

VISIT TO CUSTOMS AND EXCISE: DRUGS

You said you would like to see the work of HM Customs on drugs.

Customs have advised that Heathrow is far and away the best place to see the range of their work in this field within a shortish space of time. Hartley Booth has conducted an early reconnaissance visit, and thinks that you should have a most interesting visit, and that it will bring great encouragement to the Customs services. The best time to see the operation is early in the morning, and a 9 o'clock start would be ideal. About one and a half hours should be long enough to see a sufficient range of work of the Customs in this area.

We have ear-marked a slot in the diary on ^{Friday} 9 August. So far this is still a light week. You are aiming to depart for your holiday on the following Monday. It is, of course, into the holiday season, but the key Customs people will be available on that date. You would need to leave No. 10 at about 8.00 am and could expect to be back here at about 11.30 am.

The police would also welcome the chance to arrange a visit to show you some of the work they do in this field. New Scotland Yard have offered to put on a presentation about their intelligence and investigative work in the UK, and their links with Customs' activities. They believe they could convey a good national picture to you in that way. If you wished, we could arrange this visit for the afternoon of the same day as your visit to Heathrow. I think we should set aside another one and a half hours, although there would be minimum travelling time.

Content that we should proceed with setting up the arrangements for a visit to Heathrow in the morning of 9 August?

Content also that we should arrange for a visit to New Scotland Yard that afternoon for a presentation of police work on enforcement?

Mark Addison

MARK ADDISON
24 June 1985

*Not that date. I
want to spend 2 or 3 days
at Solihull - not*

Cardhu.^{CR.}

9/8
MEAT has put
rate in 5 P.M.
CR.

When could we find a slot
of 1 1/2 hours, 9 - 10.30, on a
Friday morning for Henderson
Drugs visit?

We shall also be looking for a
hour and a half one day to
visit New Scotland Yard to
have a look at the drugs work.
Would you identify a possible
slot for that too pl?

MEAT 24/6

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PRIME MINISTER

21 June 1985

VISIT TO CUSTOMS AT HEATHROW AIRPORT

Following your suggestion, I visited Heathrow on Wednesday 19 June 1985.

The best time for a visit is between 7 and 10 am when the largest number of passengers arrive. As early as 9 am would be best but 9.30 am would be possible. Preferably a Friday otherwise a Saturday morning would be convenient. A 1½ hour visit is suggested.

The programme that we have sketched out covering the most interesting operations is as follows:

You would be greeted by the National Head of Customs, Angus Fraser, together with the experienced Collector at Heathrow, Dick Craggs. They will escort you through the rear of Terminal 3 to their covert operation with a sniffer dog. Through the familiar 'Nothing to Declare' entrance, you will see the inside of the customs passenger clearance office. Here there are interview rooms, a general office and detention rooms to hold those suspected of swallowing contraband.

In a separate building is the Control Centre with a radio, computer terminal, telephone, telex and record files which enable the customs to home in on suspect aeroplanes and individual passengers. You will then be taken across the

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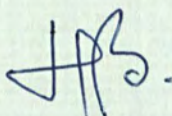
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airport firstly, to a press conference and customs exhibition, secondly, to a typical freight terminal, where boxes will be opened, and thirdly, to the Aladdin's Cave, where drug seizures are stored before they are burnt.

You will be impressed by the scale of the problem, by the enthusiasm of the officials and the need for better equipment.

Your visit will bring great encouragement to the Customs Service, who have not had such a visit from a Prime Minister before. Security is satisfied, and the Press Office have prepared a brief. Would you indicate whether you agree to this schedule. We will give you more details when the date is finalised.



HARTLEY BOOTH

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CF
Myrtle Gleason
MA 21/6

10 DOWNING STREET

MA

CR

Heathrow Visit.

Dates to avoid

8th July - 5th August (The Controller & National Head are away successively)

& 15th August.

JPB

NOTE FOR THE FILE

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO CUSTOMS AND EXCISE: DRUGS

The letter from Rachel Lomax (10 June) suggests Heathrow as the right location for this visit. Hartley Booth, Detectives and Press Office are going tomorrow to see the operation, and will report back on the appropriate time, duration and, if appropriate, preferable days of the week. ^{the visit.} We can then pursue the detailed arrangements, and find a suitable date with Angus Fraser's Private Office. The Home Office have also given advice on combining this with a visit to see police work on drugs (Hugh Taylor's letter of 17 June). They do not think this could be easily combined with a visit to Heathrow. The best place for the visit would be New Scotland Yard. This, of course, could be arranged relatively easily.

BF || When Hartley Booth has reported, and a provisional date has been identified for both visits, we shall need to put a submission up to the Prime Minister.

MVA

Mark Addison
18 June 1985

HO are pending advice,
hopefully for wife box. PL dt 14/6



MEA 12/6

10 DOWNING STREET

Robin Butler

Mark Addison

I agree

RB

11.6.

We now have the go ahead

from CoE Exec - see

Rechel Lomas letter attached
(10/6)

It may be possible to continue
an early morning visit with
a visit to see the police

expecting reality, and certifying
the whole thing to half a day.

If you agree, I will speak
to HO accordingly & submit
the proposal to the PM.

MA 11/6

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H. M. CUSTOMS AND EXCISE
CUSTOM HOUSE, HEATHROW AIRPORT LONDON
HOUNSLOW, MIDDLESEX
01-750-1504

H Booth Esq
Prime Ministers Office
No. 10 Downing Street
London SW1

CF

Plan with papers on
public drugs visit to
CAE advice. I think it
is to be by tomorrow.
MLP 13/8

10 June 1985

With reference to our telephone conversation on Friday, I write to confirm that we will expect you at Heathrow at 0900 hours on 19 June. On the assumption that you will be coming by car I think it would be best on that day if you first come to my office in the Custom House, which is on the North Side of the airport just off the A4. A rough map is attached to guide you on your way. We will then use an official car, which has the necessary airside security clearance to conduct you around those aspects of our preventive control measures which we think would interest the Prime Minister. No doubt Mark Addison will contact me if these arrangements are in any way unsatisfactory.

As requested I have copied this letter to the Minister of State, Treasury and Mark Addison.

R CRAGGS
Collector

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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

Mark Addison
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

10 June 1985

Dear Mark,

See A1
Thank you for your letter of 28 May in which you mentioned the Prime Minister's wish to see some aspects of Customs operations to prevent the illegal importation of drugs.

Although we note that the Prime Minister's visit need not be restricted to London, the fact is that Heathrow is far and away the best location to see the main range of Customs operations in this field within a shortish space of time.

The Collector London Airports and his staff would do much of the presentation, but the Chairman of HM Customs and Excise, Mr Angus Fraser, would be happy to accompany the Prime Minister during this visit. Perhaps suitable dates could be arranged in consultation with his Private Office.

The best time for the Prime Minister's visit would be fairly early in the morning when the flow of passenger traffic is at its peak. This would give her a good impression of the scale and nature of the control problem with which the Customs have to cope.

Some of the activities which the Prime Minister would be seeing are rather sensitive, so it would be very desirable to limit the press and photographic coverage to a single session. Perhaps this could be discussed between your Press Office and that of HM Customs and Excise when details of the visit have been finalised.

I am copying this to Hugh Taylor (Home Office).

*Yours ever
Rachel*

RACHEL LOMAX
Principal Private Secretary

MR BOOTH

DRUGS

Thank you for your note of 5 June.

On the WHO Conference, if the suggestion is that the Prime Minister should lead this office, we shall need a proposal from DHSS/FCO. It won't surprise you to know that March is going to be a difficult month.

On the visit to Customs and Excise, to look at their drugs operation, I should prefer that any briefing visit by you should await the response to our letter to the Treasury. Presumably we are expecting a response from Mr Hayhoe, supporting the idea of a visit and suggesting Heathrow, shortly.

As you know, we have no objections to your visiting a drugs squad on a familiarisation visit in the near future. I am glad you are keeping your lines clear with the Home Office Private Office. We shall need to pursue the possibility of the Prime Minister seeing police work on drugs at first hand, in whatever way seems appropriate, when we get the go-ahead from Customs and Excise.

MARK ADDISON

6 June 1985

MR ADDISON

5 June 1985

DRUGS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

1. John Patten's office are eager to put on record that the WHO have sparked and are leading an initiative in which Britain is to host a major international conference next March in London.

2. Mr Godfrey, the Deputy Secretary at Customs investigation, has invited me to check out and brief on operations. Barney Hayhoe confirms Heathrow will be the place for a visit. Jean Caines usefully pointed out last time on Suffolk House that it would be helpful if we went together prior to any Prime Ministerial visit on other occasions. I suggest, as Heathrow is easy to reach, that I make an initial visit and go again with Press if necessary.

3. Chief Constable Ron Broome (Chairman of the Chief Constables' Committee on Drugs) would be happy for me to join a drug squad in Bristol. I propose a visit in the next fortnight. The Chief of the Metropolitan Police Drugs Squad confirms that a visit to an operational drugs squad is totally unsuitable for any Minister, but it is possible for them to prepare a "presentation" - samples of drugs, forensic exhibits etc. I am keeping the HO Private Office informed of this direct contact. In both cases the police are content to speak, etc. Mr Broome

If the report is to be made is to lead me shall need a proposal for NP/FGS

I should prefer that any briefing visit meeting should await the response to our letter to Ch/Bach.

We shall need to make a decision of a visit to see police within days who will give the go ahead.

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invited me and the Drugs Squad Chief Inspector telephoned me yesterday.

4. The Ministerial Drugs Meeting will be at 10.30 am today. I will inform you of any relevant decisions.

Hm.

HARTLEY BOOTH

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