

Tyne Bridge Constituency Labour Party **Parliamentary Report**

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Redheugh Boys Club Presentation

In the week in which we heard that the UK had won the bid to host the Olympics in 2012, I was delighted to be able to present awards to those who had given so much back to the community, the unpaid workers who coach, encourage and support the youngsters in all their sporting activities. This famous club is moving to new premises in Eslington Park, Teams, which will provide extended facilities for young men and women to enjoy.

Tall Ships Come to the Tyne

The Tyne and its banks erupted in a spectacular blaze of activity as more than 100 tall ships berthed in the river, en route to Norway bringing young and adult sailors from more than 50 countries to enjoy the Gateshead Wheel, one of the best firework displays I have ever seen, and the fantastic atmosphere on the quaysides.



Dunston Fair

I joined the Mayor, Cllr Joe Mitchinson, and Cllr Dave Bollands at the Dunston Village Summer Fair. As always, the fair was a wonderful success, helped by warm sunny weather and supported enthusiastically by the local community.

Beverley Hughes Visits Mill Lane Youth Centre

I was able to welcome the Education Minister to the Youth Centre to meet some of the youngsters using the facility. We had an interesting - and well-informed - discussion about the Government White Paper 'Youth Matters' as well as the multi-cultural project organised by the youngsters that involved other young people from youth centres right across the city.



General

Parliament rose for the summer recess, rocked by both triumph and tragedy - the triumph of winning the bid to host the Olympics in 2012 and the tragedy of the bombings, and attempted bombings, by **terrorists** in London. Unlike the Madrid bombings, this was not the work of foreign extremists brought up in oppressive states and suffering from severe deprivation, but by people to whom we had given refuge and people brought up in our multi-racial society, of which we can justifiably be proud, people who had benefited from educational and social opportunities afforded to all our citizens.

However misguided and whatever the motivation these were criminal acts condemned by all sections of our society. As a consequence the government has decided to change the rules that govern our society - a person's right to say what they think is, and should be, limited by the consequences of their statements. Hence non-UK citizens who incite violent extremism will be returned by the UK to their home country, as is already the practice in France and Spain.

There can be no cause, no religious or political conviction that can justify the indiscriminate and deliberate murder of innocent and unsuspecting people going about their daily lives, and the belief that any god of any religion would reward such acts after death is surely the most bizarre aspect and the worst motivation of all.

The **Iraqi Constitution** has finally been passed by the new parliament but with notable dissenters. We can only hope that this will lead to a successful outcome in the planned referendum in October and that a new democratic Iraq can be built in the interests of all it's people.



Parliament

Ministers say that the benefits of the **Olympics** will ripple out to the furthest parts of the UK. I said, in the debate on the subject, that I was looking for a tidal wave, rather than a ripple.

I have been selected to be a member of the **Transport Select Committee** and elected Chair of the **All Party Group for Members' Clubs**.

I deliberately chose to move to the Transport Committee as this is undoubtedly one of the key areas of policy for the country and the world over the coming years. It is crucially important to the North East, our links with the rest of the UK and the world and, of course, is a very important player in the battle against global warming.

I spoke in debates about the **Licensing Act** and the way in which it affects clubs and pubs in the UK.

I also spoke in Transport and DCMS question times. I met with the DCMS minister dealing with the new Licensing Act about various aspects of the Act affecting clubs and the possibility of including a representative from the Club and Institute Union on the newly set up committee, to be chaired by Sir Les Elton no less, looking at the effects of the Act on small and voluntary organisations. Much has been said and written about the new act and while there will no doubt be some who will initially indulge more excessively - *I well remember the rush to buy sweets when rationing was ended* - I do believe that, sensibly applied, the new law can resolve many of the problems associated with statutory closing times and that the passing of responsibility for licensing to local councillors will provide more democratic control over the industry. I joined other MPs in a

meeting with **Health Minister** Lord Warner. In a frank and robust exchange he was left in no doubt about the strong feelings of members about NHS policy. I joined PTA representatives to present Tyne and Wear transport plan **Project Orpheus** to Transport Secretary Alastair Darling.

The sudden death of Robin Cook on 6 August shocked and saddened Labour Party members and supporters. Robin was an astonishingly able Parliamentarian, with a quick wit and brilliant intellect. His death will leave a huge gap in British politics. I disagreed with Robin on Lords' Reform and PR but respected him as a colleague and I attended his funeral in Edinburgh as a mark of respect for someone who was also a very decent bloke.

Mo Mowlam also died, following her long illness. She also left her mark on politics and government. Mo, a former secretary and Chair of Tyne Bridge, was a unique individual who's abilities included the element of shock and surprise from time to time. I have many fond memories of discussions and encounters with Mo over the years. She was extraordinarily able but mostly she was kind and understanding and will be very badly and sadly missed.



CONSTITUENCY

As well as items referred to on the front page, I attended the **Newcastle Mela**, and the opening of the new **Quaylink** bus service. I met with the the **Leader of Gateshead Council**, the **Chief Superintendent of police** in Gateshead and attended the **Police Open Day** in Saltwell Park. I was at the **Gateshead Summer Flower Show** and I attend the opening of Newcastle's **Live Theatre** extended premises.