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PRIME MINISTER

Visit to Liverpool

I had an irate call from David Alton in whose constituency, Mossley Hill, contains the Garden Festival. He had heard radio reports that you were visiting Liverpool and 'phoned to seek confirmation. I said I was unable to confirm or deny these reports.

He made two complaints. First, generally he felt that a visit by you without giving local MPs the normal advance warning undercut the position of those, like himself, who advocated the normal course of responsible politics. (MPs have been sent a letter by Michael which will arrive tomorrow).

Secondly, and more specifically he has views on how the Garden Festival site should be developed when the Festival ends. I believe the argument is whether the southern half of the site should be returned to the City Council or, as David Alton prefers, is retained by MDC as a permanent park or garden site. He has made representations, including a 30 minute meeting, to Patrick Jenkin when he handed in a petition with 140,000 signatures. I expect he will go to the Garden Festival tomorrow in the hope of meeting you as you go round.

Andrew Turnbull

1.10.84

PRIME MINISTER

MS

This appeared around 4 pm in the Liverpool Echo. Departments and ourselves have refused to confirm or deny it.

Mr. Keva Coombes, Chairman of the Merseyside County Council (Labour controlled, to be rate-capped, and then abolished) reacted to this report by putting in a request to meet you for 5 - 10 minutes. This could be accommodated, just before the meeting with the Liverpool Councillors.

I suggest you discuss this with Mr. Jenkin on the plane, though I think there are good reasons to accept. Mr. Coombes could then be informed as soon as we arrive.

AT

1 October 1984

758 CABOFF G
108108 MERTAS G
01-OCT-84 17:21

TO ANDREW TURNBULL
FROM DENNIS MORRISON MTF
MAGGIE FOR MERSEYSIDE

LABOUR'S AWAY AT THE SEASIDE, SO THE COAST IS CLEAR FOR PREMIER

BY PERER XXXXX PETER PHELPS LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDITOR

THE PRIME MINISTER IS PLANNING A SURPRISE VISIT TO LIVERPOOL
TOMORROW

SPECULATION WAS MOUNTING TODAY THAT MRS THATCHER WOULD ACCOMPANY
HER ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY PATRICK JENKIN ON A TRIP TO THE ALBERT
DOCK VILLAGE COMPLEX AND, POSSIBLY, TO THE GARDEN FESTIVAL.

BUT ANY APPEARANCE BY MRS THATCHER IN LIVERPOOL IS BOUND TO BE
SHROUDED IN SECRECY.

NO OFFICIAL SOURCES WOULD CONFIRM OR DENY THE REPORT.

THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION WHICH HANDLES MINISTERIAL VISITS
REFERRED ENQUIRIES TO THE NO 10 DOWNING STREET PRESS OFFICE,
WHERE A SPOKESMAN SAID 'WE NEVER DISCLOSE MRS THATCHER'S DIARY
IN ADVANCE. IT IS A MATTER OF STRICT POLICY'.

BUT MR JENKIN'S MOVEMENTS ARE USUALLY REVEALED IN ADVANCE AND
THE COI WAS MAINTAINING A CURIOUS SILENCE ABOUT TOMORROW'S VISIT.

A VISIT BY MRS THATCHER WOULD BE BVXXXXX BOUND TO
CAUSE CONTROVERSY IN LABOUR DOMINATED MERSEYSIDE.

BUT IT WAS SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD ATTEND THE INTERNATIONAL

GARDEN FESTIVAL AT SOME STAGE AND THE WEEK OF THE LABOUR PARTY
CONFERENCE IN BLACKPOOL, WHEN MOST LABOUR LEADERS ARE AWAY,
WOULD SEEM AN OPPORTUNE TIME.

MRS THATCHER HAS NOT BEEN TO LIVERPOOL SINCE THE TOXTETH RIOTS IN
1981.

108108 MERTAS G
758 CABOFF G

JK

WAVERTREE TECHNOLOGY PARK

1. Sir John Clark (Chairman)

Age 58, Chairman and Chief Executive, Plessey plc, since 1970. Educated Harrow and Cambridge. Has been associated with Plessey since 1949 and been involved with various subsidiaries within the group. Director Banque Nationale de Paris, Vice President of Institute of Work Managers and Engineering Employers Federation.

2. Leader, Merseyside County Council

Councillor Keva Coombes, Leader since March 1982. Aged 34, Solicitor (formally partner) in Liverpool practice. Born in Kent, educated University of East Anglia. Resident in Liverpool since 1971. Liverpool City Councillor 1976-80. Merseyside County Councillor from 1981. Chairman of Passenger Transport Committee 1981/82, heavily involved in reducing transport fares. Elected Leader in March 1982 when previous Leader (Councillor Stuart-Cole) resigned during lead up to budget 1982/83. Not very forceful in private company though is capable of making rousing political speech. Appears to be soft left.

3. Leader, Liverpool City Council

Councillor John Hamilton, Retired Liverpool Schoolmaster. Served on City Council since 1959. Said to be in the hands of the left wing.

4. Chief Executive, English Estates

Tony Pender. Age 42. Since qualifying as a chartered surveyor in 1964 has had a career in the public service. Appointed Chief Executive of English Estates in 1979.

5. Geoffrey Forshaw (Chief Executive)

Age 61. Whole life devoted to telecommunications manufacturing industry with extensive home and overseas experience. From 1973 has held various staff positions within the H.Q. function of Plessey Telecommunications, culminating in the post of Director of Technology.