

MAIN EVENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh visits the Bahamas (to 17 March)

The Duchess of York attends the Women of Achievement Awards ceremony, Savoy Hotel, London.

TUC conference on "The role of the media in a democracy", Congress House, London

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STATISTICS

HO: Criminal Statistics 1988

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

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

DTI: Provisional figures of vehicle production (Feb)

DTI: Capital expenditure by the manufacturing and service industries (4th qtr 1988-rev)

HMT/  
CSO: Public sector borrowing requirement (Feb)

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PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Treasury; Prime Minister

Business: Budget Debate (3rd day)

Adjournment Debates: The British Airtours Boeing 737 accident at Manchester Airport (Mr A Morris)

Lords: Starred Questions  
Children Bill (HL): Third Reading  
Road Traffic (Driver Licensing and Information Systems) Bill (HL):  
Third Reading  
Pneumoconiosis etc (Workers' Compensation)(Payment of  
Claims)(Amendment) Regulations 1989: Motion for Approval  
Redundancy Payments (Local Government)(Modification)(Amendment)  
Order 1989: Motion for Approval  
Social Security (Contributions) Amendment (No 2) Regulations 1989:  
Motion for Approval  
UQ on the relationship between aesthetics and planning control

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PRESS DIGESTMain News

Guardian MARPLAN gives Government 2% lead - 41/39/8/SDP7.

Mirror claims D/Transport gave a warning about the kind of bomb which brought down the Lockerbie airliner only two days before the disaster - but Paul Channon made no mention of it in his statement.

Today and Express claim their reporters' investigation brought action from Government.

John Biffen says the Express must be congratulated.

New legislation to tighten up security at airports pledged in your letter to John Prescott.

You reject call for an inquiry into Lockerbie bomb warning.

You call for Nelson Mandela to be freed in surprise meeting with Pik Botha.

Spanish police representative insists IRA gang was tracked to Gibraltar and British authorities then informed they were unarmed and without explosives. FCO rejects story.

Chancellor aims for 20p tax - and Star says he proposes to stay in office until he achieves it. Brands health campaigners as "hysterical" over his failure to impose higher tax on alcohol and cigarettes.

Prince Philip, in Toronto, says fish and chips can damage your health.

Kenneth Clarke hints at a two tier system of eye tests when free NHS tests end. Opticians and blind organisations attack idea.

Times - Royal College of Physicians threaten to withdraw training recognition for junior doctor posts in hospital departments where a medical audit has not been held; leader says the possibility that taxpayers and patients might like to know the death rate under the knife of different surgeons has been given scant consideration.

Mail says Edwina Currie is being allowed to use D/Health room telephone, and with access to staff and records, to write her memoirs.



PRESS DIGEST

House of Lords EC committee will deal a fresh blow to the Government's green image today in a report condemning the condition of waste incineration plants (Times).

Pamella Bordes, the high-class call-girl who worked as a researcher in the Commons, says her secrets could bring down the Government and that the City would grind to a halt.

Police and immigration officers authorised to start arresting next week known members or supporters of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards living in Britain (Times).

Leading Iranian banker told to leave Britain in security clampdown over Rushdie affair following discovery of his forged passport at his flat.

Muslim fanatics warn pop star Madonna that her life would be in danger if she visited an Islamic country because she kisses a black Christ in a video - and Muslims regard Jesus as a prophet (Sun).

Pay strike at Shorts coincides with visit by those interested in buying it.

Government scientists warn of dangers of Radon gas in houses.

MOD tells MMC that revised GEC/Siemens bid for Plessey would still pose considerable threat to competition (FT).

British Aerospace says Saudi deals could earn £50billion.

British Aerospace could offer Honda a stake in Rover under plans to strengthen relationships between the 2 companies (Independent).

Rover returns profit of £65.7million - best for 10 years.

Labour reiterate claims that the taxpayer was cheated when BAe took over Rover. Times Business Pages say that if it had not been for the purchases of Royal Ordnance and Rover, BAe would not be looking too clever at all. Making money certainly seems easier to BAe than making aircraft.

Government plans to farm out most of its non-military telecommunications traffic to the private sector (FT).

Hillsdown Holdings UK egg and poultry profits return 37% increase in pre-tax profits at £150.9million; said to have been shaved by £8million because of egg scare.



PRESS DIGEST

University lecturers reject a doubled pay offer of 7% and refuse to call off exam boycott (Times).

A new CTC for Dartford will be the biggest in the country (Independent).

Leader of National Association of Schoolmasters advises young people not to consider teaching as a profession because their status is at an all-time low (Times).

Select Committee says MOD procurement executive is seriously undermanned in key areas (Times).

You reinforce your determination to force through water privatisation by unveiling free shares deal for industry's 45,000 workers.

Express critical of Michael Howard for permitting rises of 22% by private water companies after insisting of rises of no more than 10%.

Mail leader also critical of release of private water companies price increases on Budget day. This is the most dog-eared trick in the bumper book of Ministerial dodges. And it always fails.

Labour moves to exploit government embarrassment over the 22% average price rises announced by private water companies. Downing Street dismisses reports that you are critical of Michael Howard; but you are clearly concerned that the Government is not getting its message across (FT).

Lord Chancellor accuses judges and barristers of not giving his reforms a fair hearing and of hypocrisy.

Lord Chancellor delivers one of his most forceful attacks on the Bar effectively accusing it of stifling the views of barristers who did not oppose the Government's reforms (Times).

PAC says patients are more likely to die having operations in some parts of the country than others; wants action to put right shortcomings.

Robert Maxwell sacks Sir John Hoskyns as director of Mirror company because of his speech about Europe.

Maxwell now says he plans a much delayed autumn launch for his new The European newspaper.



PRESS DIGEST

Paul Foot, in Mirror, says a property developer photographed with the Home Secretary and Jonathan Aitken at a Thanet Conservative dinner, has bought an old people's home from a Christian charity and evicted the old folk.

Man who killed 7 month old daughter by shaking her to death escapes with 18 month suspended sentence after pleading guilty to manslaughter. Express describes it as the crazy face of justice.

Judge Pickles, in article in Mail, says Judges will strike down the wicked, but they can do nothing without witnesses who have the courage to do their duty. He was right to jail woman witness who refused to give evidence, he says.

Elderly woman killed by high speed police car - sixth victim of police car chases in three weeks, though rest involved vehicles being chased.

Wiltshire vicar and wife lost three daughters in fire.

Norman Tebbit blames Government's present difficulties on personnel weaknesses at the head of administration, and calls for a new strong man at Central Office and says you are missing the behind-the-scenes co-ordinating genius of Lord Whitelaw (Times).

EFTA decides to seek closer ties with EC before 1992 (Times).

23 nationals in Europe agree to crack down on satellite TV pornography and violence, following earlier EC agreement.

Government's battle to keep heavier lorries off British roads until the late 1990s appears doomed (FT).

Briton and 32 other people charged in Kuwait with plotting to overthrow Government.

Peaceful revolution begins in Hungary where long suppressed democratic movement breaks into open on first celebration of traditional National Day since 1948.

Gorbachev admits he has not found the answer to Russia's chronic food shortages.

West outraged as UN clears Iraw of massacring Kurds (Times).



PRESS DIGESTBUDGET

Star agrees with Chancellor that critic of his decision not to put up taxes on cigarettes or drink are hysterical. Had he done so inflation spiral would have gone up.

Sun - Yes. I was a ram-bore, but my Budget was right says Nigel as shares slip. Leader says Kinnock deserves credit for stopping Jim Sillars' "cheap stunt". The posturing antics of the SNP are a pain in the kilt but in elections and referendum Scots vote for the union because they know when they are best off.

Mirror says Budget was punched from both sides of House. John Smith accuses Chancellor of helping foreigners at Britain's expense and John Biffen says his policies will cost the Government the next election unless he changes course.

Today - Nigel defends 'Killer' Budget. Leader says Chancellor seemed almost to go out of his way yesterday to make himself look even more foolish than he had managed to do on Budget day.

Mail - Sketchwriter says that while Chancellor has got some things wrong John Smith and other Labour economic wizards find it pitifully difficult to mount the anti-Lawson case. News report: We must beat inflation before taxes are cut, Nitel tells 'standstill' Budget critics. Another story says that people paying domestic staff in cash face a new tax crackdown.

Telegraph leads with 20p income tax still the target, says Lawson.

Times - Chancellor predicts interest rates are now close to their peak; leader says an austere Budget is what the nation knows it needs in the long-term, but restraint brings political risk. This summer the Government can expect the opinion polls to make disagreeable reading particularly with the difficulties over water and electricity privatisation and the dogged resistance by the professions to legal reform. For the first time in 10 years the Government could find itself faced by a real opposition and in the context of its own difficulties, that will not make for an easy Tory passage to the next election.

FT - Chancellor says that any reduction in interest rates depends on a showdown in M0 monetary growth and a firm pound. He stresses the Government's determination to lower inflation will not permit a devaluation of sterling. Sam Brittan criticises Budget for not being sufficiently monetarist.



PRESS DIGEST

While motorists flooded garages and motoring organisations about switching to unleaded petrol, the RAC and MPs were among the slowest to take note of the Government's campaign to convert to cleaner fuel (Times).

Guardian referring to D/Environment figures that Britain has a record trade deficit in building materials says there is not much evidence of a supply side miracle here.

LOCKERBIE/AIRPORT SECURITY

Mirror, following up its front page lead on D/Transport's warning of a Lockerbie type bomb threat two days before the event says Paul Channon has been economical with the truth over warnings issued by his Department.

Today says it is proud to have played a vital part in bringing the Government to its senses over airport security.

Express leads with "Airports: we get action" - Thatcher orders tough security curbs after Express revelations. Leader says the Government's response to its reporter's revelations of security lapses will go far to calming public fears. We should be pressing other Governments to adopt similar measures.

Mail leader ignores security and goes for safety. It says there has to be more traffic discipline in the sky since the skies over Europe are congested.

LAWYERS' REFORM

Today says the behaviour of lawyers, like that of GPs threatening to withdraw from the NHS, is not what it expects from professions. Their knee jerk resistance will make most people think they have no arguments to put and offer the best evidence that the Government's reforms are right.

PIK BOTHA

Express - Thatcher in plea to let Mandela go. Raises speculation you will meet South African Ministers in Southern Africa.

FT diary claims that there will be no Foreign & Commonwealth Office representative on the VC-10 when you go to Africa. An official at the FCO said "Charles is there to bat for us".



PRESS DIGEST

Mail page 1 lead - Maggie: Free Mandela now. it's time for a change in South Africa, she says. Leader says you sensed this was the moment to give some timely advice. If they are going to heed anybody outside their laager, South Africans will listen to you who believes jaw jaw is better than sanctions war with the Boers.

Times - Your meeting with Pik Botha was the first official meeting with South African Government Minister since 1984.

Times notes that the turmoil created by President Botha's power struggle concealed from public view when he took his place in parliament yesterday for the first time since January.

Telegraph - Briefing on Botha for Thatcher.

Independent - All the elements of an international peace initiative on South Africa seemed in place last night after an unexpected meeting between you and Pik Botha and an announcement in Moscow that it did not want to escalate revolutionary violence in South Africa.

POLITICS

Under the heading "Mid term or terminal?" Ronald Butt in the Times says you and your Government have been through bad times before. But they were different in kind from the present and that you would be mistaken to think that the difficult waters you are entering can be sailed as easily as in your first two Parliaments.

Labour signals that it will put its post-Budget attack on the Government's economic management at the centre of its campaign for local elections in May and European elections in June FT.

Senior Tories are threatening to rebel on child benefits being frozen (Independent).



MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DEM: Mr Fowler speaks at Nottingham Chamber of Commerce dinner
- DEN: Mr Parkinson addresses World Energy conference, British National Committee Energy Forum dinner, Marriott Hotel, London
- DOE: Mr Ridley addresses Economic Forestry Commission lunch on "The Environment"
- DTp: Mr Channon addresses and Lord Brabazon attends British Ports Federation annual lunch, Hotel Inter-Continental, London
- DEM: Mr Nicholls launches Hairdressing Training Association as a National Training Manager
- DEM: Mr Lee lunches with American Chamber of Commerce at English Speaking Union, London
- DH: Mr Freeman visits hospitals on the Isle of Wight
- DOE: Mr Howard visits Manchester and visits North West Water Authority; later has lunch with local authorities
- DOE: Lord Caithness opens RIMNET Centre, London
- DOE: Mrs Bottomley attends launch of Merseyside Tidy Britain Group, Merseyside
- DTI: Mr Atkins visits Royal Aeronautical Establishments, Farnborough
- HO: Mr Patten attends WH Smith Literary Awards ceremony, South Bank Centre, London
- HO: Mr Renton opens and gives keynote speech at Cable and Satellite Show Olympic, London
- MAFF: Baroness Trumpington attends British Food Farming seminar, Staffordshire
- OAL: Mr Luce addresses Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme reception, London
- SO: Lord Sanderson addresses Scottish Crofters Union conference, Benbecula, Western Isles
- WO: Mr Roberts attends Economic Forestry Group lunch, London
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- DTI: Mr Maude visits Switzerland
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MINISTERS (PRESS INTERVIEWS)

HMT: Mr Lawson appears on BBC Radio 2's "Jimmy Young Show"

DEM: Mr Nicholls interviewed by 'Sharp End' programme, Channel 4; later interviewed by 'Personnel Today'

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TV AND RADIO

'This Week': Thames (20.30)

'Question Time': BBC 1 (22.00) with Robin Cook, Sarah Hogg, Lord Jenkins and John Major

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