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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

MR WICKS

cc: Mr Alison ✓
Prof Griffiths
Mr Sherbourne
Mr Addison
Mrs Ryder
Mr Coe
Press Officers

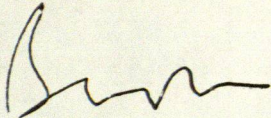
PRESENTATION: HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

At a meeting with Press Office today, acting on the record of the above meeting of July 1, the following decisions were made:

1. Mr Coe is to write personally to Regional Controllers of the COI asking them to identify "cracking" human interest stories with which the Prime Minister might be associated; they would be asked to regard this as a continuing day-to-day task, recognising that only a limited number of suggestions could be taken up.
2. On each human interest occasion the press officer designated to handle it will consider how the best publicity, and especially television and pictorial publicity, can be achieved. One consideration will be whether to confine coverage to regional or local television, radio and press.
3. Press Officers, as a matter of course, will consider whether, on major Parliamentary occasions in which the

Prime Minister is involved, she should be recommended to give television interviews afterwards in order to get a short summary of her views face to camera on the record.

I was asked to add that it would help if adequate time for media work were built in to visit programmes.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bernard', written in a cursive style.

BERNARD INGHAM

10 July 1986

Present: Mr. Wicks ✓ Mr. Sherbourne
 Mr. Alison ✓ Mr. Addison
 Mr. Ingham
 Mr. Griffiths

PRESENTATION: HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

The following action were agreed at the extraordinary publicity meeting yesterday:

Events in No. 10

1. Press Office should pursue its efforts to encourage local press to make full use of the opportunities provided by visits to No. 10. Jim Coe would review what further needed to be done. Action BI + JC.
2. In particular, if it looked as if it would help, exclusive coverage would be arranged with TV companies, or local papers. Action BI.
3. The Press Office, the Political Office and the Private Office would be more on the look-out for opportunities where we could actively seek publicity, rather than reacting to requests which came in.
4. A more systematic approach to identifying good local stories (which would also have the maximum chance of attracting national coverage) was needed. One approach would be to identify MPs in marginal seats and see whether they could come up with striking ideas for visits to No. 10. A regular slot in the diary might be identified. Action SS in consultation with MEA, MA and CR.

Events Outside No. 10

1. Stephen Sherbourne proposed to make use of someone at Central Office who would be able to personally vet possible engagements for inclusion in regional tours and provide advice before the programme

was finalised discussed between Political Office, Press Office, Detectives and the Area Agent. Action SS.

2. A number of theme visits, probably involving the Prime Minister travelling by helicopter between several engagements linked together by a single theme, should be included in her forward programme of tours. These should guarantee a certain level of national publicity, but they could also cater for Party needs if the right areas were chosen, a Party function was included. Consultation between No. 10 and the Party in the area, as well as the Department concerned would need to be close. Education and health were candidates for such visits.

The arrangements for ensuring such close cooperation between Party, Departments and No. 10 in the setting up and running of theme tours needed to be considered further. A proposal for three such tours next year should then be put to a diary meeting. Action SS and MEA.

3. Stephen Sherbourne and Mark Addison were considering reinstating the West Midlands environmental improvement visit for the autumn, to substitute for the regional tour in that area which was already planned for then. Action SS + MEA.
5. Bernard Ingham would consider the idea of the Prime Minister giving radio and TV interviews after policy statements or debates in the House in order to ensure that her message was most effectively got over. Action BI.

MEA

(MARK ADDISON)

2 July 1986

cc: Those present
Mrs. Ryder

VC2ALS

cc: Mr Alison
Mr Sherbourne
Prof Griffiths
Mr Addison
Mr Willetts
Mr Coe

MR WICKS

PRESENTATION

This minute refers to notes by Professor Griffiths and Mr Addison.

We are constrained by four things in getting more national publicity for "caring" subjects:

- Prime Minister's time
- demonstrations at visits or events (which are calculated by minorities to wreck them as positive news stories)
- the strength of the story line of the event itself
- excessive repetition (since familiarity only breeds contempt in the media)

It is easier to get positive publicity in local or specialist journals, though even here pressure groups can hijack an event. We shall only get national publicity if the story is a strong and compelling one.

The surest route to good local publicity is a good local visit to No 10. The magic of visits to No 10 is beginning to wear a bit thin in Fleet Street unless, of course, the story is irresistible.

In these circumstances what we need is a new approach to this aspect of the Prime Minister's publicity.

First, we need to re-examine our objectives. What are we trying to achieve? In essence, we want to persuade the public that the Prime Minister does in fact care about people as distinct from abstract issues.

In terms of present political preoccupations this means showing concern about:

- the unemployed;
- parents, pupils and teachers;
- the NHS and its patients;
- crime and its victims.

If this is accepted, then it could be that identifying with random groups of children, the disabled and disadvantaged is not sharply directed enough. This is not to suggest we should cut these out altogether. But a 5-minute meeting with the Prime Minister on the doorstep of No 10 with a quick 15 minutes' tour of No 10 conducted by officials would probably be just as effective in media terms.

What is likely to be much more effective is, as Professor Griffiths suggests, positive interest in good stories about unemployed people being put to work; educational successes; fine NHS performances, especially those which bring out the improved use of resources; and crime prevention achievements.

I suggest that from September we bend every effort to producing publicity exercises with these objectives in view. We need to get it over to the public that good things are happening in Britain - and especially in the more unlikely places of Britain.

To this end I am an ardent advocate of the helicopter tour, especially after the success of the BNFL visit last November. Consequently, I am particularly sorry that the

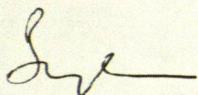
idea of a helicopter tour of Community Programme/heritage projects has apparently disappeared.

It follows from this that:

- i. the Prime Minister must get out of London and the South East;
- ii. we must face up to the demo threat and do our best to organise it out of the cameras; easier said than done, but easier when
- iii. the visit has an intrinsically strong story line; the impact would be heightened if we were able to put out a strong quote from the Prime Minister which told the essential story in her words.

Three final thoughts:

- could we ask each relevant Department for 10 examples of good strong stories associated with our objectives?
- could we plan helicopter tours which follow up one theme - eg primary education or TVEI in a number of locations topped off by a short speech in front of the cameras at the last stop drawing the strands together?
- are there any ideas to be gleaned from the Honours List, and especially the BEMs which take us deep down into the real positive, hard working and dedicated Britain?



BERNARD INGHAM
30 June 1986



10 DOWNING STREET

With the compliments of

MR. N. L. WICKS

Publicity for Prime Minister
meeting - 1700 2/7/86.

PRIME MINISTER'S VISITS: SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS AND JOB CENTRES

As a method of reinforcing the PM's recent speeches which have given prominence to the caring side of the Government's policies on education, health and employment, it might be worthwhile arranging three one-day visits dedicated to these areas.

EDUCATION

A day's visit in the field of education could be used through the media as a series of visual aids to back up the cutting edge of policy, and might include some of the following:

1. Devolution of power and responsibility over budgets to governing bodies and heads

Cambridgeshire and Solihull have already embarked along this path. Why not choose a school which shows the benefits of such delegation, eg the governors were able to save money in one area to buy more/better books or equipment or spend in another area.

2. Joint ventures between the private and public sector

- a. Schools. Arrange a visit to a TVEI scheme on the day on which a well-known plc is giving the school a computer/word processor, or some such piece of equipment.

b. Polytechnics or Universities. Similar occasion at some institution, eg North Staffordshire Polytechnic, which has a first-class reputation in computing - in a recent assessment, North Staffordshire Poly was ranked third after Cambridge and Imperial College.

3. High standards in the curriculum

Choose a rather ordinary kind of school which gets first-class results because of its outstanding head/teachers. Place emphasis on teaching methods and the vigour of the curriculum.

4. Business education

John Egan has made a deal with the University of Warwick, whereby the Management Centre train his staff on MBA programmes, in which part of the training is done in-house. Very good visually.

5. Technological education

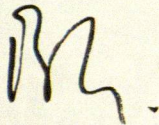
A visit to one of the few existing technology schools or an average comprehensive, but one which has made a great deal of, eg TVEI; or a FE college which has shown considerable enterprise in its teaching of technological skills.

6. Discipline and standards

Visit a maintained school which has high standards, eg Oratory School, Brompton. Put particular emphasis on seeing the PM

observe the children entering/leaving the school, or having lunch, or entering a classroom in which the teacher is actually teaching.

[Notes on Health and Employment to come]

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'B. Griffiths', with a small dot at the end.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

2nd July

PROFESSOR GRIFFITHS

PUBLICITY FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

As I mentioned to you at our discussion this morning, I would be very pleased if you could join myself and the copy recipients of this minute at our meeting at 1700 on **Wednesday 2 July.**

I enclose copies of the papers so far prepared for the discussion. It would be helpful if you could put down on paper the thoughts which you were expressing this morning.

MR. N. L. WICKS

N L WICKS

24 June 1986

cc Michael Alison MP ✓
Bernard Ingham
Stephen Sherborne
Mark Addison

MR. WICKS

cc Mr Ingham

Mr Sherbourne

Mr Alison ✓

THE DIARY: HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

Concerns were expressed at this morning's diary meeting about achieving more media coverage for the Prime Minister's engagements falling into the "human interest" category. Insofar as there is a problem here I do not believe it is anything to do with the positive coverage of her foreign visits. There will always be some who think that any time at all spent abroad would be better spent here. There is nothing that can be done for them. The problem is rather how to get more pictures into the paper, and coverage on the television, when the Prime Minister undertakes engagements in the UK.

Steps already taken

We have already taken several steps which should, in some way, help achieve that objective. We have

- (i) instituted the system of regular diary meetings to try to consider incoming invitations in a more systematic way;
- (ii) more recently instituted fortnightly publicity meetings both to look ahead at the balance of the diary and to consider how to get the maximum impact out of it, and to look back and evaluate the impact of engagements which have been and gone;
- (iii) increased the number of human interest visitors to No.10 (so far this month we have had the presentation of the Royal Wedding souvenir by the Girls and Boys Brigades, the visit from the charity runners, a visit from Marilyn Houlton, the 12 youngsters from the Margate School for Deaf Children, the Americans to tea);
- (iv) instituted more careful planning for the programme of regional tours to ensure that manufacturing or

- commercial visits are balanced by visits to eg hospitals or schools;
- (v) planned one full day a month, and one half day every month, for regional tours next year;
- (vi) commissioned ideas from departments for future visits.

All these measures have helped to give the local and national media more opportunities to cover the Prime Minister in informal and human contexts. I do not believe that the record is in fact a bad one. Certainly the local press - both for regional tours and for visits from young people to No.10 - can be expected to carry useful stories, and we are as you know taking steps both to ensure we feed out the pictures to them, and monitor the impact afterwards. The national media are more difficult to crack. Regional tours are often seen simply as an opportunity to doorstep the Prime Minister about the political issue of the day (eg Westlands on the East Midlands visit, and Mark Thatcher's security at Sunderland shipbuilders).

The forward programme

The forward diary is no cause for dismay. We have coming up, before the end of July:

- driving the crane at Broadgate;
- visiting the lifeboat station at Porthcawl;
- visiting the British School of Technology Bus;
- testing the new Rover;
- flying to Vancouver in Concorde;
- meeting Janet Brown;
- ? buying a brick for the new building for handicapped children in Mr. Greenway's constituency;
- visiting the Commonwealth Games.

In addition to this list, there are of course all the more formal engagements such as Lord Shinwell's memorial service, State occasions etc, and a good deal of interviews - ranging from serious think pieces to "What is it like to be the first woman British Prime Minister". Beyond July, we have visits to

Milton Keynes, Barrow, Scotland, the North East, ICI, Brighton and Guys Hospital set up. (It is of course a pity the Birmingham visit cannot now take place in August.)

Reasons for the lack of national coverage

This is Press Office territory rather than mine, but there seem to be a number of factors operating

- (i) the national media are more interested in major news stories, particularly bad news stories, than in nice picture stories or simple shots of the Prime Minister visiting a hospital or factory;
- (ii) new stories with an immediate importance will always tend to knock out general human interest pieces;
- (iii) there is a problem of saturation. If we arranged for groups of disabled children to come to No.10 every day of the week, I doubt if it would attract any more national coverage than we do at present;
- (iv) visits to No.10 inevitably follow a fairly formal form. Visits outside can be made more unusual and attractive but there is very properly a limit to the amount of gimmickry the Prime Minister will accept and a limit to the amount of time which can be allocated.

There are therefore clear limits about what can realistically be done.

How to get more cover

We do need fresh ideas both to help in the difficult task of jazzing up visits here, for engagements close by which are sufficiently out of the ordinary to attract attention; and for our programme of regional tours.

We need to:

- (i) continue to watch out for invitations with an unusual angle - eg the train naming suggestion for Grantham which, as you know, is still in limbo;
- (ii) continue to take initiatives ourselves where possible

eg the M25 opening;

- (iii) continue to be alive to the publicity angle on the requests which come in no matter what their origins (eg Marilyn Houlton).

Specifically we might also aim to work into the diary

- (iv) visits with an ethnic dimension;
- (v) visits with an urban regeneration/conservation dimension, and a before and after theme;
- (vi) a visit to mark the sale of the 1 millionth council house;
- (vii) another drugs visit;
- (viii) visits with a crime prevention theme.
- (ix) a supermarket (low inflation) visit - perhaps the new Sainsburys near Guildford.

Finally, a note of warning. There is very limited scope for adding more to the diary. We have already come close to overload on visits to No.10. There is effectively no room to add more outside visits this year. And the more we impose from the centre the less freedom the local party has to draw up the programmes they want on regional tours.

I hope when we discuss this, all will bear these constraints in mind, and that we can focus on specific and practical suggestions.

Mark Addison

Mark Addison

20 June 1986

MR WICKS

cc Mr Alison
Mr Ingham
Mr Sherbourne
Mr Addison
Mrs Ryder

TRIPS

I understand you intend to hold a meeting about the Prime Minister's visits, following the discussion at the last diary meeting.

I would urge that the Prime Minister should not solely visit successful factories, new hospitals or strongly Conservative areas. Of course she must visit a full share of successes, but visiting the failures and the run-down areas, and talking to opponents might in the right circumstances pay dividends, both in publicity and in helping towards policy decisions.

For the Prime Minister to be associated only with successes reinforces the image that she does not know or care about the problems. And the Prime Minister can often soften her opponents (as the letter attached shows yet again).

The visit to the North East took place at a very difficult time for the area and with some trepidation. I don't know how much coverage it got, locally or nationally, but it may well have helped reduce the stridency of protests about shipbuilding closures: MPs who came to see the Prime Minister about the AOR order referred warmly to her discussions with Swan Hunter management, and the management themselves greatly appreciated it. She has herself I think been influenced by it to take a particularly close interest in the decisions in this area.

Security has of course to be a concern and the places need to be carefully chosen. But the North East visit shows it can be done. A visit to Middlesbrough is projected, which is

welcome. Other possibilities include hospitals which are soon to be replaced or streets which are to be enveloped, or council estates which are to be done up.

We don't have to wallow in problems, but it's right to recognise they are there and to show that the Prime Minister is aware of them and cares about them.

DW

David Norgrove

19 June 1986