter Nancy will be the Mayoress Nancy, a former pupil of Arnold School, gained an Honours Degree in Economics from Leeds University and is currently employed by a City of London Investment Bank as a Fraud and Anti-Money Laundering Expert. Councillor Mrs Callow was first elected a Member of Blackpool Borough Council in 1983, since which she first represented Marton

Ward then latterly Norbreck Ward. She was also a County Councillor on Lancashire County Council for five years until Blackpool Borough Council acquired Unitary Status.

Councillors Mrs Callow was appointed a Magistrate in 1982 and continues to sit on the Fylde Coast Bench. In 1987 she became the first woman Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Committee and went on to become the first woman to lead the Conservative Group on Blackpool Council. She is a Non-Executive Director of Blackpool Airport.

Maxine has twice been Deputy Mayor, in 1988/89 and again in 1993/94. She has served on the Management Committee on the Local Sea Cadet Corps and is a member of the Inner Wheel Club of Blackpool. Councillor Mrs Callow is an enthusiastic Amateur Gardener and also reads light novels for relaxation.

**ANNUAL NATIONAL
CONFERENCE &
EXHIBITION 2004**

Welcome

I very much hope to welcome you to Blackpool for the annual conference of the Association of Larger Local Councils. I am sure that it will once again be an excellent event and give the opportunity for useful discussions on a range of topics of importance to all tiers of local government.

The Association's members are crucial to its continuing strength and I have been pleased to see many



more taking an active part in the expansion of the organisation by supporting 'Government World' and being actively involved in the website's Forum by placing subjects of general interest for discussion.

I am delighted that the Association has forged a strong working relationship with the Welters Organisation Worldwide which is producing the 'Government World' publication, the website and the

conference itself. The publication will include material emphasising the role of the third tier authorities in the government structure and the possible influence this could have on the Government and its policies.

In an increasingly technological world, it is also good to see the Association having an updated website, which I know will be a useful tool for members, with a changed "Forum" page.

Our Conference, will give greater opportunity for more interaction between Speakers and Delegates. Workshops focusing on important issues in local government, including the review of local government finance and tackling anti-social behaviour will be followed up with the chance for dialogue with those making policy at the national level.

It is also good to see a focus on the European issue, a prelude to the Association's anticipated international event next Spring.

This promises to be an exciting and informative Conference with a range of excellent speakers and workshops. It is a chance for all tiers of local government to explore issues of importance and influence policy. So I hope you will book your place and I look forward to seeing you in Blackpool.

David Hanson MP, President



Provisional Programme for the

ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

4th TO 6th NOVEMBER 2004

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Forum for Town Clerks

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All bedrooms are en suite, many with sea views.

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Conference Registration from 12.00pm 4th November

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THURSDAY 4TH NOVEMBER

Three Workshops.

- 14.00** Workshop 'A' REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE.
- 15.00** Workshop 'B' THE EUROPEAN ISSUE.
- 16.00** Workshop 'C' ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.
Martin Lee, Head of Operations, Nuisance Strategy Group, Manchester Housing.
Sarah Kirby, Deputy Head of the Blackpool Community Safety and Drugs Team at Blackpool Council, will join the Delegates at the Workshop and enter into the debate.
- 17.00** **THE WELSH DIMENSION.**
To Appoint a Chairman to the Welsh Members Committee.
One Voice Wales) Other related Issues.
Carl Sargeant AM National Assembly for Wales.
- 17.45** Chairman's Reception & Welcome to Welsh Guests.
- 17.45** Town Clerks Forum.
- 19.30** Exhibitors Reception
- From 20.00** Informal Dinner in Hotel Restaurant.

FRIDAY 5th NOVEMBER

- 9.00** NEC Meeting.
- 9.15** Conference Registration.
- 9.45** Official Opening of the Conference and Welcome by The Worshipful the Mayor of Blackpool Cllr. Mrs Maxine Callow.
- 10.00 FIRST BUSINESS SESSION.**
- "REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE"**
Speakers/Panel Chaired by the President to the Association **David Hanson** Member of Parliament for Delyn and Private Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.
Philip Holt Member of Parliament for Corby.
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
(Confirmation Awaited)
Eric Pickles Member of Parliament for Brentwood and Ongar, Opposition Spokesman for Local Government and the Regions.
Mathew Green Member of Parliament for Ludlow.
Liberal Democrat Spokesman on Youth Affairs, Deputy Prime Ministers Office.
- 11.00** Morning Refreshments and Exhibition.
- 11.30 SECOND BUSINESS SESSION.**
"THE EUROPEAN ISSUE"
Bill Cash Member of Parliament for Stone and former Shadow Attorney General 2003
Gordon Marsden PPS to Tessa Jowell
(Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport).
UKIP
- 12.30** Lunch.

- 14.00** **THIRD BUSINESS SESSION.**
- "ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR"**
Joan Humble Member of Parliament for Blackpool North and Fleetwood.
- 15.00** Refreshments.
- 15.30** **FOURTH BUSINESS SESSION**
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
Presentation by **Susan Handley**,
International Partnerships & Programmes Officer
Local Government International Bureau.
- 16.30** **FIFTH BUSINESS SESSION**
THE ASSOCIATION. "WHAT DO WE EXPECT?"
Chaired by the Chair Elect. **Cllr. Sadie Mason**
(Seaham Town Council)
- 17.30** Close.
- 19.15** Civic Reception.
- 19.45** Conference Dinner
- SATURDAY 6th NOVEMBER**
- 9.30** Presidential Address Followed by Annual General Meeting.
- 12.30** **Close of Conference.**

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Pensions Reform Must Tackle The Income Gap Between Older Men And Women In Retirement, Warns Alliance

An alliance of more than twelve charities, unions and pressure groups led by the Equal Opportunities Commission has called for a radical approach to tackle the low income faced by millions of women in their retirement ahead of the government-appointed Pensions Commission report to be published on Tuesday.

In an open letter to the leaders of the three main political parties, the alliance of campaigning organisations which includes Age Concern, the TUC and the National Association of Pension Funds, says that the current pensions system excludes women and “does not take into account the huge changes that have occurred in family life over the last fifty years”.

Any reform of the pension system will fail, it says, if it does not fully reward women for the caring role they carry out and increase the eligibility of women for the basic state pension in their own right.

Julie Mellor, Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission said, “The income of older women is just over half that of older men. They often lose out on their contributions when they take on a caring role and also earn less on average than men throughout their working lives. As a result their savings for their retirement are woefully small. We hope the strength of support shown by this letter will make political parties realise that if they want to woo women voters for the next election, they need to take action.”

The letter goes on to state:

“Britain benefits greatly from this caring. In sheer financial terms, the unpaid care provided by parents and carers is worth £277 billion, a fifth of GDP if it were counted. Yet, more importantly, this caring is the very glue that binds our society together. And instead of rewarding it, we punish it.”

The letter also warns that politicians should ignore this issue at their peril. 78% of adults support improving pensions for parents and carers and their 8.8 million women voters over the age of 55. The alliance also urges the parties to build a new consensus on the pensions crisis.

The letter, sent to the party leaders today, says:

“The face of pensioner poverty is mostly female. Women are penalised for looking after their families. Add to this the fact that women are excluded from a pension system because they earn too little and you have the explanation for why so many women live out their old age in poverty.”

London’s Leaders Support Principle Of Smoking Ban In Enclosed Public Places

London’s leaders have given their support to the principle of a smoking ban in enclosed public places at a meeting of the Association of London Government (ALG) held 12/10/2004.

The ALG’s Leaders’ Committee has unanimously agreed the idea should be further developed for a private bill to be submitted to Parliament.

It could take some time for any possible ban on smoking in places like pubs, bars and restaurants to come into effect.

ALG Chair, Sir Robin Wales, said: “We feel we can’t ignore the growing evidence of the effect smoking has not only on the people that smoke but also on others through passive smoking.

“Smokers make the choice to smoke, but equally there are others who decide they don’t want to. We want to ensure that non-smokers are able to enjoy visiting public places without the risk of inhaling other people’s smoke, which leads to death.

“We must also think about the health of the people who work in these places. It is estimated that in London one million non-smoking workers are exposed to tobacco smoke.

“A possible smoking ban was just one of a number of the ideas the boroughs, mainly following concerns of their local residents, put forward for inclusion in the 9th London Local Authorities Bill.

“However because of the strength of feeling around this issue, we feel it is best that this forms a separate Bill. It will take some time for the Bill to go through the normal legislative process, and this process will also shape how any possible ban could be enforced.”

The Bill will be promoted in Parliament by the ALG along with the 9th London Local Authorities Bill, which will seek to give boroughs more stringent powers to tackle arrange of issues that affect the quality of life of Londoners.

Biography Spotlight:

Gordon Marsden MP

Labour Member of Parliament:
Gordon Marsden MP



- Born 28.11.53, Manchester.
- MA in History, New College, Oxford. Harvard University, Kennedy Scholar in International Relations.
- MP for Blackpool South since 1997. Member of Education and Employment Select Committee (to 2001).
- Chair, Fabian Society. Member of GMB, Trustee of Institute of Historical Research and President, British Resorts Association.
- Set up backbench group of MPs to lobby for seaside and coastal town interests. Campaigned

for compensation for Far East POWs. Highlighted issues of pupil mobility - now included in government and Ofsted guidelines.

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Biography Spotlight: joan Humble MP

**Blackpool North & Fleetwood
Labour Member of Parliament:
Joan Humble MP**

- Born 03.03.51, Skipton, Yorkshire.
 - Married. Two children.
 - BA in History, Lancaster University.
 - Before entering Parliament was a Civil Servant.
 - MP for Blackpool North and Fleetwood since 1997.
- Member Social Security Select Committee (1998 - 2001). Chair, Lancashire Social Services (1990 - 1997), Councillor, Lancashire County Council (1985 - 1997).
- Member of the T&G, Christian Socialist Movement, Magistrates Association and the Co-operative Party.
 - President of Blackpool Advocacy, an organisation providing a voice for disadvantaged or disabled individuals. Former School Governor (Chair of governors for 10 years). Magistrate.



Contact your MP at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

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Website: www.northwest-labour.org.uk

Southwark Tenancy Arbitration Tribunal Service

The Southwark Tenancy Arbitration Tribunal offers tenants of Southwark an opportunity to submit complaints about the council as landlord.

A panel of lay people assisted by a legal adviser hears the dispute and makes a decision that is binding on both the council and the tenant. The council's alternative dispute resolution forum marks its twentieth anniversary this year.

The service is provided free and therefore avoids huge litigation costs. Tenants are encouraged to represent themselves at the tribunal. The Tribunal is unique to local government as no other authorities provide this service.

SARAH KIRBY ALLC Conference Speaker

Sarah Kirby is totally committed to helping the town she serves become safer and residents feel safer. She is the Deputy Head of the Blackpool Community Safety and Drugs Team at Blackpool Council and also holds a strategic role on the Blackpool Community Safety and Drugs Partnership, a multi-agency body that was established on 1st April 2004, following the merger of the CDRP and the DAT.

Sarah has worked for Blackpool Council for more than three years, where she has specialised in crime and disorder and equalities.

She is currently leading on the Community Safety and Drugs audit for Blackpool, and has recently completed a Council strategy for tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, addressing the three strategic themes of Prevention, Enforcement and Co-ordination.

Previously, Sarah was employed for five years by the charity Sahara; offering support services for minority ethnic women, providing a holistic approach to tackling domestic violence.

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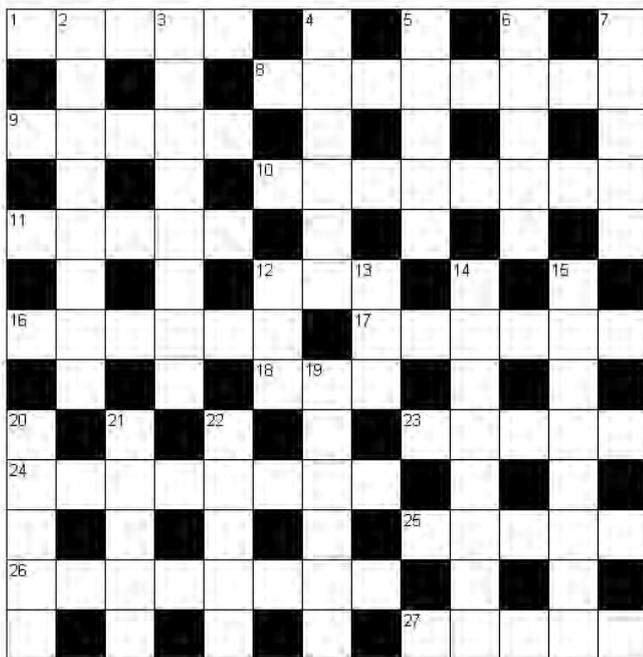
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The Crossword



Across

- 1. Tony - his project has nothing to do with witches! (5)
- 8. They ensure things are kept running. (8)
- 9. They are not alkaline. (5)
- 10. They are surrounded by water. (8)
- 11. A bite. (5)
- 12. An electric guitar needs this (colloq.) (3)
- 16. Twice as much as a fiver (colloq.) (6)
- 17. Enrol. (6)
- 18. Opposite of woman. (3)
- 23. Professional at pretence. (5)
- 24. A proletarian? (8)
- 25. Orifice. (5)
- 26. Makes gifts out of delivering? (8)
- 27. Exclusive utterance. (5)

Down

- 2. Pub Landlord? (8)
- 3. Offensive. (8)
- 4. Amount demanded to return something stolen. (6)
- 5. Heathen - follower of an Ancient religion. (5)
- 6. Pliable. (5)
- 7. Those operating computer software. (5)
- 12. Appendage. (3)
- 13. Aren't you using one now? (3)
- 14. They decide if they're in and decide if they're out! (8)
- 15. Various. (8)
- 19. Wards off. (6)
- 20. Range. (5)
- 21. Urge. (5)
- 22. You can be one on polling day. (5)

Answers in next issue
or email crossword1@welters-worldwide.com



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