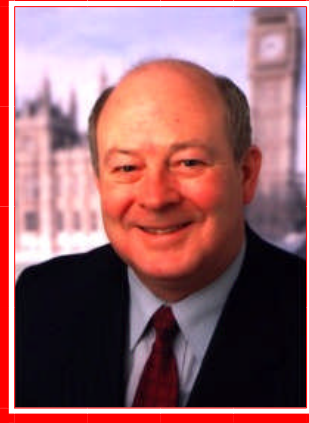


Tyne Bridge Constituency Labour Party Parliamentary Report

David Clelland MP

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Amaro Opening



I was happy to be able to officially open the delivery company's new premises on the Metro Riverside Park.

Amaro is a locally-based company, committed to the region and committed to further investment in the region. The company has good working practices and, whilst it might be junk mail to some, the dissemination of information has been vital to consumer choice ever since the advent of the bush telegraph. Amaro has contracts with local businesses, local authorities and won much work from political parties during the election. (Pictured with Robert and Amanda Greener founders of Amaro)

British Islands and Mediterranean Conference

I attended a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference which discussed the problems of an ageing society, immigration, global warming and alternative sources of energy. I chaired the session that discussed alternative and new forms of energy. I also joined a Commonwealth Parliamentary delegation that met with the President, Speaker, Prime Minister, Ministers and politicians from the Malta Parliament following their accession to the EU.



Transport Minister visits Gateshead Interchange



I was able to welcome Transport Minister Karen Buck when she visited Gateshead to launch two important new bus services, Centrelink and Quaylink.

Boarding the new Quaylink bus with Transport Minister Karen Buck and PTA Vice Chair Councillor David Bollands

Bridging Newcastle Gateshead



I met with the Director of Bridging Newcastle/Gateshead to discuss current proposals for, and the progress of the organisation's programme in the constituency.

General

Europe took centre stage these past few weeks, with the **'no' votes** in the **referendums** in France and the Netherlands, and the UK's accession to the **presidency of the EU**. The 'no' votes led to the British government's decision to postpone the Second Reading of the European Union Bill and to the Prime Minister's decision to address the European Parliament.

Despite the jeering from some of the MEPs - do these people ever listen to the bear pit that Tony Blair takes on weekly in the Commons - it was by and large, a robust presentation of the social achievements of the Labour government in slashing long term unemployment, particularly amongst the young, introducing a minimum wage, re-distributing income to poorer families through tax credits, and regenerating deprived communities, and led neatly into a plea for an EU that reflected social justice.

It would be difficult to find a more incredible example of public policy, where 80% of a vast amount of subsidy goes to farmers via the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). And there is little point in Europe doubling its aid to poor African countries whilst at the same time destroying their embryonic industries by dumping tinned tomatoes and milk powder - grown at subsidised prices.

So, on the eve of the **G8** summit and the **Make Poverty History** demonstration, let us hope that European leaders are able to reach agreements that end the CAP injustices, provide real help to developing nations and take serious account of the effect the growing influence of China and Malaysia will have on the global economic and social structure.



Parliament

Statements this last month also included one on the subject of the **tax credit system**. The payments fiasco has been a boon to the cynics and those opposed to what is the biggest-ever redistribution of money to the poorest in our society - the sums for overpayments that the Inland Revenue now wants to claw back are nightmare-sized. But remember, the CAB's typical case is a single mum working for 20 hours on the minimum wage who can expect around £8,000 a year more in her pocket from tax credits, far more than ever before. The problem is with the operation of the system, not the system itself.

The **Racial and Religious Hatred Bill** and the **Identity Cards Bill** were introduced and completed their Second Readings.

The **Identity Card Bill** proposes a national identity card system covering the UK, together with a national identity register to record information on holders of ID cards. Ministers argue that ID cards will help tackle illegal working and immigration abuse, assist in the prevention and detection of crime and counter-terrorism, prevent identity-theft and fraud, prevent fraudulent access to public services and under age drinking and enable easier and more convenient access to public and private sector services.

The **Racial and Religious Hatred Bill** also received a Second Reading. The offence had previously been agreed twice by the House of Commons, as part of the Serious Organised Crime Act but had to be withdrawn because of timetable pressures to secure the passage of other important legislation.

The Bill deals with hatred and incitement to hatred. It is about nasty and extreme behaviour - like the

desecration of Jewish cemeteries - and is not intended to stop anyone telling jokes about religion, proselytising or to curb artistic freedoms.

Other Bills included the **Violent Crime Reduction Bill** - which gives local communities and police more powers to tackle guns, knives and alcohol-related violence - and the **Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill** which will tackle illegal working and limit the rights of appeal for those refused entry into the UK. The principle is managed migration and that entry into the UK is fair but properly controlled.

I have been elected to the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's UK Branch.



Constituency

I met with the new Managing Director of **Newcastle Federation Breweries** to discuss future plans for the business following the Newcastle/Federation merger.

I visited **Live Theatre** to view the new premises recently acquired that will enable the theatre to improve and expand its facilities and activities.

I joined local police, councillors and council staff in a meeting with the **Pendower Residents' Association** to discuss local issues, and I met with the Director of **Bridging Newcastle Gateshead**. And I was delighted to be able to officially open new premises for **Amaro**, the leaflet distribution company and to join **Transport Minister Karen Buck** when she opened the recently completed bus links from Gateshead Metro interchange.