

PREM 19/3358

Confidential Filing

The Standard of catering and service provided by the Government Hospitality Fund.

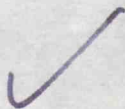
The recommendation that Government Hospitality be subject to a Rayner study.

GOVERNMENT  
HOSPITALITY

July 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>23.7.79</del>							
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<del>16.3.83</del>							
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31.5.81							

PREM 19/3358



10 DOWNING STREET

You are seeing Brigadier  
Cavan briefly on Monday.

FCO have looked at  
turning SIAF into an  
agency but have concluded  
that it is more cost-  
effective as it is. (Saw the  
report at the time and it was  
(surprisingly) persuasive.

*[Handwritten signature]*

Jilv

MR WALL

Prime Minister  
I find the offer of brandies, liquors after  
lunches de trop and passé. I would  
definitely cut out of working lunches  
and possibly formal lunches as  
well. Very few people partake.  
30/5

Prime Minister  
21/5

Brigadier Cowan: Government Hospitality Fund

I attach a note on Government Hospitality Fund which they have sent across to me.

I also enclose a note on the Prime Minister's likes and dislikes which was checked initially with Mrs Major and added to.

Brigadier Cowan would like to ask the Prime Minister if he is content with GHF vis-a-vis the lunches, dinners, receptions which are held at No. 10.

One point he may raise is the question of whether drinks should be served after lunches at No. 10. The Prime Minister has been offering the guests drinks following lunches.

? Not generally

Brigadier Cowan will probably touch on the role GHF plays in visits to this country by Overseas Visitors.

There are also two points which you have made.

1. We should serve the wine of a visitor's country if at all possible. ✓
2. Coffees and teas for visiting Heads of Government are best dealt with by the messengers rather than served by the Butlers with a 'special' tea. ✓

Sue

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND MEALS AT 10 DOWNING STREET

**Numer, Order and Preparation of Courses**

3 courses for lunch

4 courses for Dinner one course could be cheese

**Pre-Meal Drinks**

15 minutes for up to 30 guests

30 minutes for over 30 guests

**Wines**

White - prefers German wines

Red - no preference

**Port, Brandy, Liqueurs**

Named on a State Lunch/Dinner. For small lunches/dinners it is usually printed on the menu as port, brandy, liqueurs and they are offered on trays .

For Working Lunches/Dinners they are offered on trays but do not appear on the menu

**Champagne/White Bourdeaux**

At discretion of Secretary

**Dietary Preferences**

**Likes**

Smoked Salmon

Grilled/Fried Fish

Any Roast Meats excluding Veal and Venison

Roast Chicken

Cashew Nuts

**Dislikes**

Smoked Fish other than Smoked Salmon

Shell Fish but might have Prawn Cocktail

Veal, Venison, Game, Duck

Any rich sauces which should be served separately

No pate de foie gras

No herring

## A NOTE ON GHF

### Role

1. The role of GHF is to provide, "with a view to the promotion of international goodwill", certain facilities for distinguished visitors of at least Ministerial status from overseas who have been invited to the UK as official guests of Her Majesty's Government; and to organise entertainment on behalf of HMG for other overseas visitors of an appropriate rank.
2. A fundamental principle is that services of GHF are made available to all Ministers and their departments on impartial and equal terms.

### Minister in Charge

3. A personal appointment, listed in reference books as such.
4. From 1908-1975 Minister always appointed from DOE and its predecessors. This because the prime mover in creation of GHF (in 1908) and its first Minister in Charge was Mr "Lulu" (later Lord) Harcourt, Her Majesty's 1st Commissioner of Works: successors followed this precedent.
5. Decision made in 1975 that it was more convenient for the Minister to come from GHF's parent department. This remains the position and the Earl of Caithness is current holder of the appointment.

### Parent Department

6. From 1908-1968, HM Treasury; from 1968-1981, Civil Service Department; since April 1982 has been FCO.
7. In effect GHF is a semi-autonomous mini-Department, with Secretary operating as its Managing Director. "Hooked-on" to parent Department for reasons of economy: otherwise size would be much greater (to include own pay, recruiting, welfare, etc staff).
8. Secretary reports to Minister in Charge for operational matters and to Chief Clerk FCO for administrative matters.

14. Apart from provision for special events unique to a specific year (eg Commonwealth Finance Ministers in 1982, Economic Summit in 1984, EC Presidency in 1981 and 1986) no volume increase to operational budget since 1980/81, when CSD injected a new £100,000. FCO under notice that similar injection may be needed before too long.

#### Wine Cellar

15. Said to be the best in Europe. Certainly it is internationally famous. Others - eg President of France - cannot match it! Not too fanciful to call it a "political weapon".

16. Kept in immaculate condition by Mr Nevard, who combines role of Head Government Butler with that of Cellarmaster.

17. Managed on a day to day basis by Secretary GHF. Purchases made on advice of small and very expert Wine Committee, which was created in 1922 and which has followed a consistent policy ever since.



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

A C Galsworthy Esq CMG  
Private Secretary to  
The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AL

4 May 1988

*Handwritten:* 1. Mr. Beaufort <sup>5/5</sup>

*Handwritten:* 2. C.F. - P.C.

*Handwritten:* REC 5/5

*Handwritten:* Dear Anthony

RECEPTION AT DURBAR COURT

Our officials have been in touch with yours about my Secretary of State's proposal to hold a reception in Durbar Court. He would like to use the Court at the end of June, preferably the evening of 22 June.

The Secretary of State appreciates that use of Durbar Court can be disruptive, especially for staff working in offices adjoining the Court, and that, for this reason, its use needs to be restricted. The occasion the Secretary of State has in mind is a short evening event at which about 300 guests would be entertained to drinks. Since the idea is that they should circulate in the Court we do not envisage that any lengthy preparations for the reception will be required so that disturbance can be kept to a minimum.

The Secretary of State's idea for the reception has really been inspired by the restoration by the PSA of Durbar Court itself. Most of his guests will come from the private sector and a significant proportion have links with the construction industry or the heritage. They will therefore have a good eye for the high quality of the refurbishment of the Court.

I should be grateful if you could confirm that the Foreign Secretary sees no objection to the Secretary of State's proposals.

I am copying this letter to Paul Gray at No 10.

*Handwritten signature:* Roger Bright

R BRIGHT  
Private Secretary









010 397 (2)  
PDP 07/1  
Pine Kingstr

8 Cleveland Row  
St. James's, London SW1A 1DH  
Telephone: 01-210 4280  
Switchboard: 01-210-3000

CDP  
2/4

GHF A7329

31 March 1987

Charles Powell Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

*Ce Snelwoodhill*

*ms*

*Dear Charles,*

I am writing to apologise for the fact that the flowers for King Fahd's lunch last week were not up to standard. We here are very sad about this incident and deeply regret that the Prime Minister should have been burdened with an additional worry on our account.

I have taken the following immediate action. Lyndeau Floral Ltd have been withdrawn from future work at No 10 until further notice. Michael Goulding and Co have been appointed to do the flowers for the dinner on 6 April in honour of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Bearing in mind that Michael Goulding is sometimes away on overseas and other commissions, it is my intention in future to alternate him with Caroline Evans for functions at 10 Downing Street.

I understand that the Prime Minister enquired last week about Pulbrook & Gould Ltd. This Company withdrew from the GHF approved list of florists some months ago, on grounds that we did not pay enough. This withdrawal resulted from action taken by GHF in the light of a report by the National Audit Office which criticised us for paying different rates to different florists: we were invited to rationalise our affairs at around the cost of the lowest rates. Two florists, including Pulbrook, withdrew at once; and more recently we have had to remove our business from another, who tried to increase their rates by 100% overnight. The net result is that we are now reduced to three of the long-established florists - plus one new one under training. We intend to rebuild the list to six florists as soon as possible.

Please present my apologies to the Prime Minister for the failure last week and assure her that we shall do our level best to ensure that there is no cause for complaint in the future.

*Yours ever  
Alan.*

J A C Cowan



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

COOPERATION

1954



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 January 1987

Dear Charles,

Review of the GHF

You wrote on 6 January to ask what action had been taken or was contemplated on the ideas about government hospitality put to us in your letter of 13 April 1986, replying to the circular letter of 10 April 1986.

We were very grateful for your detailed and helpful response to our enquiry, which formed part of an internal efficiency review of the Government Hospitality Fund, now completed and approved by Mr Renton. Some of your comments - particularly those in the enclosure to your letter - were directly relevant to the review and were taken fully into account in it; others went beyond the responsibility of the GHF, and on these the review officer recommended a separate study, which is now being tackled.

The main conclusions of the review which have a bearing on the points you put to us were:

- The GHF should stay with the FCO, which in turn must make greater efforts to overcome the staffing difficulties you rightly mention. Action has been taken on this point, which we shall keep in view.
- Though there would be some disadvantage to the widespread use of free competition in GHF catering, some specifically selected functions each year will now be put out to tender. This kind of "market survey" should certainly help to keep GHF's regular caterers on their toes, and make it possible to identify new ones.
- The standards of service at functions ("butler", "silver") should remain high, but any Ministers who want the slightly more economical "silver service" for specific occasions can have it.

copy  
②

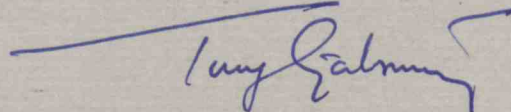
Prime Minister  
This is proving a  
very slow exercise.  
— CDP  
26/1



- In scrutinizing the review officer's detailed recommendations and seeking to make the GHF a more flexible and market-oriented organisation we have been specially careful to safeguard the high standards which Ministers expect it to maintain. The review also gave valuable reassurance that the GHF continues to be both professional and economical.

On the arrangements to welcome Heads of Government visiting this country, the difficulties of doing more in the ceremonial field are as you say well established, but solutions hard to find. This subject went beyond the remit of the study of GHF and is outside their responsibility. We have therefore decided to review this whole question separately once again. It may be possible to bring helicopters into Horse Guards Parade provided safety and environmental problems can be solved. We shall also look at Guards of Honour, and the more frequent use of the FCO quadrangle, and the employment of regiments other than those of the Household Division. The Royal Air Force might be able to mount a Guard of Honour at Heathrow Southside.

Your final point was to underline some points for Departments drawing up guest lists. We circulated a reminder to all departments, incorporating your views, on receipt of your letter of in May 1986. I hope the guest lists we are now proposing to you meet your needs better.

Yours ever,  


(A C Galsworthy)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

GOVT. HOSPITALITY: Govt. hospitality Fund. July 79



Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is mirrored and difficult to decipher.



FILE  
JA

10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

6 January 1987

**REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND**

I sent you some ideas on 13 April 1986 to be taken into account in the Review of the Government Hospitality Fund. They were specifically endorsed by the Prime Minister.

The front of our file since then has accumulated 22 b/u notes, all of which say something to the effect that a reply or result can be expected shortly. The most recent, however, says that the FCO state that no further action is to be taken.

Could you please let me know within two weeks what action if any has been taken or is contemplated on the various points which my letter raised.

(Charles Powell)

A.C. Galsworthy, Esq., C.M.G.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

lv

OW



CC SUE SCODCHIW  
Prime Minister ②

CARLTON GARDENS LONDON SW1Y 5AA  
8 Cleveland Row  
St. James's, London SW1A 1DH  
Telephone: 01-210 4280  
Switchboard: 01-210-3000

A necessary  
but - handsome  
apology.

19 May 1986 CDP

Charles Powell Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Very handsome  
and the mistakes are  
so rare - I think  
it's a job well done  
19/5

Dear Charles,

It is my invariable custom, whether or not I am in station at the time, to accept full personal responsibility for any errors committed by GHF.

I am writing now to offer my sincere apology for the dreadful mistake over the invitation card to the Peruvian Ambassador for the lunch which the Prime Minister gave on 14 May in honour of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. There are no excuses: it was a straight matter of human error.

I deeply regret the fact that a clerical mistake in GHF should have caused Mrs Thatcher such embarrassment. The officials concerned have been strongly rebuked and are mortified by the occurrence. Immediate action has been taken to introduce yet another step in the checking procedures, in an attempt to ensure that such an error can never occur again.

As you know GHF has worked very hard to provide a high standard of service to the Prime Minister: we are all very sad that we have let her down on this occasion. Please accept my assurance that we shall now redouble our efforts for the future.

In fairness to my staff I should mention one specific matter - not as an excuse but so that you are aware of the knife-edge on which we sit every day. My Functions Section has in it now only 5 Clerical Officers. These people are responsible for processing anything between 350-500 events per year, involving some 25,000-30,000 invitation cards. The work requires expert knowledge of etiquette etc and attention to minute details: stability and continuity of staff are essential. The picture in recent years has been one of continuous change. Ignoring cuts following Staff Inspections, these 5 posts have suffered 11 new incumbents since January 1983, including two who have arrived this year. The most experienced CO has been with us only since October 1984 (and is a candidate for transfer to the Diplomatic Service list), while the second most experienced may transfer shortly from FCO to a Home Department. A small and specialised unit such as GHF cannot survive this rate of change indefinitely and still continue to produce for Ministers the standards of excellence which they are entitled to expect. These points have been brought forcibly to the attention of the Officer who is conducting the current review of GHF.

With renewed apologies for our mistake on 14 May.

Yours ever  
Alan.

J A C Cowan



CONFIDENTIAL

Circular Home 'B' 23/86

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1H 9NL

13 May 1986

For Information.  
All Under Secretaries, All Heads of  
Departments likely to prepare guest  
lists for No.10

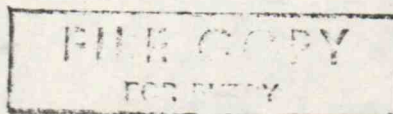
#### GUEST LISTS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

1. No.10 have recently asked if we could exercise more imagination in suggesting guests for parties given by the Prime Minister for overseas visitors. They have noticed that the same names tend to come up again and again. They have also noticed a tendency to propose people whom they regard as being a little bit too far down the ladder. (They recognise that there is some potential conflict between these two criteria.)
2. No.10 have in mind both the need for foreign visitors being entertained by the Prime Minister to have a wide, relevant and distinguished selection of guests to meet, but also the fact that the Prime Minister's luncheons and dinners for foreign heads of government are a very high proportion of the total entertainment which she offers: they thus represent a large part of the available opportunities for her to entertain leading figures from all walks of life in this country. To give specific examples, the sort of people they would like us to focus on would include editors of newspapers rather than the man who wrote the supplement on Ruritania, Chairmen of companies rather than sales managers and so on. This need not of course be to the exclusion, where there is something very concrete in question, of the man who worked directly on the key relevant contract.
3. I should be grateful if Departments would bear this advice in mind.

A C GALSWORTHY

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Heads of Department and above



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LR3APU

cepc

cc D. Goodchild

## 10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 April 1986

### REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND

Thank you for your letter of 10 April asking whether No. 10 had any comments to offer in the context of the review of the GHF. I have consulted the Prime Minister.

First a more general point. There is no doubt that the scale of the welcome given to the Prime Minister on her visits abroad generally exceeds that which we give to Heads of Government in this country. By this I mean everything from airport welcoming ceremonies (Guards of Honour, bands), use of VIP helicopters, lodging in government guest houses, clearing of traffic, motor cycle escorts, frequency with which host heads of government accompany their visitor, pay farewell calls, and attend at the airport for arrival and departure and so on. This is of course particularly the case in Third World countries and arguably other considerations apply there: a visit by a Head of Government is much more of an event. But it applies in some measure in other European countries and the United States. And one also has to take into account that the Third World countries who go to the most trouble over their visitors are the most likely to be sensitive to what they regard as inadequate treatment in return. At worst this can undo much of the good of having them here.

The problem is not new and the difficulties of doing anything about it are well established. It would be a nonsense for the Prime Minister to spend her time dashing to and from the airport. The British people do not take kindly to being held up in traffic jams while some foreigner sails past. We seem not to have VIP helicopters ie. ones which don't rattle, split your eardrums and have a howling gale coming through the door. But it is worth considering once more, in the context of this review, whether more can be done to upgrade the facilities for welcoming foreign heads of government, eg. more regular use of suitable helicopters to bring them to a point in central London (not the present Battersea heliport), more ceremony on arrival at the airport, more use of the welcoming ceremony in the FCO courtyard.

Another point to emphasise - and this again is relevant to the review - is that we should reinforce what we already do well. We are strong on ceremonial and tradition and

BW

should make the most of it. The surroundings are there, whether at No. 10, Lancaster House, the Guildhall, etc. What we must do is keep up standards: standards of service (GHF butlers), of food and of wine and things which help make a visit memorable.

By and large we think that GHF does a good job on this second aspect, and this is reflected in the answers to your questionnaire which you enclosed. One area where we see scope for improvement is that of food where the quality can vary very considerably. It is for consideration whether there is not room for more competition here. Another aspect which might be looked at is providing musical entertainment during or after dinners, at least in the case of the more important visitors. (This was done with great success during the Dinner to mark the 250th Anniversary of 10 Downing Street.)

A final point, not strictly relevant to the review of GHF but closely linked to it: guest lists. I recognise that suggesting guests for parties which you will not yourself attend is a bit of a chore. But it is very important indeed to have a wide, relevant and distinguished selection of guests for a foreign head of government to meet. In recent months I have had an impression of some decline in imagination - there are names which come up again and again - as well as a tendency to propose people a bit too far down the ladder (I recognise that there is some difficulty in meeting the first of these requirements without extending suggestions beyond the top rung). But bearing in mind that the Prime Minister's lunch and dinners for foreign heads of government are a very high proportion of the entertainment which she does, and thus of the available opportunities to entertain leading figures from all walks of life in this country, the guests should be leading figures: proprietors or editors not the chap who wrote the supplement on Ruritania, Chairmen rather than sales managers and so on. You may like to consider a reminder to departments on these points.

C D POWELL

A. C. Galsworthy, Esq., C.M.G.  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

(i) The running of GHF and its effectiveness

We find that GHF provide a good and effective service both in looking after Heads of Government and in organising the Prime Minister's hospitality. The Prime Minister has had occasion to criticise some aspects of the arrangements made for Heads of Government, for instance the buildings in which distinguished foreign visitors are received at Heathrow Southside and at Northolt, the inadequate length of red carpets at the airport. On the entertainment side, we have experience of errors in important details, such as wrongly written invitation and admit cards, typing errors etc. These stem in part, we think, from the rapid turnover among junior staff particularly in the Functions Staff.

Those with long memories say that No. 10's relations with GHF are far better now than in the 1970s.

(ii) The value of its expertise and the service it provides

We assess the value as high. Within No. 10, GHF knows the ropes and operates smoothly. Where there are shortcomings - and the most obvious is in the quality of food provided for official lunches and dinners by the outside caterers employed by GHF, which varies between very acceptable and downright horrid - these are presumably the result of financial constraints rather than the operation of GHF itself. This leads on to the thought whether the catering service could not be handled more competitively by drawing on a wide range of caterers (our understanding is that only two are ever used at 10 Downing Street). We believe that a better overall standard of food could be obtained without any major increase in costs.

We value highly the experience of the Wine Committee and the skills of the Government Butlers.

(iii) Consequences if there was no organisation to perform a central role in Government Hospitality

The consequences for No. 10 would be serious. At present we manage with one splendid and over-worked social secretary. Without GHF we should need a Protocol Office, possibly of considerable size, to deal with arrangements for visits of heads of government and the entertainment at No. 10. This would presumably be matched in other Government departments. We think that the advantages of having a central body to coordinate are very considerable.

(iv) Are present standards too high?

We regard present standards as appropriate. If someone is of sufficient importance to the country to be entertained by the Prime Minister it must be to a high standard (particularly since in other respects, such as the scale of official welcome, we fall short of the standards of others). We would regard silver service as unacceptable for visiting heads of government and equivalent, nor would any of the other changes mooted be appropriate in the case of foreign

visitors to No.10.

There might however be some scope for savings on working lunches and dinners limited to British guests only. Silver Service would be acceptable for these meals as would a lower waitress/guest ratio.

(v) Is the fact that GHF is part of the FCO a problem?

This causes no problem of principle for No.10. But the rapid turnover of junior clerical staff and therefore lack of continuity in the Functions Section which stems in part from the exigencies of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, does cause practical difficulties.

SL3APU



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister

Thank you -  
excellence  
not

Government Hospitality Fund

A review is in hand of the  
functioning of G.H.F.

It covers both their role in organizing  
visits by foreign Heads of Government,  
and their management of entertainers.

No. 10 have been asked for

views.

Does my draft reply match your

views?

Are there further points you would want  
to make?  
C.D.F. 13/6.

MR. POWELL

CDP. 13/4.

REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND

Here are my comments on the <sup>still with CDP</sup> questions raised in Tony Galsworthy's letter of 10 April to Rachel Lomax on the review of the GHF. The answers below refer to the numbered points in paragraph 3 of Galsworthy's letter.

- (i) and (ii): I don't make much use of the service, so can hardly comment here. Suffice it to say that No.10 relations with GHF nowadays are much improved from when I was here in the 1970s.
- (iii): If there was no organisation forming a central role in Government hospitality, I suspect that No.10 would have to increase its staff and expertise in order to carry out the sort of functions that GHF now do.
- (iv): I believe that some lowering of standards would be acceptable, depending on the circumstances. For example, I cannot see why "silver service" should not be sufficient for visitors like the UN Secretary-General, but clearly not for the King of Spain. On a change in the waitress/guest ratio, what would this mean for the time taken over dinners? If it would add to the time taken over dinner, this would not matter on some occasions.

Two further points:

- (i) Should not it be a general rule that GHF always provide an estimate of costs in advance before we "commission their services"?
- (ii) That GHF book out wines on an historic cost basis leads to somewhat anomalous costings.

N.L. WICKS

11 April 1986

N.L.W.

File

862

**MR. WICKS**

**MRS. GOODCHILD**

I enclose a copy of a note about a review of the Government Hospitality Fund. It would be helpful if you could let me know any views you may have on the points which are being examined. I will then put a note to the Prime Minister to seek her views.

**(C. D. POWELL)**

11 April 1986





Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 April 1986

Dear Charles,

Review of the Government Hospitality Fund

At the Foreign Secretary's request the FCO's Management Review Staff are carrying out an internal review of the Government Hospitality Fund. You will see from the attached copy of a letter that has gone to a number of Private Offices in Whitehall that we are seeking the views of Ministers on aspects of the service which the GHF provides.

In view of the amount of work which the GHF do for the Prime Minister, I should be most grateful for any comments which No 10 might like to make. If you do have points to be taken into account and if it would be easier to convey them orally rather than in writing, please let me know and I will arrange for one of the reviewers to call.

Yours ever,

(A C Galsworthy)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 April 1986

*Jean Rachel,*

Review of the Government Hospitality Fund (GHF)

At the Foreign Secretary's request we are carrying out an internal review of the Government Hospitality Fund. The terms of reference for the study are: "to examine the need for a GHF, its methods of operation and its effectiveness, and whether the FCO should continue to be its parent Department".

The review is being carried out this month by the FCO's Management Review Staff. They will be looking at the justification for retaining the GHF in its present form, possible alternative ways of carrying out its functions, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its services.

The reviewers would find it most helpful to know the views of your Secretary of State on:

- (i) the running of the GHF and its effectiveness;
- (ii) the value of its expertise and the service it provides;
- (iii) what the consequences for your Department would be if there were no organisation to perform a central role in Government hospitality;
- (iv) whether the present standards of service are too high. Would some lowering of standards be acceptable, such as:-
  - (a) replacement of "butler service", where guests serve themselves from salvers brought round by waiting staff, by "silver service" where the waiting staff serve? (A change which would produce savings.)

/(b)



- (b) replacement of the State dinner service, glassware, and silver cutlery by crockery etc provided by the caterer?
  - (c) a change in the waitress/guest ratio from the 2:8 presently used by GHF to the 1:8 used by hotels and restaurants. (Introduction of "silver service" would facilitate this);
  - (d) the use of hotels/restaurants, with a possible loss of privacy, when this would be cheaper than using Government houses?
  - (e) different standards for hospitality given by junior Ministers (at present the only difference is in the quality of wines).
- (v) whether the fact that the GHF is part of the FCO has caused any problems.

If it would be easier to discuss these points rather than write a letter, you might care to ring Philip Astley (210 4098) or Bill Brownlie (210 4125) of the Management Review Staff to arrange for them to call on you.

I am copying this letter to those on the attached list.

*Yours ever,*  
*A C Galsworthy*

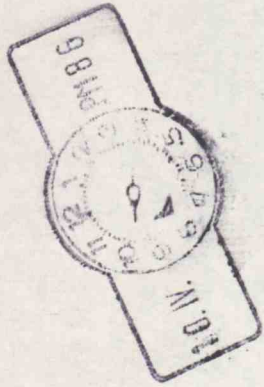
(A C Galsworthy)  
Private Secretary

Mrs Rachel Lomax  
HM Treasury



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Geoff Dart Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Energy
John Howe Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Defence
Tony Lawrance Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Social Services
Ivor Llewelyn Esq	PS/Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Ron Scrutton Esq	PS/Lord Belstead, MAFF
Michael Bourke Esq	PS/Mrs Fenner, MAFF
Paul Thomas Esq	PS/Minister of State, Privy Council Office
John Lambert Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Employment
J S Palmer Esq	PS/Minister of State for Employment
Jim Daniell Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
John Graham Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Scotland
John Mogg Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Trade & Industry
Tim Abraham Esq	PS/Minister of State, DTI
Maureen Dodsworth	PS/Lord Lucas, DTI
Richard Allen Esq	PS/Secretary of State for Transport



MR. BUTLER

Discussed with  
Peter Taylor.  
Pl. file.

PERB

Your minute of 24 July to Mrs. Goodchild refers.

Could you please elaborate on Brigadier Cowan's complaint that the GHF staff are not always treated in a friendly manner at No.10? Considering that they have the run of the house and freedom of action in carrying out their duties I find this a rather strange complaint.

On the subject of "outmess" I believe that the complaint about one Summit Conference mess was made out of pique. Brigadier Cowan had stated that he would sit with the Aides. The practice of having a separate mess for Aides is a long established one. The "need to know" principle is applied.

One GHF outmess was provided as usual.

Regarding your suggestion that Mrs. Goodchild should attend the outmess I feel that such an idea should be resisted rather than encouraged. It is not the first time this has been suggested. There are other reasons for not wanting this besides that of economy. Far from believing that any good could come of this I feel that it would merely bring about a continuation, if not an increase, in the amount of "interference" in my duties which has been a continual annoyance to me in recent years.

On the question of the state of the kitchens- recently the first floor kitchen was left dirty by the caterer after a Political function- nothing to do with GHF. I dealt with the matter as it is my responsibility.

One of our cleaning ladies cleans the kitchen every morning- after the caterers- after Sherry.

I believe that Sherry is quite aware that she directs any complaint to me so I am quite astonished that you should be troubled by what is no more than a minor domestic matter.

Early discussion of some of these points would be appreciated.

Peter Taylor  
26/7/84



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Principal Private Secretary*

25 June 1984

B.F. | Many thanks for your letter of 19 June. I think it an excellent idea that Charles Powell and I should have a word with you, and we have provisionally fixed 1545 on Tuesday 17 July - either side having the option to ask for a postponement if the time proves difficult!

Robin Butler

Brigadier J. A. C. Cowan, M.B.E.

JK



2 CARLTON GARDENS LONDON SW1Y 5AA

TELEPHONE: 01-214 6715

SWITCHBOARD: 01-214 6000

19 June 1984

Robin Butler Esq  
Principal Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

1545

Tues 17 July

Dear Robin,

It is a very long time - late 1980 in fact - since I called on the holder of your appointment. Clive Whitmore and I agreed then that we ought to keep in fairly regular personal touch and, following my letter of 19 March 1982, we had fixed a meeting for 7 April of that year, at which John Coles was also to be present. The eruption of the Falklands demolished that plan; and its later alternative - to fit me in sometime during your takeover from Clive - never really got off the ground. Since that time there have been innumerable reasons for my feeling that you had too much on your plate and I have therefore tried to avoid bothering you!

It is actually quite important for you and me to have a good personal relationship. Ken Stowe could tell you graphic stories from my predecessor's time of what so easily can go wrong if this is not so, and it was because of this unhappy background that Clive and I were determined to ensure that the lines were kept fully open between us and that small niggles between our respective staffs were confronted head-on before they could become issues.

When we had a quick word at the National Portrait Gallery the other day you did not demur when I suggested that the time was ripe for a meeting between us. I did not know then that John Coles' departure was imminent and I would see considerable advantage if we could meet fairly early in Charles Powell's tenure. May I therefore ask you, please, to select one or two dates - perhaps in the latter half of July or in early August? - when it would suit you for me to look in for 20 minutes or so.

Yours ever

Alan

J A C Cowan





20 JUN 1984

9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF TRADE

Permanent Secretary's Office  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0ET

Telephone Direct Line 01-215  
Switchboard 01-215 7877

4 SEP 1981

*With the Compliments of  
Sir Kenneth Clucas*

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

Govt. Hosp.



DEPARTMENT OF TRADE  
1 VICTORIA STREET  
LONDON SW1H 0ET

TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01 215 3785  
SWITCHBOARD 01 215 7877

From the Permanent Secretary  
Sir Kenneth Clucas, K.C.B.

3 September 1981

Sir Ian Bancroft GCB  
Civil Service Department  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

Dear Sir,

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY

In his letter of 13 August, Frank Cooper suggests that the Government Hospitality Fund services should be the subject of an inter-Departmental Rayner type study.

We have no major criticisms of the services and indeed we appreciate the helpful co-operation which we receive from the GHF. We are not, however, in a position to judge the efficiency of the services in terms of cost and agree that a Rayner-type study would be useful.

I do not think it is necessary for us to provide a scrutineer for this exercise.

I am copying this letter to Frank Cooper, and to the recipients of his letter.

Yours ever,

KENNETH CLUCAS

24 SEP 1981

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12

C A Whitmore Esq



With  
the Compliments of  
Sir Frank Cooper, G.C.B., C.M.G.  
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
SW1A 2HB

1. ~~MOGPA~~ } dR  
2. CAW } dR

HL.  
217

to see  
MAD.

COST  
Hospitality

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 2193 (Direct Dialling)

01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

SIR FRANK COOPER GCB CMG

PUS/81/1272  
79/1Sir Ian Bancroft GCB  
Civil Service Department  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

13 August 1981

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY

A review by our Management Services Division on the function and organisation of the MOD Protocol Office has recently been concluded. The main thrust of their report relates to internal departmental matters, but the Study Team did also examine the role of our Protocol Office vis-à-vis the Government Hospitality Fund. I enclose a copy of the relevant part of the report.

2. It recommends that Government hospitality should be the subject of an inter-departmental Rayner study. This recommendation is based principally on the view (supported, we understand, by a recent independent CSD study) that the service the Fund provides is failing to give satisfaction to customer Departments in terms of quality and cost.

3. I support this recommendation. I have been in touch with Michael Palliser (since the FCO is by far the largest user of the Fund's services), and he agrees that there is a case for a Rayner Study of the way in which the Fund works in order to establish whether a more efficient system could be devised. We both believe that the study should be done by one CSD scrutineer and one or more from user Departments. The FCO, as one of the principal users, would like to provide a scrutineer - on that basis, I don't think I would need to do so too.

4. I am sending copies of this letter to all those whose Departments, according to the figures I have, make significant use of the Fund's services - Robert Armstrong, Michael Palliser, Ken Stowe, Brian Hayes and Ken Clucas, and to Clive Whitmore. I am also sending a copy to Derek Rayner.

FRANK COOPER

#### The Government Hospitality Fund (GHF)

40. MOD is involved with the GHF when our Ministers are hosts to foreign VIP visitors, on which occasions the GHF organises and pays for the whole visit, or when we use the services of the GHF on a repayment basis. Both the FCO and some parts of MOD (we did not consult other Government Departments) voiced a number of complaints about the present arrangements.

41. The loudest complaint is about food. The Secretary of the GHF is aware that the quality of food and standard of service at some functions fall below those expected for guests of HMG, but he has difficulty in finding reliable caterers. He is grateful for comments (adverse or favourable) which private offices make after a function, so that he can try to improve the service provided to Ministers. While the staff of the GHF are, of course, happy to take individual Ministers' dietary preferences into account, their policy is not to offer a choice of menu to the host Minister. (The Prime Minister and FCO Ministers, who together account for about 80% of the GHF's business, are exceptions to that policy.) The rationale behind the policy is twofold:

## MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

- a. Guests are usually in the UK for several days at a time and for most of that period are given meals arranged by the GHF. It is obviously important that the menus should be varied. It might not be possible to achieve the desired variety if the menu preferences of Ministers - who might not have oversight of the whole programme - were taken into account. The GHF view is that they are providing meals for the guests, not the hosts, and should be allowed to get on with their job without constantly referring to Ministers for approval.
- b. Problems could arise in finalising menu details with the caterers if delay were introduced by Ministers' requirements to see the menus beforehand. Often functions are arranged at fairly short notice and a busy Minister may not be able to consider the menu in the timescale required.

Brigadier Cowan, the present Secretary of the GHF, has been in post only for a few months and is gradually calling on Ministers in turn to discuss the organisation of official functions with them; subject to the Secretary of State's views, it would seem to be appropriate to defer discussion of this question until Brigadier Cowan visits him.

42. One minor point relating to individual Departments' dealings with the GHF was mentioned to the Study Team and is worth recording here. It seems strange that a Department wishing to entertain a foreign Head of Government has to ask the GHF for approval; the Minister responsible should make a policy decision of that kind. This serves to illustrate the somewhat curious nature of the system.

43. A more fundamental complaint about the GHF reached us from the FCO which naturally has much more business with the GHF than MOD does. The FCO believes that the service provided by the GHF is very expensive and that HMG would be well advised to change to contract catering for entertainment to be paid for out of monies voted to



MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

individual Departments. We understand that the FCO view is borne out in an independent study of the GHF, commissioned by the CSD, but whose report that Department is reluctant to release to us.

44. We understand that the study found that for a comparable meal (excluding wine), the GHF was twice as expensive as a quality hotel in London. Where the GHF gained was in the provision of wines which, having been laid down in its excellent cellar some fifty years ago, are considerably cheaper than comparable wines provided by a hotel now. We have no information about the cost of the GHF's wine-purchasing policy.

45. In view of the above complaints about the GHF and the financial implications in particular, we endorse Mrs Williams' recommendation that Government hospitality should be the subject of an inter-Departmental Rayner study. We have the strong backing of the FCO Protocol and Conference Department in this recommendation.



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
FISHERIES AND FOOD

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS  
OF  
SIR BRIAN HAYES KCB

WHITEHALL PLACE  
LONDON SW1A 2HH



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
Whitehall Place  
London, SW1A 2HH

Sir Brian Hayes, K.C.B.  
Permanent Secretary

21 August 1981

LM  
24/8

Dear Sir Ian,

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY

I have seen a copy of Frank Cooper's letter to you of 13 August.

My Minister has in the past expressed broad satisfaction with the services of the Government Hospitality Fund. I would not, however, have any objection to its being the subject of an inter-departmental Rayner study to be carried out by a CSD scrutineer and one or more others from user Departments.

Since MAFF is not a major user I would not suggest that we provided a scrutineer.

Copies go to Frank Cooper and the other recipients of his letter.

Yours sincerely,

*John Robbs*

PP

BRIAN HAYES

Sir Ian Bancroft GCB  
Civil Service Department  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1

(Approved by Sir Brian  
and signed in his absence)



24. AUG 1964



With the Compliments of  
the Permanent Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY  
Alexander Fleming House  
Elephant and Castle  
London, S.E.1.

Try Chivers Tray

I have asked  
for an extra  
copy from

Cooper at the

~~BF 1/9~~

WN 2/8

Govt Rep.



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY**

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522 ext 6981

*From the Permanent Secretary*

Sir Kenneth Stowe KCB CVO

Sir Ian Bancroft  
Civil Service Department  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

20 August 1981

*Dear Ian.*

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY *below*

I have seen a copy of Frank Cooper's letter to you of 13 August.

2. I too support the recommendation that Government Hospitality should be the subject of an inter-departmental Rayner study; and I would be content that the study should be undertaken by one CSD scrutineer and one (or more) from user Departments - perhaps most appropriately from the F.C.O.

3. Copies as before

*Yours sincerely*

*Ken.*

21 AUG 1987

11 12 1 2 3  
0 ← 4  
9 8 7 6 5

Duty Clerk, No 10



With  
the Compliments of  
PA / Sir Frank Cooper, G.C.B., C.M.G.  
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
SW1A 2HB

As requested.





MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 2193 (Direct Dialling)

01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

SIR FRANK COOPER GCB CMG

PUS/81/1272

79/1

Sir Ian Bancroft GCB  
Civil Service Department  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

13 August 1981

*Frank Cooper*

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY

A review by our Management Services Division on the function and organisation of the MOD Protocol Office has recently been concluded. The main thrust of their report relates to internal departmental matters, but the Study Team did also examine the role of our Protocol Office vis-à-vis the Government Hospitality Fund. I enclose a copy of the relevant part of the report.

2. It recommends that Government hospitality should be the subject of an inter-departmental Rayner study. This recommendation is based principally on the view (supported, we understand, by a recent independent CSD study) that the service the Fund provides is failing to give satisfaction to customer Departments in terms of quality and cost.

3. I support this recommendation. I have been in touch with Michael Palliser (since the FCO is by far the largest user of the Fund's services), and he agrees that there is a case for a Rayner Study of the way in which the Fund works in order to establish whether a more efficient system could be devised. We both believe that the study should be done by one CSD scrutineer and one or more from user Departments. The FCO, as one of the principal users, would like to provide a scrutineer - on that basis, I don't think I would need to do so too.

4. I am sending copies of this letter to all those whose Departments, according to the figures I have, make significant use of the Fund's services - Robert Armstrong, Michael Palliser, Ken Stowe, Brian Hayes and Ken Clucas, and to Clive Whitmore. I am also sending a copy to Derek Rayner.

*Frank Cooper*

#### The Government Hospitality Fund (GHF)

40. MOD is involved with the GHF when our Ministers are hosts to foreign VIP visitors, on which occasions the GHF organises and pays for the whole visit, or when we use the services of the GHF on a repayment basis. Both the FCO and some parts of MOD (we did not consult other Government Departments) voiced a number of complaints about the present arrangements.

41. The loudest complaint is about food. The Secretary of the GHF is aware that the quality of food and standard of service at some functions fall below those expected for guests of HMG, but he has difficulty in finding reliable caterers. He is grateful for comments (adverse or favourable) which private offices make after a function, so that he can try to improve the service provided to Ministers. While the staff of the GHF are, of course, happy to take individual Ministers' dietary preferences into account, their policy is not to offer a choice of menu to the host Minister. (The Prime Minister and FCO Ministers, who together account for about 80% of the GHF's business, are exceptions to that policy.) The rationale behind the policy is twofold:

## MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

- a. Guests are usually in the UK for several days at a time and for most of that period are given meals arranged by the GHF. It is obviously important that the menus should be varied. It might not be possible to achieve the desired variety if the menu preferences of Ministers - who might not have oversight of the whole programme - were taken into account. The GHF view is that they are providing meals for the guests, not the hosts, and should be allowed to get on with their job without constantly referring to Ministers for approval.
- b. Problems could arise in finalising menu details with the caterers if delay were introduced by Ministers' requirements to see the menus beforehand. Often functions are arranged at fairly short notice and a busy Minister may not be able to consider the menu in the timescale required.

Brigadier Cowan, the present Secretary of the GHF, has been in post only for a few months and is gradually calling on Ministers in turn to discuss the organisation of official functions with them; subject to the Secretary of State's views, it would seem to be appropriate to defer discussion of this question until Brigadier Cowan visits him.

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MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

individual Departments. We understand that the FCO view is borne out in an independent study of the GHF, commissioned by the CSD, but whose report that Department is reluctant to release to us.

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45. In view of the above complaints about the GHF and the financial implications in particular, we endorse Mrs Williams' recommendation that Government hospitality should be the subject of an inter-Departmental Rayner study. We have the strong backing of the FCO Protocol and Conference Department in this recommendation.

MRS. HARRIS

Correspondence about GHF

I should be grateful to know if you have the papers on the various complaints made about Government Hospitality Fund at the time of Colombian Dinner and subsequently. If so are you going to keep them?  
EDU Dinner

I have the top copy of the minute from Sir Ian Bancroft to Clive Whitmore about the use of the dinner service.

Sue Goodchild

---

NOTE FOR TOP OF FILE

23 July 1979

Please ensure Sue sees all latest papers on this file. LAST DOCUMENT SEEN: -

~~11/7/79 of 20/7~~  
NJS to MAP 11/8/80  
GHF to NJS 11/8/80



G. Hoop

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

2 October 1980

Dear Geoffrey,

CATERING AT NO. 10

Thank you for your letters of 21 August and 17 September about catering at No. 10. I am also grateful to Paul Bristow for his letter of 28 August 1980.

I have now been able to have a further word with the Prime Minister about which large catering firm we should select to act as our sole caterer for large functions at No. 10 during the trial period between now and the end of January. She has decided, in the light of Town and County's performance at the dinner for the Prime Minister of Bahrain on 16 September, that Ring & Brymer should be the firm we use during this time. She thought that the food which Town and County produced for the dinner on 16 September was very good but she was less than happy with the quality of the service at table. I should therefore be grateful if you could arrange for Ring & Brymer to do all the large functions at No. 10 for the next four months.

We shall want to consult Ring & Brymer about the improvements to be made to the kitchen. The point about using them for this purpose and not Crown Caterers, whose advice Paul Bristow thought we would be seeking, is that our aim is so to improve the upstairs kitchen that we can use it for lunches and dinners for 32 people, and meals of this size are provided by the big firms, not the small ones. We will be in touch with the DOE and the GHF about precisely how we should involve Ring & Brymer in the work in the kitchen.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Paul Bristow (DOE).

Yours etc,

Shirley Williams

KRB

G.E.T. Green, Esq.,  
Civil Service Department.



Civil Service Department  
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ  
Telephone 01-273 3000

Minister of State

Clive Whitmore Esq  
Principal Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

17 September 1980

*Dear Clive*

CATERING AT No 10

Having seen Paul Bristow's letter to you of 28 August, I thought I would just confirm that the GHF would not object to the use of Crown Caterers, who could be consulted about the kitchen as soon as they have had time to consider what is needed. Although the question of consultation over the kitchen improvements that are necessary is primarily for No 10, Crown Caterers and DOE, I am sure it would be helpful if the GHF were also brought in.

I am copying this to Paul Bristow.

*Yours sincerely*

G E T GREEN  
Private Secretary

MR. WHITMORE

Dinner for the Bahrain Prime Minister  
Tuesday, 16 September

I asked Ian Gow for his opinions on  
last night's dinner and he said the following:

1. Insufficient drinks passed round before dinner - there were quite a lot of empty glasses;
2. dinner was delicious;
3. service at table not very good.

Sue

17 September 1980



MISS PORTER

MR. WHITMORE (on return)

Catering at No. 10

Please see correspondence attached from GHF, CSD and DOE regarding the catering and the upstairs kitchen.

With regard to Mr. Bristow's letter of 28 August - is it not the intention to modernise the upstairs kitchen so that it would be possible to serve 32 size meals from it? If this is the case, then it would be necessary to seek the advice of one of the two big caterers chosen after the dinner on 16 September.

Sue Goodchild  
—

29 August 1980



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

28 AUG 80

*Dear Clive*

CATERING AT NO. 10

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 6 August to Geoffrey Green.

I am sure that the Prime Minister is right in saying that it would not make much sense to use more than one outside firm to obtain views on the Kitchen improvements. But, as we understand it, we are talking only about the upstairs kitchen, which I assume would be used only by Crown Caterers and Mrs Mitchell-Innes - not by the big caterers you mention. If so, and if CSD agree to the use of Crown Caterers for small functions, you could presumably consult them any time after the end of September.

On the other hand, there is no difficulty from our point of view if you wait until after January. Indeed if the proposals eventually decided on include any major structural work (eg the resiting of the door) you may not find it convenient to have the work done before the Summer Recess of 1981.

I am copying this to Geoffrey Green (CSD).

*Yours sincerely*

*Paul Bristow*

P N BRISTOW  
Private Secretary

C A Whitmore Esq

11 12 11  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

29 AUG 1980

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of August 15 to  
Barclay Green.

In some cases the above material is right in saying that it  
could not make much sense to use more than one outside firm to  
obtain views on the Lichen Inventory. But, as we understand  
it, we are talking only about the material which  
would be used only by Green Caterers and the Mitchell-Linn  
not by the other caterers you mention. If so, and I agree  
to the use of Green Caterers or Mitchell-Linn, you could  
presumably consult them very late after the end of September.

On the other hand, there is no difficulty from our point of view  
if you want to call after September. Indeed, if the proposal  
eventually decided on includes a visit for at least one of the  
reasons of the sort you say for the commitment to have the  
work done before the winter season of 1981.

The copy is being sent to Green (80).

Barclay Green

C. A. Mitchell-Linn



Minister of State

Clive Whitmore Esq  
Principal Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Civil Service Department  
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ  
Telephone 01-273 3000

21 August 1980

*Dear Clive*

CATERING AT No 10

Thank you for your letter of 16 August.

I do not think there will be any difficulty for GHF in proceeding in the way you have indicated in your letter. I expect that Nick Sanders has shown you copies of an exchange of minutes between the Lord President's office and the GHF in June. (Copies of minutes dated 19, 24 and 26 June were sent to Nick Sanders on 11 August, while you were away on leave.)

I am sending a copy of this letter to Paul Bristow in Mr Heseltine's office.

*Yours sincerely*

*G E T Green*

G E T GREEN  
Private Secretary

*✓ Mrs Goodchild to see  
ra*

*MA 24/8*

22 AUG 1980





MAP  
→ Miss Goodchild  
to see + PA

Refs: GHF(P)30/01  
GHF(P)18/15/01

My

MR N J SANDERS

CATERING AT NO.10 - CROWN CATERERS

Further to our telephone conversation today,  
I enclose copies of Jim Buckley's minute of  
19 June and mine of 24 and 26 June.

*C R Taylor*

C R Taylor

11 August 1980



10 DOWNING STREET

MR ~~PATTISON~~

Mr Taylor (GHF) rang to say that he had seen Clive's letter of 6 August. He thought that he ought to tell us that Lord Soames had complained once about the standard of Crown Caterers - at the Rhodesia Dinner here.

Sue Goodchild tells me Clive knew all about this before he wrote, so NFA, I think.

MS u/8/80



Mr. Peterson to see  
✓  
CNP 4/8.  
Govt hospitality

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

6 August 1980

Dear Geoffrey,

CATERING AT NO. 10

Gary Rogers wrote to Colin Peterson on 16 May about the No. 10 kitchens and the catering firms we use here for our various functions. I am sorry that we have not responded to his letter more quickly.

The Prime Minister has now considered further the suggestion that we should in future rely on only one firm which would then get to know our preferences in the way of menus and become practised at coping with the problems of the kitchens. She has concluded, in the light of the points made in Gary Rogers' letter, that, rather than put all our eggs in one basket at once, we should reduce the list of caterers we use from its present size to two or three firms. What we would like to do is to use Crown Caterers for small functions which involve outside guests and Mrs. Mitchell-Innes for small meals when only Ministers and/or officials are present. For big occasions the choice of firm lies between Town and County Catering and Ring & Brymer, but we do not want to make a judgement between them until we see how Town and County Catering perform when they do the dinner for the Prime Minister of Bahrain on 16 September.

We propose to give these arrangements a trial for four or five months and then review them. Since we shall not be implementing them until the second half of September, this points to the review taking place at the end of January. We can consider then whether to move to just one firm for all functions.

As regards the suggestion that we should seek the views of the caterers on the improvements to the kitchens here at No. 10, the Prime Minister doubts whether it makes much sense to use more than one firm for this purpose and she suggests that we should obtain the advice of whichever of the two big caterers we choose.

Perhaps you would let me know if you see any difficulty in proceeding in the way I have outlined above.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Paul Bristow (Department of the Environment).

Yours sincerely,

Alan Whinn.

G.E.T. Green, Esq.,  
Civil Service Department.



MR. WHITMORE

Catering at No. 10

With reference to your minute of 4 August, I confirm that GHF have booked Town and County Catering for the Bahrain dinner on 16 September for 32 guests. They also tell me that Ring & Brymer will be doing the catering for the Vice President of Egypt lunch on 2 September (also for 32). The only other occasion when a caterer has been booked for here for the autumn is a teaparty for handicapped children on 15 September which Floris will do. Would you wish them to change this in the light of yesterday's discussion?

The only other problem is the question of the kitchens, particularly the First Floor Kitchen. Would you prefer this to be left until a decision is made on a firm for the larger meals?

Sue

5 August 1980

MRS GOODCHILD

Catering at No.10

We spoke today about the proposal that we should henceforth concentrate on only two firms - one big and one small - as the caterers at No.10.

I have now had a word with Mr Towers of the CSD, as I said I would, <sup>and</sup> he tells me that the conclusions of the study by consultants on the functions of GHF do not in any way affect the decision on whether we rely in future on two firms. This means, therefore, that we can go ahead in the way we agreed this afternoon. We will use Crown Caterers as our caterers for small occasions involving outside guests and Penny Mitchell-Innes for meals when only Ministers and/or ~~other~~ officials are present. But we will not take a decision about a firm for large meals until we see how Town and County Catering get on with the dinner for the Prime Minister of Bahrain on 16 September: we can then make a judgement, in the light of their performance, between them and the other contenders, Ring and Brymer.

We agreed that we should give these arrangements a trial for 4 or 5 months and then review them. Since we shall not be implementing them until the second half of September I suggest that we have the review at the end of January.

I think the next step is for me to send a letter to Mr Channon's office in response to their letter of 16 May, letting them know how we propose to proceed. Is there anything else we need do immediately?

HWL.

4 August, 1980

*Mr Bennett  
(to file)*

Copied: A.20(L-10Gs-  
25.6.80-Mexican  
IIU Dele.)  
Bouquets

Ref: GHF(P)18/15/01 ✓

MR J BUCKLEY

cc PS/Minister of State  
PS Permanent Secretary  
Mr P L Towers

CROWN CATERERS

In the final paragraph of my minute of 24 June I said, in response to your request, I would let you know of reports made on the catering by this firm at the lunch yesterday.

The lunch was held at No.1 Carlton Gardens. The host was Minister of State, FCO, Mr Nicholas Ridley, whose comments to the GHF official present were: 'a very good meal, very enjoyable. The caterers must also be congratulated on the fast and efficient service.' Some of the guests also praised the meal.

*C R Taylor*

C R Taylor  
26 June 1980



Ref: GHF(P)18/15/01 ✓ ←

MR J BUCKLEY

cc PS/Minister of State  
PS/Permanent Secretary  
Mr Towers

CROWN CATERERS

Thank you for your minute of 19 June.

I was indeed sorry to learn that the Lord President had cause for complaint about the dinner at No.10 Downing Street on 9 June. I am grateful to you for bringing the matter to my attention and for the detailed report in your minute. The meal was not to the standard aimed for by GHF, and I offer my unqualified apologies to the Lord President.

The GHF officer present at the dinner also found the soup to be too thick and, I understand, informed Mr Morgan of this. He of course should have checked that all was in order before allowing it to be served.

My impressions are that on the whole favourable comments were received about the meal, and as, in your final paragraph, you have asked for reports on meals since produced by this firm, I can say that on 19 June they were given very high praise by the Secretary of State for Education for a dinner he hosted at Lancaster House. I am glad to say a number of the guests also paid glowing compliments about the meal.

Other than one commitment for this firm, for a lunch on 25 June, Crown Caterers will not be engaged by GHF again until the Autumn. I will let you know what reports are received after tomorrow's lunch.

C R Taylor  
24 June 1980

1. ~~Mr Watson~~
  2. ~~MR. Doodes~~ JM 27/6
  3. Miss Brown for file - P'se. CA. 26/6/80
- Please see also minute of 26/6/80 attached.

copied A85(D-NO 10-9-68)  
Zimbabweans



MR C R TAYLOR  
Government Hospitality Fund  
2 Carlton Gardens

cc  
PS/Minister of State  
PS/Permanent Secretary  
Mr Towers

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND: CROWN CATERERS

Since the Lord President found the Zimbabwe dinner at No 10 last week disappointing he asked Mr Morgan the Managing Director of Crown Caterers who supplied the meal to come to see him.

Mr Morgan came this afternoon and was prepared for the Lord President's comments since at the dinner the Lord President had asked one of the butlers which firm he worked for immediately he had tasted the soup. (I confess that I too did the same and, for what it is worth since this is the one and only GHF function which I have attended, I can certainly confirm that the food was very disappointing for an occasion like this). Mr Morgan accepted that the soup was much too thick in consistency: he thought perhaps the use of double cream by the chef had been the culprit. Mr Morgan had seen the soup - but not tasted it - on its way into the dinner: he did check it for himself after the butler alerted him to Lord Soames' question. The Lord President felt that there was a lesson here in that there was little point in the senior man from the catering firm being present if he failed to check food before it was served. The salmon also came in for some criticism which Mr Morgan felt was primarily the result of having to buy larger salmon than he would have preferred.

On the whole Mr Morgan had received favourable comments from guests and was, he said, taken aback at Lord Soames' disappointment. Lord President said that he would keep an eye on the performance of Crown Caterers and he hoped that Mr Morgan would strive to be a perfectionist in producing food at Government functions. Only in that way could the high standards be achieved. Mr Morgan readily agreed, pointing out that his firm did provide many small touches with which most firms now would not bother. He had already spoken to the chef about the soup and looked forward to the next occasion when he catered for the Government to demonstrate that his firm were indeed providing first class service.

Page missing in  
original file

Since the Lord President did say that he would keep an eye on Crown perhaps you could let me know what other reports you have of them in the coming months, and alert me particularly when the Lord President will be attending a GHF function at which Crown cater.

*Buckley.*

J BUCKLEY

19 June 1980

MR WHITMORE

Catering at No.10

In their recent letter which is, I think, with you the CSD suggested employing two firms of caterers.

I had a message today from Mr Heseltine's office to say that he at least continues to favour using one firm exclusively.

CVP.

5 June 1980



E. R.  
1.  
PRIME MINISTER

Kitchens and Caterers

We have been pursuing your suggestion that, as part of our efforts to improve the quality of the catering at No. 10, we might employ in future only one firm who would then get to know our preferences in the way of menus and become practised at coping with the problem of the kitchens.

We have consulted the CSD as the Department responsible for the Government Hospitality Fund, and their views are set out in the letter from Mr. Channon's office at Flag A. As you will see, they suggest that we might be wise to rely on two firms in future rather than put all our eggs in the basket of one. They attach to their letter a brief assessment of five of the firms we regularly use but they do not offer a view on which of these we should choose to be the team of two for the future.

Mrs. Goodchild sees a great deal of all the firms and I have therefore asked her what she thinks about them. Her views are set out in the note at Flag B. She has included Crown Caterers who were not mentioned in the CSD's letter. Mrs. Goodchild agrees with the CSD that it would be risky to rely on only one firm, and she thinks that we should use two or even possibly three.

I believe that the CSD and Mrs. Goodchild are right. We may eventually be able to settle on a single firm, but I think that it would be prudent in the first instance to go for two. Do you agree?

If you do agree, the next question is which two firms to choose. I suggest that we might pick one large company and one small. In the light of the CSD's and Mrs. Goodchild's assessments and of what I have myself experienced at a number of meals, I think that the big firm might be Town and County Catering (Lyons) rather than Ring and Brymer or Paynes, and the small one

/Crown

Crown Caterers in preference to Tollgate. Do you agree?

As regards the reorganisation of the kitchens, I think that it will only make for confusion if we try to use the advice of both the firms we choose to do our catering in future. I believe that it should be sufficient if we seek the views of only one of them and I suggest that the one firm should be the bigger of the two - Town and County Catering (if you agree with what I have said earlier about the choice of firms). Agree?

Yes

Jan.

I have no means of judging so will accept the advice.

23 May 1980

ans



10 DOWNING STREET

Mrs Goodchild

---

Can you please let me  
know what items are under  
the first forms have sent me  
in recent months and also your  
view of them is.

SW

20 v.

MR. WHITMORE

Please see attached.

Sue Goodchild

---

22 May 1980

CATERERS

B

PAYNES

- 24 March 1980 Trilateral Commission Reception (150)
- 20 May 1980 Dinner(64) for UN Secretary General  
Reception (120) for UN Secretary General

Their first dinner and reception was on Tuesday, 20 May for the United Nations Secretary General. This was considered to be a success. Although they have taken over Gunters, apart from this dinner, there is no first hand experience of them.

RING & BRYMER

- 29 January 1980 Dinner for Italian Prime Minister (30)
- 30 January Lunch for the Italian Prime Minister (12)
- 16 May Dinner for Permanent Secretaries (30)
- 12 May General Reception (180)

They have considerable back up in coping with difficult situations like the Economic Summit weekend. They are more geared to dealing with the unusual such as Kosher meals. I find that the catering managers are usually both professional and helpful. However, their general standard has slipped, and there has been a lot of criticism of them. I feel that their food seems processed and unimaginative at times. They are probably at their best with the larger functions. It is difficult to disregard them.

TOLLGATE

- 10 December 1979 Lunch for the President of Liberia (32)
- 17 January 1980 Reception for Parliamentary Journalists (200+)
- 6 March Reception for Entrepreneurs (200)

Their food is well presented and imaginative and they have proved to be good at receptions and small meals. To date they have not been involved in a 60+ meal. They are very pleasant people to deal with. They are, of course, some distance away, but so far this has not proved to be a problem.

TOWN AND COUNTY CATERING CO. LTD.(LYONS)

- 25 October 1979 Dinner for Sir John and Lady Hunt (60)

They do all the catering at Buckingham Palace. They did the farewell dinner for Sir John Hunt (60) but this is the only large function they have done at No. 10. Like Ring & Brymer they are used to dealing with large functions.

/SOUTH LONDON

SOUTH LONDON CATERING COMPANY

5 December 1979                      General Reception (150)  
6 December 1979                      Dinner for the Dutch Prime Minister(12)  
2 May 1980                              Lunch for Scientists (12)

Good on receptions, but on meals, I feel that they fall down on imagination and presentation.

CROWN CATERERS

Have not been listed as they have only recently been tried out. They do the catering at the Guards Polo Club at Windsor. Have only done two meals at No. 10 - the dinner for Sir Kenneth Keith (32) on 21 January and the lunch last Monday (19 May) for the Portuguese. Both were considered a success. They have been booked for the Zimbabwe dinner on 9 June which will be for 60+. They have flair, their waitresses are well turned out and they use Cordon Bleu girls as cooks. They are similar to Tollgate but possibly have a slight edge in the brief experience we have of them.

SUMMARY

My opinion is that it is essential to have one of the larger firms, Ring & Brymer or Town and County for 'back up' and last minute occasions.

I would also like to see one or two of the smaller firms to cover receptions, medium and small meals and to add a little flair and imagination to some of the occasions. For a number of reasons, I would support two (possibly three) firms to do the catering. I think it would be very risky, at this stage, to rely on one.

Perhaps an independent adviser could be used in reorganising the kitchens with the catering firms putting forward their suggestions.

*Sue Goodchild*  
—

22 May 1980

WHITMORE

Catering at No.10

Following the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr Heseltine the other day, I asked the Civil Service Department to recommend a number of firms from which the Prime Minister might wish to make a choice.

The CSD, letter below, have suggested five firms. They have also, as you will see, suggested that better results might be obtained by retaining two firms for functions here, rather than just one.

You may like a word about this before deciding what advice to give to the Prime Minister, but you may like to see this today as one of the firms, Paynes Caterers, are looking after tonight's dinner for Dr Waldheim.

CVP.

20 May 1980



Minister of State

C V Peterson Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

A

Civil Service Department  
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ  
Telephone 01-273 3000

16 May 1980

Dear Colin,

Thank you for your letter of 1 May about the No 10 kitchens.

... The attachment to this letter gives details of five catering firms which are used by Government Hospitality Fund (GHF) at present.

You, and Paul Bristow to whom I am copying this letter, have said that the Prime Minister and Mr Heseltine have it in mind to have only one caterer to handle functions at No 10. The idea is that the firm which is selected should be associated with the review of the No 10 kitchens.

Clearly, there are advantages in engaging only one caterer at No 10. Through experience they will work more closely with the Prime Minister and her staff and become more aware of particular preferences, likes and dislikes, that could be expected to produce a consistently higher standard. But there is of course an argument the other way. Caterers generally operate at No 10 for prestige rather than for the financial benefits they could gain from their normal commercial catering. It might well prove to be difficult to find a caterer who was prepared to operate almost exclusively at No 10 at GHF prices for a prolonged period. Concentrating on catering at No 10 would undoubtedly affect a firm's free and unrestricted acceptance of important outside work while, at the same time, the firm's engagement at No 10 would not fully commit it. If, as would be likely, a firm had to retain on stand-by a chef and all other necessary staff so that they were readily available to work at possibly very short notice at No 10, it must be very likely that the additional costs so incurred (a "retainer fee") would be reflected in their charges.

Do you think it would be worth considering employing two catering firms on completely equal terms, and given as far as possible opportunities to share on an equitable basis the functions over an agreed period? The firms would obviously want to be as competitive as possible, and you might find that a pretty good service resulted. And, you would always have the option to reduce to one firm if you decided, at some later stage, that that might be better. If you decided to go for two firms, initially at least, there would appear to be no reason why each should not be invited to provide (separately or together) a representative to advise on the improvements to the kitchens.

Yours sincerely  
G D ROGERS

G D ROGERS  
Assistant Private Secretary



1. Paynes Caterers, London W4

Catering Manager: Mr Bernard Clements.

This firm has recently taken over the old established catering firm of Gunter & Co Ltd, who had been employed by GHF since the 1920s. Gunters had sufficient back-up and security cleared staff to cater for large functions at No 10. It is not known to what extent Paynes are retaining Gunters staff, other than Mr Clements the Catering Manager.

Paynes have not yet been tested at No 10. Their first appearance there will be for the dinner to be given by the Prime Minister for the Secretary General of the United Nations and Mrs Waldheim on Tuesday, 20 May. Their food appears to be of a high standard and service is good.

Menu costs: Reasonable.

2. Ring & Brymer, London EC2

Catering Managers: Mr Clive Basil and Mr Brian Kirker.

First employed by GHF in 1971. An old established City firm recently taken over by Trusthouse Forte. Another firm with sufficient administrative back-up and security cleared staff to manage large functions at No 10. They have produced a chef from one of THF's best hotels in London to prepare a meal at No 10.

Ring & Brymer normally provide a high standard of cooking and good professional service.

Menu costs: Expensive.

3. Tollgate Caterers (The old Tollgate Restaurant Ltd), Steyning, Sussex

Director: Mr Peter Sergeant.

This firm has been used by GHF for about a year. They have been used successfully, I understand, for small meals at No 10. They have a first-class chef but the service is less professional than that of 1. and 2. above.

Being a small firm they have limited resources, but would no doubt willingly increase their staff if given the opportunity of regular



engagements at No 10.

Menu costs: Expensive.

4. Town and County Catering Co Ltd (Lyons)

Catering Manager: Mr F L Quinby.

This firm has handled one or two large functions at No 10 and proved quite adequate. Their back-up service for staff is good. They are heavily committed elsewhere, but doubtless would be delighted to gain the prestige of working exclusively for No 10. Standards quite good.

Menu costs: Inexpensive.

5. South London Catering Company

Managers: Messrs Hemmings.

A family firm which produces consistently good meals, though perhaps a little plainer than those produced by some caterers. They have been employed by GHF for about two years and have produced a very willing service although heavily committed elsewhere. Plain basic menus. Very good for receptions.

Menu costs: Inexpensive.

1 May 1980

Paul Bristow, in his letter to you of 29 April about the kitchens here, said that the Prime Minister and his Secretary of State wanted to identify one caterer only to handle functions at No.10.

The Prime Minister will wish to consider further which firm this might be, in the light of what has happened to Gunters (my letter of 30 April). It will therefore be very useful if you can give me the names of, say, four or five catering firms (with a little background about each) from which the Prime Minister could choose.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Paul Bristow.

C. V. PETERSON

Geoffrey Green Esq  
Civil Service Department

10 Downing Street  
Whitehall.

30 April 1980

On the subject of kitchens and catering I learned yesterday, as I told you, that the firm of Gunters no longer exists as such. A new firm called Paynes Caterers, which includes some of the Gunters people, has been set up. Their catering manager is still Mr Bernard Clements, and the firm's address is 18 British Grove, London, W4, telephone number 377 8030.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Geoffrey Green (Civil Service Department).

C. V. PETERSON

Paul Bristow Esq,  
Department of the Environment.

✓CVP. 30/4

MISS PORTER

Gunters no longer exists as such. A new firm called Paynes incorporating some of the Gunters people has been set up. Their catering manager is still Mr. Bernard Clements:

Paynes Caterers  
18 British Grove  
W4

Telephone No. 377 8030

Sue Goodchild  
—

29 April 1980

CONFIDENTIAL



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

29 April 1980

*Dear Geoffrey*

As I explained to you over the telephone, my Secretary of State has discussed with the Prime Minister the improvements needed to the kitchens at No 10. I understand that they agreed that it would be advantageous to line up with one caterer only to handle functions at No 10, and that the firm of Gunters was mentioned favourably.

Mr Heseltine intends to take the views of a representative of Gunters on the proposed improvements to the kitchens, at an early date. You will wish to let Mr Channon know.

I am copying this to Colin Petersen (No 10).

*Yours sincerely*  
*Paul Bristow*

P N BRISTOW  
Private Secretary

G E T Green Esq  
PS/Mr Paul Channon MP



10 DOWNING STREET

Note for the record.

I spoke to Mr Towers, CSD, today to find out where matters stand on the proposed inquiry into the G.H.F. He told me that CSD Ministers were concentrating at the moment on the search for a successor to Mr Barclay - there were 2 or 3 promising candidates - and did not want to launch the study until this was settled.

KW

29.11.

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Kitchens

The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment met here on 25 April to consider what ought to be done about the kitchens and catering arrangements at No 10.

The Prime Minister said that there was a good deal of spare space on the first floor adjacent to the two Dining Rooms which could be better used for cooking and catering. But re-organisation of this space would be a major task, too expensive to undertake at this time. The Prime Minister said that she therefore accepted that the basement kitchen had to be retained at present for cooking for larger functions (ie, those for 60-70 people), but the first floor kitchen should be improved so that it could cater for meals for up to 35 people, and so that all the hot food could be served from it for the larger functions.

The Prime Minister said that there would be great advantage in a permanent arrangement with one firm of caterers for functions at No 10. This did not mean that the Government would employ that one firm only; other caterers could be used for functions at other Government buildings such as Lancaster House. When this firm had been agreed - and the Prime Minister made a favourable comment about the high standard of Gunter's - they should be asked to draw up a list of a few menus, perhaps 4 to 6 in all, which they could guarantee to serve at the highest possible standard. There was no need for more than two hot courses. The selected firm might also be involved in planning the improvements to the first floor kitchen so that an excellent service would be provided.

The Prime Minister noted that GHF did not at present have on its staff anybody who was a catering expert.

Miss Porter, Mr Taylor and I were present at this meeting.

CVP

28 April 1980

CVP

Ms [unclear]  
Thank you.

AKH  
29/4

Mr Whitmore

To see. The S.G.S. is following up; and I have asked his private secretary to keep me in touch in all stages. CVP. 28/4.

cc Baker  
Rylands

180



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 March 1980

Thank you for your letter of 10 March about catering at No. 10.

The problem has now unfortunately resolved itself, as Westminster Technical College have now concluded that they will not be able to cater for us. I am sorry that you have been put to some unnecessary work but this research may come in useful in the future for other cases.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Baker and Mr. Rylands.

M. A. PATTISON

Mrs. D.C. Miller,  
Civil Service Department.

22





CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Telephone Direct line 01 273 4287  
Switchboard 01 273 3000

M Pattison Esq  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

10 March 1980

*Dear Mike,*

CATERING AT NO 10

Following your telephone call the other/I have been making some enquiries about the possibility of:-

- i. the Department making a token payment to Westminster Technical College in respect of the services provided by its catering students for some functions at No 10;
  - ii. arranging some special insurance for the students should they be injured while working at No 10.
2. As to i. above there is certainly no objection to our making a token payment to the College as long as the Department is sure it is getting value for money.
  3. As to ii., this is a little more complicated. The government does not insure employees but meets liabilities as and when they arise. When we employ people they are covered by the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme; when we use fee-paid people the responsibility is that of the employer. In this case, although the students are not fee-paid, the employer would have to be regarded as the College. We are, however, required to ensure that the premises, equipment and working environment are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, hazard free and without risk to health. The kitchens at No 10 are used frequently by catering contractors without complaint, so I think we can assume that we are meeting our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act.
  4. We suggest therefore that the easiest solution is for Westminster Technical College to take out the necessary insurance and we will add the cost to the token payment. If they take out Employer's Liability Insurance, the cost should not be great.
  5. Both these matters are financial ones and I therefore suggest that you contact the CSD's Finance Officer, Mr R D H Baker, direct, to make the necessary arrangements. His address is - Room 416, Loddon House, Basingview, Basingstoke, RG21 1JT, and he can be found on telephone number 0256 29222 Exn 210.
  6. I am copying this letter to Mr Baker, and Mr Rylands, the Security Co-ordinator.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Cheryl Miller*

Mrs D C Miller  
Personnel Services Division



*R. Whitmore MW.*

FCS/80/8

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE DEPT

Government Hospitality Fund

1. Christopher Soames wrote a minute to the Prime Minister on 10 October about the need to improve standards of catering provided through the Government Hospitality Fund and suggesting that there might be some merit in transferring the Fund to the FCO. I commented on this proposal in a minute to the Prime Minister dated 30 October in which I said that I would like to take a closer look at the best ways of dealing with both the functions and visits side of GHF before coming to any decision.
2. I said in my minute that it was not evident to me that the transfer of responsibility from one department to another would necessarily help to improve or even maintain the standard of catering. After further thought this is still my view and I can see no good reason for the FCO taking on this aspect of GHF's work. What I would suggest is that the whole field of Government catering should be looked at by competent outside experts who should be asked to advise on the best way of providing the various types of Government function. Their terms of reference should specifically include the possibility of setting up a commercially trained Government catering organisation.
3. On the other hand I believe there are good arguments for the FCO taking on operational responsibility for all Inward Ministerial Visits.
4. Proposals on these lines have been the subject of discussions with CSD and GHF, neither of whom are keen on the idea of splitting up GHF in this way. It is clear that no quick decisions can be taken about such a radical re-organisation nor would there be time, even if it were eventually agreed, to implement this proposal between now and the end of the

/financial



financial year.

5. I would therefore like to suggest that studies should be put in hand immediately, employing outside consultants as necessary to consider the future organisation of both the functions and visits responsibilities of GHF and that a report should be prepared for Ministers by 1 June. This would enable a decision to be taken well before the October deadline next year.

6. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Prime Minister.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a diagonal slash.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

7 January 1980

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Govt  
Hospitality

10 DOWNING STREET

Note.

The Prime Minister agreed in discussion that a quick study should be done by a small team on the lines suggested by Mr Alexander in his minute of 30<sup>th</sup> October 1979. But when I spoke to Mr Tavers (CSD) to see how best to set about arranging such a study, he told me that the FCO, with help from the CSD, were already considering the question of departmental responsibility for the G.H.F. They are looking at R.H.F.'s responsibility is not only for entertainment but also for foreign visits generally. The results of the study should be available early in the New Year, and they will be put to Ministers shortly after that. Mr Tavers and I agreed that he would get in touch with me when he had the report of the study and that in the meantime we should not



TO DONOR STREET

attempt to convert the study into an exercise  
on the lines suggested in IV Alexander's minutes.

JWH

21 xii 79.



10 DOWNING STREET

P.M.

Peter THORNEYCROFT IS CHAIRMAN OF  
SIR CHARLES FORTE'S "TRUST HOUSE  
FORTE" WHICH OWNS RING+BRYMER !

SIR CHARLES IS VERY UPSET ABOUT  
THE PROBLEM, AND HATES THE  
DORCHESTER.

I WOULD LIKE (AT PETER'S SUGGESTION)  
TO HAVE AN INFORMAL CHAT WITH  
SIR CHARLES BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY  
DECISIONS. IS THIS ALRIGHT?

Daniel W.

Yes! leave  
out



PRIME MINISTER

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY

I have two things to report.

First, I have had a talk with Sir Charles Forte who, amongst other catering and hotel interests here and in France, owns Ring and Brymer who will be doing the meals for Giscard on 19 November under the direction of the outside chef. Clearly, expecting caterers to work with an outside chef is not a tenable solution in the long term although we shall, of course, have full co-operation on this occasion. For the future Sir Charles assured me that to improve the quality of food at Government functions he will see that one of his chefs from his organisation prepares and cooks the food. He has a handful of internationally recognised chefs and he has agreed that he will always let us have one when we so desire. I suggest that either you or Peter Carrington should put this to the test as soon as possible.

Second, Mr Barclay who heads the Government Hospitality Fund is retiring next February. I think therefore that a decision should be made fairly soon whether or not to accept my proposal that Government Hospitality would sit more comfortably and effectively under the guardianship of the Foreign Office rather than here in the Civil Service Department. Whoever is to take it on ought to be thinking now about a successor to Mr Barclay and it might be that the Foreign Office would want the job overseen by a serving diplomat. If it is to remain with CSD I would want to waste no time in my search for the right successor.

I am copying this to Peter Carrington.

S.

SOAMES  
7 November 1979

Prime Minister:

1.  
Could I please have  
a word about how we  
shall proceed?

FW

021



E-7 NOV 1979



COMMUNICATIONS

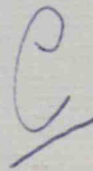


PM/79/89

PRIME MINISTER

Government Hospitality Fund

1. The Lord President of the Council sent me a copy of his minute of 10 October and recommendations about the future of the Government Hospitality Fund. This includes a suggestion that responsibility should be transferred from the CSD to the FCO. I appreciate the reasons for this proposal and am in principle well disposed, but I should like to have a much clearer idea of what is involved before I come to any final conclusion.
2. The Lord President's report deals almost exclusively with the handling of functions and has a number of suggestions about how to maintain the standard of catering in these difficult times. It is not evident to me that the transfer of responsibility from one department to another will necessarily help to solve these. But of equal or perhaps greater importance for this Department is the handling of inward visits by Heads of State, Heads of Government and Senior Ministers. I am not sure that either the present financing and regulations governing the expenditure of funds for this purpose or the division of responsibilities between the Fund and the FCO is best designed to serve British interests in the '80s, and before any decision is reached on where responsibility for the Fund should lie I would need to have a clearer picture of the financing and control of it. We need to take a closer look at the best way of arranging these matters in the next decade or so. I believe it would be right to commission a further report from the Civil Service Department and the FCO on the whole problem, bringing in outside expertise as necessary. This need not imply an excessive delay. The terms of reference could include an instruction to produce a report in time for it to be implemented at the beginning of the next financial year.

  
(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

30 October 1979

30 OCT 1979



PRIME MINISTER

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND

I attach a minute to you from the Lord President about the future of the Government Hospitality Fund, together with a minute of comment from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. The Lord President proposes that responsibility for the Government Hospitality Fund should be transferred to the FCO. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has reacted cautiously to this idea and has suggested that a report should be commissioned from the CSD and the FCO.

I do not think it would be right to take an immediate decision to transfer the GHF from CSD to the FCO. But I do question whether a further report from the CSD and the FCO "on the whole problem", as proposed by Lord Carrington, is what is required. I would have been inclined to favour the setting up of a small group to write a report on what precisely the GHF should be doing and how, it might consist of one member of GHF, one member of Protocol and Conference Department with an eminent and well-qualified outsider in the Chair. One might ask Sir Derek Rayner or Sir Hugh Wontner to recommend a suitable person. A group of this kind could be instructed to produce their report very rapidly. When it was available one could consider the broader questions of financing and control.

Do you agree?

*Allow further work  
is required.*

30 October 1979

*He could take advice  
from Hugh Wontner - on the  
re-organisation of the  
Fund on what to do  
next.*



PRIME MINISTER

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND

In your minute of 20 July you asked me to take a close look at the Government Hospitality Fund and to let you have a report. Although I have Vote responsibility for the GHF I very rarely see it in action: indeed, since May I have attended only one or two lunches. 15-20 years ago I used to see a lot of Government Hospitality. It seems to me that the major difference between now and then is that the general standard of catering throughout the country has greatly declined both as regards food and service, and that a continuing effort will need to be made by all concerned to achieve and then maintain the standards we rightly expect.

These thoughts are in my mind in submitting to you the attached report covered by a summary of recommendations.

In looking at the problem of the GHF I came to wonder whether the CSD is the best Department for it. Certainly its history is a curious one. When first established in 1908 it happened to be administered by "Lulu" Harcourt, then HM First Commissioner of Works, in a personal capacity. Thereafter, it passed to his successor as First Commissioner of Works and, until 1974, responsibility lay with the Minister with Works responsibilities. In that year, it was decided to transfer the responsibility to the Minister for the Civil Service, largely on the grounds that this would link Ministerial responsibility with Vote and Accounting Officer responsibilities which the CSD had inherited from the Treasury. There was never any suggestion then or since that responsibility for the Fund links naturally with any other CSD function. But it has been treated as a common service provided for other Departments.

An alternative way of dealing with the Fund would be to regard it as an integral element of our diplomatic effort and therefore put it under the wing of the FCO. There seems to me a good case for this. There is no doubt that the main purpose of the Fund is diplomatic entertainment. Views on the standards and nature of the hospitality to be provided for visiting Ministers are essentially questions of diplomatic judgment. The FCO (now including the Overseas Development Administration) is the largest user of the Fund - taking over 40% of the GHF budget for visits and over 30% of its budget for functions, in addition to over 30% of the functions arranged on repayment. Even in those cases where the Fund provides a service for other Departments who are the hosts of overseas Ministers with responsibilities in their functional area, there is patently a major diplomatic interest in the nature and standard of service provided.

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE

I have mentioned this briefly to Peter Carrington and perhaps when you and he have had a chance to think about it we might talk in more detail. It seems unlikely that there will be any significant technical or administrative problems.

In the meantime, an important aspect of securing the improvements which we want to see must be the fostering of personal contacts between hosts and GHF. In particular, before each function the host, or someone who knows exactly his or her desires and taste should talk directly to Mr Barclay or whichever officer is in charge of the function. My impression is that our predecessors took little if any interest in this, and that the improvement I believe we have seen in recent months is largely due to the greater trouble hosts have gone to. Only in this way can the particular desires of the host be effectively communicated to those who have to provide the service. Similarly, after functions the host, or at least a senior member of his or her staff, should take up any complaints directly and personally with Mr Barclay or his deputy. And I am sure that hosts - as I have seen them do recently - will continue to pass their praises to Mr Barclay where these are merited.

I am sending a copy of this to Peter Carrington.

S.

SOAMES  
10 October 1979

Enc

NOTE BY OFFICIALS

REPORT ON GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GENERAL

- a. Constant supervision at functions by GHF staff and continued pressure on caterers to improve standards.
- b. Continued exhortation to host Departments to minimise hazards of short notice, last-minute additions to numbers, alterations of table plans, delays to menus, and lack of punctuality.
- c. Close advance consultation between hosts or their Private Secretaries and GHF.

2. NO. 10

- a. Joint inspection of service quarters by the Principal Private Secretary (or the Prime Minister personally if she wishes) and GHF.
- b. First floor kitchen to be made available.
- c. Acceptance by No. 10 that security limits choice of caterers and staff.
- d. Close contact between Private Secretaries and GHF.
- e. GHF to be represented occasionally at important functions.

3. CARLTON GARDENS

- a. Joint inspection by the Principal Private Secretary (or the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary personally if he wishes) and GHF. Acceptance of limitations.
- b. Limit numbers to 24.
- c. Closer personal contact between FCO and GHF staff.
- d. FCO to minimise catering hazards (short notice, etc - as in 1.b. above).





## FUNCTIONS

The only complaints have been about meals. Nine complaints were made by Departments and 3 complaints by GHF during the past 12 months from 390 meals. During the same period 19 compliments have been received from Departments for meals and 7 for receptions. Details are available if required.

### MEALS

#### General

i. GHF provides, through caterers, what is basically a meals on wheels service in historic buildings which have no resident catering staff and antiquated and inconvenient service quarters. Five caterers have been used for many years: Floris, Gunter's, Kingston Miller, Ring and Brymer (THF), and Searcy's. Since early 1978 a sixth caterer, South London Catering, has also been used regularly. Four more caterers are being tried out, of which the most promising seem to be Town and County Catering (Lyons) and Tollgate. Notes on all these and their allocation to meals are readily available.

The complaints have been distributed among the caterers as follows:

Gunters	4	out of 80 meals
Ring & Brymer	3	out of 82 meals
South London	2	(1 largely unjustified as meal was 45 minutes late) out of 46 meals
Floris	1	out of 52 meals
Searcy's	1	out of 14 meals
Tollgate	1	out of 9 meals
Kingston Miller	0	out of 36 meals
Town & County	0	out of 6 meals
Silver Caterers	0	out of 3 meals
Crown Catering	0	out of 6 meals

All caterers are finding increasing difficulty in obtaining high quality experienced staff. Consideration has been given at various times to using other organisations such as CISCO, NAAFI, and the Army Catering Corps, but they clearly could not produce anything better than the commercial caterers. Contact has also been made with Party Planners (Lady Elizabeth Anson) who provide the same sort of overall service, primarily for receptions and buffet meals, in the private sector as GHF do for Ministers. They are first class but would cost twice as much as GHF and would still face most of the same problems as the other caterers (eg Kitchens).

Action - Constant supervision at functions by GHF staff and continued pressure on caterers to improve standards.

ii. Normal catering hazards.

The following factors to which all catering is subject occasionally have resulted regularly over the years in the production of substandard meals:

Short notice, lack of punctuality by hosts or guests or both, last-minute additions to numbers, alterations of table plans and menus, and delays in choosing the latter.

All these are sometimes inevitable, but they should be reduced to an absolute minimum.

Action - Continued exhortation to Departments.

Hosts to recognise their responsibility for these factors and either avoid them or accept their effect on the catering.

Close advance consultation between hosts or their Private Secretaries and GHF.

Meals for the Prime Minister

i. The basement kitchen at No. 10 is badly placed for the first floor dining room and the service area outside the latter is constricted. There is only a small service lift and there is no personnel lift available.

Action - Joint inspection by Prime Minister and GHF.

First floor (private) kitchen to be made available.

ii. All catering staff have to be security cleared.

Action - Acceptance by No. 10 that security needs must take priority and therefore limit choice of caterers and individual staff.

iii. The previous Administration had its own style of entertaining. Private Offices should have told GHF if something different was required.

Action - Personal contacts between GHF and the Private Secretaries at No. 10 to be initiated.

Joint consideration to be given to problems.

GHF to be represented occasionally at important functions at No. 10 to check up on standards of service and remedy any faults.

## MEALS FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

i. No. 1 Carlton Gardens is not in any way a convenient place for entertainment. The kitchen is in a lower basement with 2 flights of little back stairs down to it. There is no personnel lift between the kitchen and the ground floor dining room and only a small service lift. The service area outside the dining room is very small and constricted. There is no lift available for service to the reception rooms on the first floor where the preliminary drinks are served, so all the service has to go up and down the main staircase.

Action - Limit numbers to maximum of 24 (already recently agreed with FCO).

Joint inspection by Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and GHF.

Recognise limitation.

ii. The working relationship between FCO and GHF staff is not satisfactory.

Action - Closer personal contact.

Mutual recognition of problems.

Acceptance of effect catering hazards - short notice, etc - have on standards of catering.

## STANDARDS OF MEALS AND SERVICE

GHF carry out their work with a minimum of staff, but this does not affect their standard of performance. They are constantly seeking innovations and improvement.

GHF has to contain costs within the amount of money provided, and a balance therefore has to be struck between parsimony and extravagance. Within this limitation the aim is to ensure a memorable occasion for the guests from overseas. However, meals at No. 10 and other Government buildings will always be to some extent limited in quality by the nature of the meals on wheels operation; more luxurious food could be provided at a greater cost, but the general standard of service and the food when served cannot be significantly improved.

If a generally higher standard is required, this could be found at some of the best hotels and restaurants, but at a substantially increased cost and with a sacrifice of much of the sense of occasion - and of the GHF wines.

It might be possible to engage permanent catering staff - chefs, waiters, etc. to produce the highest possible standards in No. 10 and Carlton Gardens, but modernisation of the kitchens and service quarters would be required and the extra cost might be so large as to invite criticism.

Within the present budget, action on the lines noted above should lead to the maintenance of an acceptable standard at the large functions for the foreseeable future. At small functions it should be possible to maintain a high standard.

October, 1979.

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND  
TOTAL COST OF FUNCTIONS 1978 - 1979

Department	Total No Functions (Excluding on Repayment Functions)	Dinners	Lunches	Recep- tions	No of Guests	Cost	On Repayment Functions arranged
Agriculture							
Fish & Food ..	9	3	2	4	606	4,341.51	3
Cabinet Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
CSD .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
MOD .....	30	10	15	5	1,197	12,660.12	12
Education & Science .....	2	-	-	2	550	2,902.28	5
D. Employment .	1	-	1	-	12	223.29	-
DOE .....	6	1	1	4	425	3,097.25	7
Exchequer and Audit .....	1	1	-	-	70	1,321.77	-
FCO .....	103	24	69	5	2,926	44,487.73	68
			(4 B/F 1 tea)				
DHSS .....	12	5	2	5	1,945	11,273.31	5
HM Treasury ..	9	4	5	-	104	2,156.13	20
Home Office ..	1	-	1	-	23	411.22	2
Lord Chancellor's Office .....	10	3	5	2	297	3,428.12	-
Northern Ireland Office .....	2	-	2	-	32	695.40	1
Overseas Development ..	9	2	5	2	300	2,668.43	2
Prime Minister's Office .....	31	10	11 (8 Tea)	2	955	16,289.80	25
Scottish Office	13	4	1	8	2,180	7,966.20	-
Department of Trade .....	38	15	16	7	2,868	22,776.79	10
Department of Industry .....	9	2	3	4	1,110	6,430.84	9
Department of Energy .....	8	1	5	2	470	3,424.30	3
Prices and Consumer .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>16,070</b>	<b>146,554.49</b>	<b>182</b>

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND

VISITS 1978 - 1979

Department	No of Visits	Total No of Guests	As Guests of GHF	Total No of Guest Nights	GHF Liability	Total Cost at 31 3 79
Foreign & Commonwealth Office .....	20	139	139	449	100,885.03	100,885.03
Department of Trade .....	7	58	28	753	14,335.08	59,273.85
Department of Industry .....	2	34	6	333	11,093.20	60,715.64
Ministry of Defence .....	6	31	31	134	17,144.22	17,144.22
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food .....	1	9	9	63	8,419.73	8,419.73
Home Office .	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department of Health and Social Security .....	4	22	17	127	12,549.41	14,851.80
Lord Chancellor's Office .....	1	2	2	12	3,729.21	3,729.21
	41	295	232	1,871	168,155.88	£265,019.48 *

\* Of this amount £47,284.66 is in respect of functions which are also included in the total of £146,554.49 on the functions statement of 1978 - 1979. The cost of the Visits excluding functions was therefore £217,734.82



2 CARLTON GARDENS  
LONDON, S.W.1

~~01-836-6872 X~~  
214-6715

Refs: GHF.A4915  
GHF.A4958

12 September 1979

M Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
WHITEHALL

*Mr. P...*

*Dear Michael*

Thank you for your letter of 11 September. I was of course very glad to hear that the Prime Minister liked the lunches arranged for President Banda yesterday, for which the caterers were Tollgate, and for Mr Lynch on 5 September, catered for by Gunters. My staff and the caterers will be pleased to know of this.

I hope that today's lunch for the Belgian Prime Minister was also enjoyed. The caterers were Town and County.

We shall do our best to maintain the best possible standard of catering at No.10.

C F R Barclay

*Yours ever*  
*Herbert Morrison*





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

11 September 1979

Catering at No. 10

Further to your correspondence with Bryan Cartledge on this subject in July, I thought you would wish to know that the Prime Minister was well pleased with the lunch provided today on the occasion of President Banda's visit to No. 10. The Prime Minister also thought that the meal provided for Mr. Lynch last week was excellent. She very much hopes that this much improved standard can be sustained.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Jim Buckley (Lord President's Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

C.F.R. Barclay, Esq., C.M.G.  
Government Hospitality Fund.

*[Handwritten signature]*

Govt Machinery  
No 15



Mr. [unclear] Mr. Whitmore  
Thank you  
CVP. 7/9. All  
bix: Capt. this line is acceptable  
to you: I think this is a  
fairly 'fringe' point in our  
negotiations with GHF.

CVP. 8/9.

Miss Parson O/R  
to see.

6 September 1979

### Catering at No.10

We spoke about the suggestion by GHF that on big occasions the caterers should be allowed to use the first floor kitchen as an additional service area.

It is not clear to us why this would be particularly useful; the warming ovens are in the corridor outside the dining room so the food would be kept there anyway before it is served. Furthermore, the first floor kitchen is at present used by GHF as an "outmess" on these occasions, and there is no alternative room readily available for that purpose close to the dining room.

If GHF and the caterers prefer to use this kitchen as a serving area rather than as an "outmess" we have no objection. But, as I have said, we doubt if this will help very much.

C. V. PETERSON

J Buckley Esq

GHF Hospitality  
File.

MISS PORTER

cc:- Mr Cartledge - o.r.

Catering at No.10

Mr Cartledge is handling the main correspondence with GHF arising from his letter of 5 July after the Colombian dinner, and I do not want to get wires crossed.

We have a separate, although related, question of making sure that the table can be set to an acceptable standard for a dinner party if GHF maintain (are allowed to maintain) their stance that they will have nothing to do with a function here of a private or political nature (on re-payment). I hope that the result of the review of GHF will be a more imaginative agency which will co-operate with No.10, when No.10 so desire, in arranging or helping to arrange non-official functions (with of course full costs being recovered in order that no charge falls on public funds).

This review will no doubt take time and, in the meantime, we need to make sure that for those functions in which GHF are not involved we have all that is necessary to produce an attractive (and practical) table setting. In any case there will always be a need for our own cutlery, glassware, etc., as private catering arrangements will continue to be made by No.10 (far cheaper than GHF) for small functions.

I understand that there are two dinner services available here (a blue and gold one provided for the Leader of the Conservative Party, and a gold-rimmed one which is officially supplied). The first is large enough for 32 guests, the other is slightly smaller. It is therefore glass and cutlery which we require, and perhaps condiment sets. We would, of course, need the Prime Minister's authority before going ahead with any order, but perhaps you would work out exactly what is needed and

/ask

ask PSA for an estimate of cost.

There remains the question of some display silver for the table (again on the assumption that GHF either do not have, or will not make available, something acceptable to the Prime Minister). This needs further thought; we could ask the V&A, or one of the other Museums, but somehow I am not too sanguine of getting what we want. If we can identify a private owner who would be ready to lend a few things, I suspect that would be the best answer.

G. V. PETERSON

2 August 1979

Govt Hosp.

31 July 1979

Bryan Cartledge is away in Africa with the Prime Minister, and will reply on his return to your letter of 30 July about catering here and the possible use of the first floor kitchen.

**C. V. PETERSON**

C F R Barclay Esq CMG  
Government Hospitality



2 CARLTON GARDENS LONDON SW1Y 5AA

TELEPHONE: 01-214 - 6715

SWITCHBOARD: 01-214 6000

Ref:GHF.A4704/01

30 July 1979

B G Cartledge Esq  
10 Downing Street  
WHITEHALL

*Dear Bryan*

As you may know, the Lord President has recently been discussing with me in considerable detail ways and means of improving the standard of catering provided by GHF.

Among other things Lord Soames suggested that I should press you for an answer to my letter of 12 July, particularly on the suggestion that the caterers should be allowed to use the first floor kitchen as an additional service area on the big occasions. I wonder whether you have been able to make any progress with this?

*Yours ever  
Chris*

C F R Barclay

*Copy with Mrs. Goodchild.*

30 JUL 1951

6 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12



[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]



*cc Sue Goodchild  
GOV 2  
Hosp*

Prime Minister

*SM  
25/7*

PRIME MINISTER

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALITY FUND

Thank you for your minute of 20 July. I am sure you are right: the critical factor is the degree of control and supervision by the Government Hospitality Fund of the various caterers they use.

I had already had a stern talk with Mr Barclay who is in charge of the show following one lunch I had been to given by Peter Carrington. One was enough to see that much is left to be desired.

I intend to see that things get better. As I am not in the business of government entertaining I hope that you and other users will let me or Paul Channon know what sort of service they are getting.

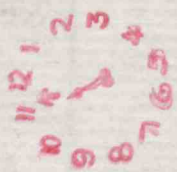
I am copying this to Peter Carrington.

*S.*

SOAMES  
25 July 1979

*and*

26 JUL 1979





*cc Invitations Secretary.*



10 DOWNING STREET

*B/F 20<sup>10</sup> 8.79.*

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No. M7/79

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Government Hospitality Fund

On the basis of my experience so far, and particularly following my dinner for the President of Colombia on 3 July, I am not at all happy with the standard of catering and service provided by the Government Hospitality Fund. My office have corresponded with the Head of GHF about the problem but, although GHF have promised to do their best to achieve an improvement, I am not confident that this can be brought about merely by exhortation. I should like to be assured that GHF is being properly managed, that there is a proper willingness to innovate - for example in the employment of catering firms - and that, in general, the Government and the taxpayer are being given good value for money.

Not simply because GHF falls within your own area of responsibility but also because you are so well qualified by experience to appraise it with a critical eye, I should be grateful if you would take a close look at it and let me have a report in due course.

I am sending Peter Carrington a copy of this minute.

*Roger Deakin*

20 July 1979

PRIME MINISTER

Government Hospitality

After your dinner for the President of Colombia on 3 July, you asked me to let the Head of Government Hospitality (Mr. C.F.R. Barclay) know that you had been very dissatisfied with the standard of food and service which GHF had provided on that occasion.

I attach below Mr. Barclay's reply to the letter which I sent him. It boils down to three points:

- (i) Service could be improved if the caterers were allowed to use the first floor kitchen in No.10 for serving purposes (it is at present allocated on these occasions as an "outmess", i.e. a place where protocol staff etc. can be fed).
- (ii) Food and service would be better if guest lists were smaller.
- (iii) We chose the menu for the President of Colombia's dinner.

*Nothing wrong with the menu - it was the quality of food.*

This is not very helpful. It seems to me absurd to say that the traditional "large dinner" at No.10, of up to 70 guests, should be reduced in size simply because the caterers cannot cope: the answer surely is to find caterers who can. It is of course true that we chose the menu but the printed word is not necessarily an accurate guide to the dishes which are produced. So far as use of the first floor kitchen is concerned, we shall look into this but I am not convinced that it would make much difference.

I think the main problem is that GHF have become creatures of habit so far as the caterers they employ are concerned. The two firms normally used, Ring and Brymer and Gunters, have I think become complacent and could do with some keen competition from

/newcomers

newcomers. But there have been so many complaints from other quarters, particularly the FCO (as Lord Carrington mentioned to you), about GHF that the problem may go wider than this. GHF falls within the Lord President's responsibilities and he is, by experience, uniquely well qualified to take a keen look at its operations. I suggest, therefore, that you might ask him to take the matter on board and I attach a draft minute which you might send him.

[below]

You also said that you were unhappy about the standard of table and glassware used in No.10. This is in fact the responsibility of the Department of the Environment (Property Services Agency) and I shall, if you wish, pursue the matter with them: but since any improvement will obviously involve very considerable expense, i.e. the wholesale replacement of a very large dinner service, do you really wish to launch a replacement operation at this time? It is the kind of thing which could, I fear, leak to a gossip columnist and be put to damaging use.

But.

No - I will be  
and get some display  
service for the table for  
the V.A.  
out

20 July 1979

MR. CARTLEDGE

Letter from Mr. Barclay, GHF

You asked me to comment on the penultimate paragraph of the first page of Mr. Barclay's letter.

I have had a word with Mr. Taylor about this:

There are a number of problems to Mr. Barclay's suggestion:

- (1) The kitchen is used by GHF as an outmess on these occasions. It would be impossible to find alternative room for them in No. 10 to take account of their stipulation that they need to be as close to the Dining Room as possible.
- (2) The warming ovens are in the corridor outside the dining room so the food would be kept there anyway. It would therefore seem sensible to serve the food as at present straight from these ovens.
- (3) There is a lot of silver and china kept in the First Floor Kitchen which would need to be locked away each time if the outside caterers used the room.

On the question of menus, second page, the Prime Minister commented on the three menus submitted by GHF that she did not like any of them but that Menu II would be all right without the Whitebait and then suggested sole. (It does seem to me a bad idea to suggest Roast Pork for a dinner of this size (Menu III)

*Sue*

13 July 1979



2 CARLTON GARDENS LONDON SW1Y 5AA

TELEPHONE: 01-214 - 6715

SWITCHBOARD: 01-214 6000

Ref:GHF.A4704/01

12 July 1979

B G Cartledge Esq  
10 Downing Street  
WHITEHALL

*Dear Bryan*

I was sorry indeed to learn from your letter of 5 July that the Prime Minister was not pleased with the dinner given for the President of Colombia on 3 July. This was particularly disappointing to us here as we have been making a special effort over the past few months to improve the standard of catering generally. I have, since Easter, held meetings with all our catering managers to enable them to discuss their and our problems with my staff. Please assure the Prime Minister that we shall do our very best to achieve the standard of catering in No.10 that she desires.

For the Colombian dinner we had specially impressed the importance of the occasion on the caterers, Ring and Brymer, and they rightly sent their Executive Chef to supervise the meal, so it should have been good. I can only apologise on behalf of Government Hospitality and the caterers that it was not. We will do all we can to keep the caterers up to the mark in future. Ring and Brymer can, in fact, do very good work and, prior to the Colombian dinner, have catered for two other meals for the present Prime Minister for more than 60 guests, and also for 4 other meals for 12/14 guests. They have also recently put on two very successful major dinners at the Mansion House for the Colombian President and for the Diplomatic Corps respectively. I feel sure that we should persevere with them.

Concentrating still on the standard of catering, I would like to make two specific suggestions for you to consider:

First, I believe that on the big occasions - say 40+ guests - it would really help the caterers if they were allowed to use the upstairs kitchen near the dining room as part of the serving area. I think that this might make quite a difference in the standard of service. Would this be a possibility?

Secondly, I feel bound to make a point on numbers. There are now very few caterers who have sufficient back-up administrative support, and staff cleared for work for HMG, to cope with meals for large numbers. No.10, too, behind the scenes is not at all an easy place for the caterers to work on major occasions. I believe that you would get an overall improvement if you could

restrict the numbers. For the larger occasions, Lancaster House would be much better, from the catering point of view, if the Prime Minister would consider going there.

As a matter of statistics, out of rather more than 300 meals arranged for Ministers in a year, we seem to get about 6 substantial complaints and about the same number of compliments. It is very noticeable over the years that nearly all the former come from the big occasions for over 60 guests - and nearly all the latter come from the smaller occasions, for under 24 guests.

You also mentioned the standard of menus. We always send No.10 a wide choice and, for convenience, I enclose a copy of the suggestions made for the Colombian dinner with Joanna Watson's letter of 25 June to Sue Goodchild. These had to take into consideration the menu already ordered for the Lord Mayor's dinner the previous night for 350, also done by Ring and Brymer (Melon, Salmon and Lamb). Menu II was chosen but, at your suggestion, Whitebait was subsequently altered to sole. You can of course also always pick individual dishes from the suggested menus. This system seems to work quite well, although a nice sounding menu does not of course necessarily result in a delicious meal. It is the cooking and presentation which count, and this is where any faults usually lie.

I am glad that the wines are appreciated but, as you say, they need good food to accompany them. I think, too, that the work of our flower arrangers is usually first class.

Lastly, you enquired about the provision of a special set of cutlery and glass. That is, as you surmised, a matter for the P.S.A.

If at any time you would like to discuss some of this in more detail, or indeed any other aspect of our work, I will of course gladly come across to see you. I entirely agree with you that it is useful to know what is wanted.

I am sending copies of this letter and yours to Roger du Boulay at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as we agreed, because we have recently been having much discussion with him, too, about our catering.

*yours ever  
Phil Barclay*

C F R Barclay



8308

GHF A4703/01

25 June 1979

Mrs S Goodchild  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

I submit, for the Prime Minister's approval, three suggested menus and wines for the Dinner which she is giving for the President of Colombia on Tuesday 3 July, 1979.

Will you please let me know as soon as possible which menu is selected so that I can inform the caterer accordingly?

(Mrs Joanna Watson)



DINNER FOR THE PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA ON TUESDAY 3 JULY 1979

MENU I

WINES

Consomme  
Trout with Prawns  
Roast Duck  
Bigarrade Sauce  
Selection of Vegetables  
Raspberry Vacherin  
Cream  
(Coffee)

Muscat Humbrecht, 1975  
Clos l'Eglise, 1966  
Louis Roederer, 1966  
Taylor, 1961  
Fine Cognac

MENU II

WINES

Cucumber and Mint Soup  
Devilled Whitebait  
Roast Sirloin of Beef  
Selection of Vegetables  
Strawberries in Melon  
(Coffee)

Muscat Humbrecht, 1975  
Clos l'Eglise, 1966  
Louis Roederer, 1966  
Taylor, 1961  
Fine Cognac

MENU III

WINES

Prawn and Pineapple Cocktail  
Vol au Vent of Sweetbreads  
~~Roast Pork~~  
*Cider* ~~Sauce~~ Sauce  
Selection of Vegetables  
Caramel Cream  
(Coffee)

Muscat Humbrecht, 1975  
Clos l'Eglise, 1966  
Louis Roederer, 1966  
Taylor, 1961  
Fine Cognac



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

5 July 1979

THE PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER FOR PRESIDENT TURBAY OF COLOMBIA ON  
3 JULY 1979

I am sorry to have to tell you that the Prime Minister was far from satisfied with the meal which was provided for her to offer to the President of Colombia at 10 Downing Street on 3 July. She told me after the dinner that she considered the menu to be unimaginative and the food very indifferent. Specifically, she found both the soup and the fish tasteless and the main course (roast beef) very dry. The wines, as usual, were excellent; but, as the Prime Minister said, this only served to emphasise the low standard of the rest of the meal.

As you know, the last Prime Minister did not take a very active personal interest in the catering arrangements for his entertainment of official guests at No. 10. The present Prime Minister clearly wishes the highest possible standards to be maintained, within the usual financial constraints, and for meals which she offers to her official guests to be remembered by them not only for the occasion, but also for their gastronomic excellence.

The Prime Minister has asked that the caterers who were engaged for her dinner for the President of Colombia should not be engaged for future occasions at No. 10 unless they are able to achieve a significant improvement in their standards, both culinary and in serving at table.

On a different, but related, point, the Prime Minister has asked whether it would not be possible to provide cutlery and glassware of a higher quality for large official dinners such as that on 3 July. It may well be that this is a matter for the PSA rather than for the GHF, in which case I hope you will forgive me for troubling you with it.

/ I hope you

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I hope you will agree with me that it is, in fact, very helpful to have a clear steer by a new Administration at the outset as to the standards which will be expected during their term of office and I am sure that, together, we can work towards the kind of result which the Prime Minister wishes to see.

*Bee*

C. F. R. Barclay, Esq., CMG,  
Government Hospitality Fund.

# Grey Scale #13



**A** 1 2 3 4 5 6 **M** 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 **B** 17 18 19



Inches 1 2 3  
Centimetres 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

## Colour Chart #13

Blue Cyan Green Yellow

