

15 April 1988

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS

Prime Minister gives interview to Scottish Daily Express.

The Princess Royal launches HMS Talent, Vickers Shipyard, Barrow-in-Furness

STATISTICS

BSC/BISPA: Usable steel production (Mar)

CSO: Tax and price index (Mar)

CSO: Index of output of the production industries (Feb)

DEM: Labour Market Statistics: unemployment and vacancies (Mar-prov); average earnings indices (Feb-prov), employment, hours, productivity and unit wage costs; industrial disputes

DEM: Retail prices index (Mar)

PUBLICATIONS

DES: New Technology for Better Schools

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: Scottish Whisky Bill: Remaining Stages (Mr Bill Walker)
Consumer Arbitration Agreements Bill: Remaining Stages
(Mr James Pawsey)
Companies (Political Donations) Bill: 2nd Reading
(Mr Derek Fatchett)

Adjournment Debate: The abduction of British citizens to Sri Lanka: the case of the children of Mrs Manchanayake (Sir George Young)

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

DEN: Mr Parkinson visits the Eastern Electricity Board, Essenden

DES: Mr Baker gives Keynote speech at IT in Schools conference for industrialists

HO: Mr Hurd visits Wray Park Fire Training Centre, Surrey

MAFF: Mr MacGregor opens John Rannock Ltd Chicken Factory, Haughley Park, Suffolk

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC) cont'd

- SO: Mr Rifkind visits Grampian Regional Council Curriculum and Development Unit, later addresses Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce and visits Bond Helicopters, Aberdeen
- DES: Mr Jackson addresses conference of University Administrators, Hull University; later tours the University; also visits Humberside College of Higher Education
- DHSS: Mr Portillo addresses Institute of Fiscal Studies conference, London
- DOE: Lord Caithness visits South West Water Authority
- DOE: Mrs Roe visits Reading (housing)
- DTP: Mr Bottomley opens the Ride and Drive day, Longcross Track, Chertsey
- HO: Mr Hogg visits Bedford Prison (prov)
- HO: Lord Ferrers visits Huntingdon Forensic Science Laboratory; later visits Scottish TV Studios
- MAFF: Mr Gummer meets Scottish Fishermens Federation, Glasgow; later visits Fishing '88 Exhibition, Glasgow
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington addresses Cheshire Cereals Society, Hoole Hall, Chester
- SO: Mr Lang visits Smith Anderson Paper Co, Leslie, Glenrothes
- SO: Lord Sanderson visits Fishing '88 Exhibition, Glasgow
- SO: Lord James Douglas-Hamilton makes Countryside Commission visits, Lanarkshire, later makes Housing Association visits in Glasgow area
- WO: Mr Roberts addresses British Aggregates Construction Manufacturing Industry luncheon Cardiff; later addresses industrialists/educationalists seminar on Public Provision in the Higher Education Sector, Cardiff
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

- SO: Mr Rifkind appears on Any Questions, BBC Radio 4 (20.20-21.05)
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15 April 1988

Nicholas Ridley felt to have bought off serious revolt on community charge before biggest rebellion last night of this Parliament over hearing and eyesight tests.

Another £130million to be spent on easing transition to full community charge.

Your tearoom visit widely portrayed as instrumental in persuading some Backbenchers of the error of their ways in backing Mates' amendment. Mates, meanwhile, battles on.

John Moore tells Express he is suffering from Preacher's (or Teacher's) throat which means he should rest his voice.

Off-duty policeman shot dead by bank raiders at Hemel Hempstead; eight arrested. Reports that he died because police were keeping watch on wrong bank.

20 held in police raid on West Indian drinking den in Stoke Newington; Yardie boss arrested.

Hijack in Algeria drags on at leisurely pace; one more hostage - a Kuwaiti - freed.

Afghan withdrawal treaty signed but general view this will not bring end to civil war.

Pound soars against dollar hit by another set of bad US trade figures; and Wall Street takes a tumble.

Loophole in insider trading law exposed by judge who says use of unsolicited information is not an offence.

Nellist to be hauled before Opposition Chief Whip for his behaviour during Social Security debate (Sun).

Benn accuses Army of "executing" three IRA terrorists in Gibraltar at Hammersmith meeting with Sinn Fein.

Conservatives hold with increased majority Westminster council seat vacant through resignation of councillor at centre of cemetery sales row.

Party leaders support Mirror appeal to help Mother Teresa care for homeless.

15 April 1988

British Telecom takes on extra 1,100 staff because of heavy demand for sophisticated equipment - and also recruits in Ireland (Today).

Leyland DAF switching more production to Leyland, Lancs.

Customs & Excise recruiting another 450 officers for war against drugs.

Fall in road deaths last year - at 51 - lowest for 33 years; down 5% on 1986 - safest roads in EC (Express).

Geoffrey Dickens MP campaigning against resurgence of witchcraft in Britain.

Swindon AFC footballer makes history: fined £1200 for assaulting an opponent.

Mail leader says decision by Zurich life insurance company to treble its premiums in anticipation of an expected rise in death rate from AIDS is indefensible.

5 die as US club in Naples is bombed on anniversary of US raid on Libya.

President Reagan and yourself being sued in USA for £50million compensation for 55 Libyan victims of raid.

Six serving life sentences for 1974 Birmingham pub bombings refused leave to appeal to Lords.

John Stonehouse dies at 62, and gets a bad press.

Judge Pickles becomes first serving Crown Court Judge to host a TV programme - for BBC programme which deals with small claims.

Psychologists, analysing your TV technique, say you are expert at wrongfooting interviewers and giving impression they have treated you unfairly.

Roger Bannister, Chris Brasher and Chris Chataway write to Michael Checkland complaining about "appalling inaccuracy" over a BBC film of when they cracked four-minute mile.

15 April 1988

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Sun - Maggie's tearoom chat halts poll tax rebels. She calms MPs' fears. Jerry Wiggin says Nicholas Ridley tore Mates' case to shreds.

Mirror - Thatcher in climbdown on poll tax.

Today - Maggie charms poll tax rebels - you use tea and sympathy.

Express - Page 1 lead: Maggie acts to stop poll tax revolt: £130million sweetener; leader headed "Thank God for Tory rebels" says that the opposition on community charge, as with social security, will come from the Government's own supporters. Labour bereft of ideas, unwilling to frame genuinely realistic policies and unable to control its unruly backbenchers. Labour leadership seems incapable of providing effective opposition.

Mail - Page 1 lead - Maggie eases the burden. Tory revolt weakens as Cabinet back £130million a year plan to help families. Great Tory poll tax revolt collapses; leader says if there is little wrong with the Government's overall new social security reform what about the messenger? This week's social security debate raised fresh speculation about the political future of John Moore. No Government can afford to carry passengers. George Gale says John Moore looks like a man who has been woefully miscast. He has been promoted way out of his class.

Mail has an exclusive interview with John Moore who says he should not be written off yet. "You just have to take criticism". No 10 dismisses idea he is under threat.

Telegraph leads with health charges revolt while Ridley yields to poll tax critics; leader on "The Tory Conscience" says that to those who wish to believe that the Tory Party in the Commons still possesses a social conscience the prospect after this week (and Mates' amendment on Monday) is more heartening. A dismaying feature of our politics is that the fight seems to have gone out of opposition to this Government.

Guardian - Page 1 lead Ridley sees off poll tax revolt. Minimal benefit for 5million poor rescues Thatcher from risk of defeat. Another story says Tory MPs are unhappy with John Moore who is facing a crisis of confidence. One Guardian leader says the reason for the Tory revolts is that MPs have just been in their

15 April 1988

constituencies at Easter. The typical constituency will have lost just under £1million this year in disabled benefit, and £17million in social security cuts. In another leader on John Moore it says he can't last long. But should any Minister be expected to carry responsibility for health and social security?

Charles Moore, in Express, says it is bad luck on John Moore that he has shown he cannot formulate, explain and carry out Government policy. You must think again about him.

Times leads with "Ridley heads off Tory poll tax rebellion", with 5 million to receive better deal on rebates. Report says it would appear that Ridley has halted the rebellion and bought off enough waverers to ensure a victory. Several of the 46 MPs who signed Michael Mates' amendment say they will now remove their names.

Robin Oakley in Times says Conservative MPs are speculating how much longer John Moore can hope to last as Social Services Secretary. In politics the time to kick a man is when he is down and concludes that he may never be the gilded hero he was painted on arrival at DHSS and must struggle now to resuscitate his political career. Older hands say he is not yet damaged beyond repair.

Independent - You began to tend to the concern of your Backbenchers over the more controversial reforms of your election manifesto. Having faced extensive Conservative dissatisfaction with this week's social security changes, the Cabinet yesterday considered the threat of a revolt over the community charge and agreed to a £115million-£130million concession in an attempt to buy off the rebels.

Independent - 22 MPs, including some of your most loyal supporters, voted against the Government last night in protest against the introduction of charge for eye tests. Tory MPs privately criticised John Moore for a lacklustre performance at the despatch box. Mr Moore was being blamed by some Tory MPs last night for losing concessions from the Treasury in the annual expenditure review which could have eased the introduction of the social security changes.

Independent - Michael Mates explains how the tax ratings in the proposed amendment would turn the Government's community charge into a fairer scheme.

FT Political editor Peter Riddell believes John Moore is now looking a rather beleaguered figure. The message from the

15 April 1988

Conservative Whips' office is that Mr Moore's days as Social Services Secretary may be numbered unless his performance soon improves.

FT Ministers yield to poll tax rebels. The extension of the rebates is intended to take the sting out of a threatened revolt by Conservative MPs.

ECONOMY

FT G7 ministers yesterday sought to limit embarrassment caused by the unexpected rise in February's US trade deficit with declarations of their determination to go on supporting the dollar.

FT Britain's economy will continue to be buoyant this year by strong growth in domestic demand but a sharp widening in the current account deficit will act as an intensifying constraint on growth, according to IMF.

LABOUR PARTY

Sun wonders what is the matter with the Labour Party, having blown the Social Security debate. The rabble took over and let Labour supporters down. They never learn!

Times says Labour set to rule out renationalisation of water, gas and electricity.

OTHER POLITICS

Times SDP braces itself for survival battle in next month's local elections.

Peter Stothard in the Times discusses the "Battle of the Tory Books" about last year's Conservative election campaign adding that there are more still to come.

FT IPCS votes to set up a political fund - the sixth Civil Service union to do so.

Independent - Conservative opponents of David Alton's abortion Bill will next week urge Labour sympathisers to rally behind a pre-emptive move to reduce the abortion time limit to only 24 weeks.

15 April 1988

HIJACK

Times says report from Abu Khabi claims Kuwaiti and Palestinian mediators signed deal with hijackers in Cyprus to commute death sentences of Islamic militants.

Times - Girlfriend of kidnapped British journalist, John McCarthy, accuses Government of doing nothing to help free him and is to ignore FCO advice to act with discretion.

ECONOMY

Times leader says that the Wall Street fall and the sharp drop in the dollar do not yet signal another crash but they do suggest a return to the kind of financial turbulence which has been absent for most of this year.

CITY

Times - Sir John Hoskyns tells City institutions that unless they improve self-regulation the Government will enact stricter laws to control them.

INDUSTRY

Independent - A statement on Britain's involvement in the European Space Agency is expected today. Also name of new head for the BNSC.

FT Sir John Hoskyns tells London conference that any future by business leaders to maintain the highest standards of integrity is a form of weapon against the enterprise culture.

EDUCATION

Times reports that Lords will press Kenneth Baker to drop abolition of ILEA from the Education Reform Bill.

Times Open University says it is facing a deficit of nearly £2million.

INNER CITIES

Times - Prince of Wales to return to political bearpit next month when, alongside President Reagan's advisers, he addresses a London conference on industry's role in helping urban unemployed.

15 April 1988

MEDIA

Times - IBA paper says ITN should be free to supply news to any broadcasting outlets.

Times - ITV chiefs who met Home Secretary hopeful that they persuaded him to drop plans to sell franchises to highest bidder.

EC

Times - Report by Royal Institute of International Affairs urges EC to be more flexible - the good of creating a single European market by 1992 is being jeopardised by deep-seated government and industry fears over consequences of increased competition.

Times - Lord Young launches computerised database to give guidance to companies about single European market.

DENMARK

Times - Nuclear vote may topple Schluter as NATO doubts in Danish Parliament deepen.

TV AND RADIO

"Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

"The World at One": BBC Radio 4 (13.00)

"P.M.": BBC Radio 4 (17.00)

"Any Questions?": BBC Radio 4 (20.20) with Malcolm Rifkind, Michael Mechner, Rosalind Gilmore, business consultant and Owen Dudley Edwards, reader in history, Edinburgh University

"Stop Press": BBC Radio 4 (21.05) Geoffrey Goodman with a personal view of the week's papers

"The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "The Financial World Tonight" then "Today in Parliament"

"The London Programme": ITV (22.35)

"Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.45)
