

cc Mr Ingham
Mr Vereker
Mr Lankester

MR GAFFIN

HEREFORD AND LEOMINSTER

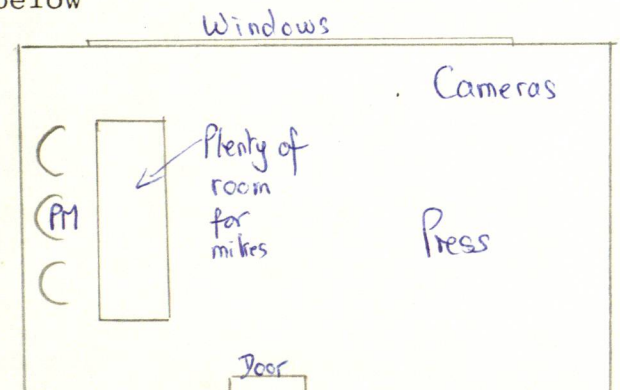
I visited Hereford and Leominster on Friday 5 December to survey the press arrangements for the Prime Minister's visit on Friday 12 December.

1. Bulmers

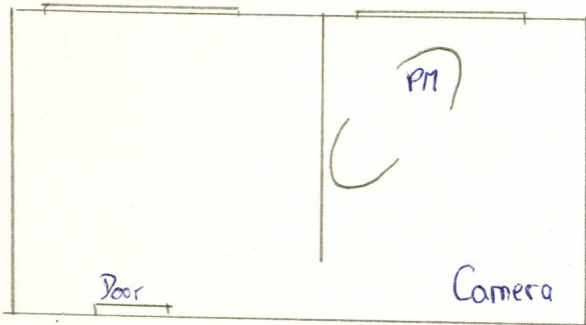
The programme is tightly structured (see attached programme A) and John Hackett has the press arrangements well in hand (see attached B). The London-based journalists will arrive at 11 am ie after the Prime Minister's tour begins; Hackett is sure that the process of registration and issue of press badges etc will take half an hour, when it will be time to take the press party over to the bottling shed/warehouse area to hear the speech.

Some specific points which were outstanding have now been resolved, as follows:

- i. The cars will stop just inside the Bulmers site to take Peter Prior (Bulmers Chairman) and John Vereker aboard. It is suggested that Mr. Thatcher leave the Prime Minister's car (to allow Mr Prior on board to describe the tour) and travel with Mr. Vereker in the Bulmers Rolls.
- ii. Camera crews will set up to record the vat-naming and the speech.
- iii. The Board Room will be set out for the press conference as below



- iv. A room for TV interviews is available across the corridor from the Board Room, as below:



- v. Press facilities include 8 telephones, 1 telex, 2 typewriters and 5 guides to ferry people about. COI Birmingham will be making one or two people available to assist.
- vi. The Lady Mayor of Hereford will be in the foyer at Bulmers Head Office, bringing with her the city's visitor's book for the Prime Minister to sign. They should have three or four minutes together to eliminate any idea of a snub to the Lady Mayor (the Prime Minister having turned down an invitation to the town hall).
- vii. Bulmers were anxious for the Prime Minister to meet the employees' council (40 of them); they suggested five minutes over coffee before the press conference. They have now agreed that this is impracticable and that, as an alternative, various members of the council will be presented to the Prime Minister at various points (their work sites) on the tour; the remainder will meet her in the ~~foyer~~ *canteen, just off the foyer.*
- viii. Bulmers half-yearly results will be published on Wednesday. They assured me that there would be no cause for embarrassment to the Prime Minister in them.

ix. The Prime Minister should be advised to wear low-heeled shoes for the factory tour, as she will be required to negotiate several flights of open wooden stairs, including one particularly steep descent of about 30 steps.

x. I have heard from Bulmers this evening that the Hereford Labour Party is planning a demo to coincide with the visit and, more seriously that the local paper is carrying TGWU allegations of 'intimidation' of the Bulmers workforce in respect of the Prime Minister's visit. Bulmers have strongly repudiated the allegations and stressed that this is a Prime Ministerial, not a political, visit.

2. Shire Hall

I did not visit the Shire Hall (venue for a party lunch) nor, indeed, the SAS barracks.

3. Paradise Court, Leominster

The 'plan' (if such it be - a haphazard suggestion from the Party in conjunction with a somewhat authoritarian council - of which more later) was for the Prime Minister to visit two completed units of this old people's housing complex and hand over the keys to a third. I asked if the senior citizens involved were happy to be the subject of publicity; the Council's reply was "They'll be glad enough to get a council house"; I insisted that the people involved be consulted on 1) publicity, 2) the fact of a Conservative Prime Minister handing over the keys. I now understand that she will be invited to visit one completed unit and hand over the keys to another, and that the residents are content.

In view of the fact that a general public walkabout is deemed undesirable I stressed that the site (which is very small - perhaps one-tenth the size of the Habinteg estate at Southwark) be closed to all except residents, their families and people with a legitimate interest eg the contractor. There is a very sympathetic police/press liaison officer, Inspector Derek Griffiths (who will join the party at Bulmers), who is prepared to brief his officers to follow the same routine as was practised in Southwark viz to let photographers into the units two or three at a time. The local Conservative press officer, Nick Young, will be on hand to vouch for the local media.

4. Rankin Conservative Club, Leominster

The entrance to the club is in the market square, which will be filled with market stalls and their rubbish, Friday being the big market day locally. It will be necessary for the Prime Minister to walk some 100 yards to the door. The Council and the Conservative agent were talking of closing the market early and making the traders clean up the area before she arrived. I made the point, rather forcibly, that the Prime Minister is not The Queen and will not be offended at picking her way through orange boxes and chip papers to get to the door and that, moreover, she would be extremely angry at the thought that small businessmen had been interrupted in their trading (2 weeks before Christmas!) in order to make the place look tidy. We left it that the Council would have a quiet word with the traders and ask them to try to keep their litter under control on the day.

Final Points

1. Mr Wolstenholme was not forthcoming on the subject of the inflatable pig; I understand political office are pursuing.
2. I was approached this evening by "The Grocer" magazine who were asking if the Prime Minister's speech at Bulmers would include any reference to the French and German attitudes to cider (which they call apple wine and which their import rules restrict); Mr Vereker tells me that although briefing is available to the Prime Minister it will not feature in the speech.
3. In general I found it very difficult to know who was responsible for what and how far I could go without exceeding my authority. There was no problem with Bulmers, where John Hackett has things under tight control and the party organisation was seen as gate-crashing but for Paradise Court the arrangements were extremely haphazard and it was difficult to impose some sort of structure without giving offence. I don't know how far I succeeded here.

Liz D.

LIZ DRUMMOND
Press Office
8 December 1980