

SUMMIT INFORMATION DESK

This is a "Who me?" series of facts and personal information about the Prime Minister to help you respond in more gracious form to questions about the Prime Minister beginning "Do you know if...?", "What's her...?", "Does she....?" and no doubt countless others; or of course, you may be lucky, and be fielded none!

Attached -

BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE p 1-2
PERSONAL FACTS p 2
FAVOURITES p 3-4
WORKLOAD p 4-5

L J Sinclair
L J SINCLAIR

THE RT HON MARGARET THATCHER, FRS, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF GREAT BRITAIN

BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE

BORN

Morning of 13 October 1925, above parents' grocer shop, in small market town of Grantham, Lincolnshire, England: mother - Beatrice Ethel Roberts (nee Stevenson) and father - Alfred Roberts (Welsh father's side and Irish mother's); both now deceased: one sister, Muriel 4 years older.

EARLIEST INFLUENCE

Her earliest influences - her father and her chemistry teacher (Grantham).

EDUCATED

Huntingdon Tower Road Elementary School, Grantham; 1936 won scholarship to Kesteven and Grantham Girls' High School; 1943-1946 Somerville College, Oxford (degree in Natural Sciences - Chemistry); 1954 - called to the Bar, Lincoln's Inn.

JOBS

After university, joined BX Plastics, Manningtree, Essex; moved to J Lyons and Co, Cadby Hall, Hammersmith, London (research into food and food technology); later a barrister, joined a set of tax and chancery chambers at 5 New Square, Lincoln's Inn.

POLITICAL

Joined Conservative Club, Oxford University; then Conservative Association, Colchester; Conservative candidate for Dartford 1948; lost elections in 1950 and 1951. In 1955 she tried unsuccessfully to be adopted as Conservative Party candidate for Orpington and later Beckenham - she ran second on both occasions; 1958 adopted as Conservative Party candidate for Finchley and, 1959 elected MP for Finchley; from 1974 continued as member for Barnet, Finchley.

GOVERNMENT POSTS

1961 Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance; 1964-1970 Opposition front-bench

spokesman (1967 - member of the Shadow Cabinet); 1970 Secretary of State for Education and Science; 1974 made a Privy Counsellor; 1975 elected Opposition leader of the Conservative Party; 1979 - Prime Minister; 1983 re-elected.

DISTINCTIONS AND AWARDS

- 1970 - Honorary Fellow of Sommerville.
- 1983 - Elected Fellow of the Royal Society.
- 1983 - Winston Churchill Foundation of the United States of America Award.

PERSONAL FACTS

FAMILY

1951 married Denis Thatcher (served as Major in Royal Artillery, World War II: a director of a number of companies).

1953 - twins born 15 August - Mark and Carol.

The Prime Minister's family live their own independent lives as much as possible. They have no press officers, and no personal information is given out by No 10 about them. If it appears necessary for a referral to be made route through No 10 only.

- HEIGHT - 5ft 4½ins.
- EYES - Blue
- HAIR - Fair
- DRESS SIZE - 12
- HAT SIZE - 7½
- SHOE SIZE - 6½ English/8AA American.
- GLOVE SIZE - 7.

FAVOURITES

- Colour** - Turquoise.
- Flower** - Likes all flowers, especially roses and Spring flowers.
- Season** - Late Spring.
- Sweets** - Chocolates.
- Fruit** - All fruit, especially English apples and white grapes.
- Drink** - Whisky and soda.
- Books** - "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens (childhood favourite) and, for example, "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy" by John le Carre; "The First Circle" by Alexander Solzhenitsyn; "The Spirit of England" by Sir Arthur Bryant; "The Seed and the Sower" by Sir Laurens van der Post.
- Bible passage** - Psalm 46 - "God is our refuge and our strength".
- Grace** - "Oh Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day, if I forget thee, do not thou forget me." (Sir Jacob Astley)
- Music** - Choral - Bach; Piano - Chopin; Orchestral - Beethoven; for light music, prefers songs in the style of, for example, Andy Williams, including Big Band sound and melodies of eg Cole Porter, Rogers and Hart. (See music choice for "Desert Island Discs", BBC Radio 4 - page 7.)
- Programmes** - Current affairs, thrillers; enjoys "Yes Minister" and series such as "The Professionals" and "Cannon". When time is available, catches up on TV viewing by video recordings.
- Pastimes** - Going to the opera, reading, walking and gardening.

- Jewellery** - Particular favourites are a small brooch in the form of the Union Jack, a silver bracelet and a small circlet of diamonds.
- Clothes** - Prefers classic styles in natural fibres, bought at shops as varied as Peter Jones and Marks and Spencer.
- Main choice of colour is black or navy, but does choose brighter colours on occasions, particularly for evening.
- Food** - Light breakfast - orange juice and black coffee; usually a working lunch unless official engagements; dinner usually in the House of Commons; PM takes tea with milk, no sugar. **The PM does not diet.** She "eats sensibly" and is aware of the important relationship between weight and health.
- Pets** - PM has no pets, however Wilberforce, the No 10 tabby cat, patrols the corridors.
- Poetry** - The PM is very fond of poetry. She names no particular favourite poet or poem but enjoys, for example, Keats, Kipling, Wordsworth.
- Toys** - PM retains great affection for Humphrey, a teddy bear some ~~50~~ years old.

30.

OUTLINE OF PRIME MINISTER'S WORKLOAD

"There isn't a job in the world more interesting than what I am doing now"

From the moment Mrs Thatcher starts work at around 8.30 am not a minute of the day is wasted until she goes to bed usually around midnight (although it is not unusual for her to go on working until 1.00 or 2.00 am). The job requires a great deal of stamina, but fortunately Mrs Thatcher is one of those lucky people who seem to need very little sleep.

The Prime Minister reads through a digest of the morning's papers, prepared for her by her Chief Press Secretary. She meets her Ministers on a day-to-day basis for discussions on Government policies and how to put these into effect. Usually on Thursday mornings she meets with all her Cabinet colleagues. The Prime Minister makes herself available for Questions by Members of Parliament (MPs) in the House of Commons every Tuesday and Thursday at 3.15 pm during the Parliamentary Session. This enables MPs to quiz her for 15 minutes on the full gamut of Government policy and her actions. Mrs Thatcher has confessed that the few minutes before Question Time begins are her most nervous moments as Prime Minister, especially as by tradition she is expected to speak extempore.

In addition, Mrs Thatcher will often make statements to the House to bring Members up-to-date on events; this is, for instance, regular practice after an overseas summit. She will also make speeches on those areas of Government policy which are her direct responsibility, for example, the Civil Service, or matters involving national security issues. When she is not getting ready to chair meetings at Downing Street or answer questions in the Commons, she is usually "working on her boxes" - going through Government papers which are kept in red despatch boxes. She also has to read reports and recommendations that other Ministers are going to present to the Cabinet and keep herself up-to-date on current affairs, both at home and abroad. Letters from the public, Members of Parliament and Ministers all have to be answered as well.

As Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher maintains close contact with

HM The Queen who takes a keen interest in Parliamentary, international and domestic affairs. She meets The Queen at Buckingham Palace on average once a week throughout the year. She is responsible for recommending to The Queen the appointments to over 200 offices of the Crown. She also recommends The Queen the appointment of Privy Councillors, senior judges, Lord Lieutenants and various other holders of civil office; as well as those names that have been proposed for inclusion in the half-yearly Honours List.

The Prime Minister also has a very busy international schedule. She receives Heads of State and Government from other countries at No 10 Downing Street for talks, often over working lunches. Additionally her schedule includes visits to other countries which have to be fitted in with other engagements, all requiring detailed planning.

As well as being Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher is of course an MP and, as such, has to represent her constituents' interests and deal with their problems. She usually spends at least half a day each week, either in the constituency (Barnet, Finchley) or dealing with constituency business.

The Prime Minister is also in demand around the country and invitations continually flood in for her to attend and speak at conferences, receptions and dinners throughout Britain. While it is by no means possible for her to meet all or even most of these requests, Mrs Thatcher makes a point of trying to visit as many parts of Great Britain as possible so that she can judge at first hand what people think about the Government and its policies and to explain what she and her colleagues are seeking to achieve.

Mrs Thatcher's Desert Island Discs - Music Choice

1. Beethoven Piano Concerto No 5, 4th Movement.
2. Dvorak arranged by Boddington "Going Home" played by the GUS Footwear Band.
3. Verdi "Aida" Act 2, Grand March.
4. Bob Newhart - "Introducing Tobacco to Civilisation".
5. Kern - Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.
6. Mendlessohn - Elijah - No 22. "Be Not Afraid Your Help is Near". With Gwyneth Jones as soloist.
7. Saint-Prux - Andante for Trumpet. Composed and directed by Saint-Prux.
8. Easter Hymn from Cavalleri Rusticana by Mascagni. Chorus and Orchestra of Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.