



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref: H/PSO/17707/81

Your ref:

12 November 1981

Dear Caroline,

GREAT CHILDREN'S TEA PARTY COMMEMORATIVE DRINKING FOUNTAIN IN
HYDE PARK

In your letter of 17 September you told us that the Prime Minister had agreed to unveil a children's drinking fountain in Hyde Park on Friday 4 December. We will be letting you have briefing and speech notes a little nearer the time, but my Secretary of State thought we should let you know now precisely what the Prime Minister has let herself in for.

Briefly, you will remember the Great Children's Tea Party in Hyde Park in 1979 to commemorate the Year of the Child. The organisers of that event agreed that they would present us with a drinking fountain to commemorate the occasion. We agreed in principle. However, we began to have misgivings when we saw the detailed design proposals. Photographs are attached, and a map.

There was long agonising between Ministers here and Mr St John Stevas in OAL, and at least one further discussion with the organisers, before Ministers concluded that it would be ungracious to refuse to take the design and that it had better go ahead. I am bound to say that Ministers here are not impressed with what is proposed. While it has some amusement value, we do not think it a dignified piece of sculpture appropriate to a Royal Park, and would have much preferred a simple drinking fountain. The organisers were however adamant.

It is more than possible that public response to the unveiling will similarly be less than enthusiastic.

Arrangements for the unveiling are now well advanced. There is one particular point which you might like to bring to the Prime Minister's attention. This concerns the inscription that is to be put on the plinth beneath the sculpture. I attach a copy of the text proposed for the inscription. It is designed deliberately to be read by children, and in our view fulfils that aim admirably.

We would hope that neither the Prime Minister nor the Royal Family would object to being referred to informally, given that this is very much designed as a children's memorial. You may however want to take the Prime Minister's and the Palace's mind on that point, though I should warn that it is now very late to make changes.

As I have said, we will let you have further detailed briefing shortly.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Ghosh

MRS H F GHOSH
Private Secretary