



**Bognor Regis &  
Littlehampton  
Constituency Party**

**QUARTERLY  
e - NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2006**

---

web-site: [www.brl-tonlibdems.org.uk](http://www.brl-tonlibdems.org.uk) e-mail: [info@brl-tonlibdems.org.uk](mailto:info@brl-tonlibdems.org.uk)

---

## **EVENTS**

71

### **Saturday 12th August.**

**10.30am Coffee Morning at 4 Selborne Road, Littlehampton**

All the usual features! Paul welcomes you for light refreshments, raffle, 2nd hand book stall, etc. Entrance £1

### **Sunday 20th August - from 12 noon**

**East Arun Lib Dems - BARBECUE**

at the home of John & Nandy Richards,

Spike House, The Street, East Preston.

£7.00 includes a glass of wine, delicious food, scintillating conversation and a refreshing dip in the pool!

Bookings to Margaret Crush 01903 773060

or John & Nandy Richards 01903 786879.

### **Friday 27th October.**

**FISH & CHIP SUPPER** at Bersted Green Court,

Hazel Road, Bognor Regis

Details from: Cllr. Francis Oppler 01243 824382

### **Saturday 18th November**

**Bingo Afternoon at the Wick Hall, Wick Street, Littlehampton.**

Doors open 1.30pm for "Eyes Down" at 2.30pm

Please ring Cllr. David Jones on 01903 722957,

10 Joyce Close, Littlehampton BN17 7JG

### **Saturday 25th November. 2.00pm**

**Christmas Fair** at Bersted Green Court, Hazel Rd, Bognor Regis.

Bric-a-Brac, New Condition Clothes, Books, Raffle, Cakes etc.,

Tombola, Teas & light refreshments etc., all staffed by members.

You are ALL urged to come and support their efforts.

Opens at 2.00pm. (**Helpers 12.30 pm please**)

Details from: Cllr. Francis Oppler 01243 824382

# IN PRAISE OF MING AS LEADER

by Margaret Boulton

Prior to the leadership election, Ming let it be known that he was not interested in “spin”. “What you see and hear is what you get” and so it has proved to be. Thinking followers of the Labour and Conservative parties were deeply concerned that Menzies Campbell would be elected as our leader, being revered by most people in the country, particularly for his common sense approach to the important decisions of foreign policy in the last few years. The other parties, having clung to the 2-party system, are now strongly contesting the middle ground, maybe realising, at last, that in the 21st century British people want strong leadership, not meaning extreme, which only ends in polarisation when so little is achieved.



The other two party leaders may be young, well-educated, articulate and highly polished media performers; the one thing they don't have, unlike Ming, is the vast experience and wisdom which come with age, having had to face many of life's challenges and choices. (He could have become a High Court judge in 1996.)

As a life-long member of the Liberal Party, through all its changes of name and leaders, I have found the biggest attribute that the Party has shown over the years is common sense, from the Beveridge plan starting the NHS, to the independence of the Bank of England. It seems we have had the good ideas but sadly, because of the current political system, we have had to rely on other people to implement them. Nevertheless they finally came to fruition. The latest of our good ideas is to raise the lowest paid workers, (those earning less than £10,000 per annum,) out of the tax bracket. This section of society pays a much higher proportion of their income in tax, relying on state hand-outs to pay for the bare necessities of life. How ludicrously unfair and demeaning is that? Particularly when they often do the most essential work for the smooth running of society.

The gap between rich and poor is ever widening and the current situation must also be extremely expensive to administer. As we have seen with the CSA debacle by the same token, it would be helpful to find an effective way of dealing with the multi-million pound avoidance or evasion of tax, call it what you will, bearing in mind the Government doesn't actually have any money and it seems therefore, only fair that citizens, who enjoy a comparatively civilized and decent way of life, should pay their dues. I do believe that hard work, good ideas and innovation should be highly rewarded. contd./

It is much fairer than the huge bonuses paid to senior staff of failing companies or even celebrities, whose contribution to society is extremely questionable.

Democracy does not come cheap, it is a very sophisticated concept. Jeremy Thorpe said, many years ago, that the country needs a mixed economy. If one is in business, profit must be the first motive otherwise the business will not flourish. However, having employees as partners may help to iron out some of the difficulties, balancing the interest of shareholders. The other side of the mix, something which I call service, i.e. transport - look at the mess of railways (not Labour's fault entirely); NHS - current arguments about hospital closures; education - privately financed academies. These services should be available to all, efficiency not profit being the motive. Change is inevitable to keep up with technology in all fields, especially with the growing concern of globalisation and environmental matters, it is how we manage that change that is important. However, radical change every few months, to satisfy short term goals, cannot be sustained by any organisation, state or private. Let's have a real consultation, serious consideration by all parties and experienced professional people dealing with their highly specialised areas of work and not ministers who stay for a short time and then are moved on. As with local councillors, MPs and therefore Ministers, are supposed to make policy which should then be implemented by civil servants who are not there to make policy. However, where there is weak leadership, the media, particularly the press, will rush in with all its distortions and make policy, especially when decisions seem to be largely following the leadership of the USA, namely Iraq, Israel and the WTO, Rendition etc.

The current domestic policy seems to go for expensive experiments and then ditch them e.g. - Police Force amalgamation; HIPS (Housing Information Property Survey) - mainly kicked into the long grass; £60m spent on seizing criminal assets - only £6m recovered; 120 hours on fox-hunting which is now being regularly flouted; the immigration shambles - total lack of accountability; much derided regional assemblies, which, of course, we already have; part of the system of non-elected 'quangos', of which there are far too many. These seem to compromise the "great and good", often highly paid but completely faceless, making decisions affecting all our lives but not answerable to the voters in any way.

Ming shows all signs of having survived the initial barrage of criticism and is now beginning to establish a strong radical but honest regime for the future. Encouraging, enabling and supporting the younger and very talented pool of present Liberal Democrat MPs. He is showing the way for economically living in the real world of globalisation, but not losing sight of our ideals. Hopefully, in the next Parliament, he will be in a very powerful position as our Leader to influence the important changes that our country so desperately needs.

## MATTHEW RETURNS TO SHADOW CABINET



Our Leader, 'Ming', has appointed Matthew Taylor M.P. (Truro) as the Lib-Dem Shadow Minister for Social Exclusion. Matthew will also co-ordinate cross-portfolio policies for poorer communities. As an M.P. from Cornwall, which is one of the poorest counties in the country, it will be an appropriate job for Matthew. Ming said, "Matthew is one of the most experienced and talented M.P.'s of his generation. I am delighted to welcome him back to the Shadow Cabinet where he will play a full and vitally important role in our campaign against poverty and social exclusion."

B.R.

## THE AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Any fully paid up member can attend 'on the day' by producing your Membership Card (no more need for a photo as they are now issued 'on the spot').

The cost is normally £15 for a whole day, and £11 for an afternoon session only..

Mark the dates in your new diary NOW.... . ...see you there!



The Main  
Party Conference  
16th - 21st September  
BRIGHTON

# “Succeeding In Sutton” or “The Crazy Doorbells In Clockhouse”

by President, Barbara Roberts.

As promised, I have compiled a diary of election week in the London Borough of Sutton, where I went the first week in May to help my friends. Before I tell all (well, the things I can print here!), I will give you the background. Lib Dems have been in control of Sutton for 20 years. They have contended with government budget cuts year on year making life challenging. Regardless, they have won ‘Charter Mark’ awards (under John Major, remember him?). Also many awards for re-cycling; being made a Beacon Council and awarded 4 stars, an accolade for being one of the best councils in the country. The ward where I helped, ‘The Wrythe’ is where our friend, Sue Stears has been Councillor since 1990 along with Roger Thistle (Thistle by name, but not by nature - except on election day, but more on that later!!) Roger’s day job, by the way, being caseworker for Tom Brake M.P. in the constituency office just down the road. Long-serving Councillor Sheila Siggins retired and moved to Australia just before the election; a great loss which meant a vacancy in ‘The Wrythe’. This was ably filled by Sue’s husband Colin as the 3rd candidate. A poisonous Tory campaign had ensued which had to be dealt with. Labour only had three seats on the council which were looking precarious in the St. Hellier ward which had been thoroughly ‘worked’ and leafleted by Roger’s two sons who were press-ganged into helping, so I’m told!

## Diary of events

Tuesday - Arrived at Sue & Colin’s about 6pm to find Sue in ‘high-dudgeon’. The tellers list (people to be on duty at polling stations) had not been completed yet. Over dinner, various phone calls were made and thankfully, helpers were found. Colin was out on work related business and Clare (their daughter) was up to her eyes with her degree dissertation. Sue and I tackled paperwork. At 11.30 pm Roger phoned to see if everything was done. He lives dangerously, that man!! We were too tired to give the answer he deserved as tension was mounting by then. Bed about midnight, busy day tomorrow.

Wednesday - Hot day (in more ways than one!). Clare went to her Grandma’s to study in peace. Wise move, Clare. Roger arrived to set up his computer on Sue’s dining table to find computer not compatible with Sue & Colin’s printer. He then started to live up to his name!!! Colin was at work so would not be available until evening. Sue and I decided it was a good time to go out delivering

“tomorrow is polling day” leaflets. We ascertained when it was safe to go back home when Roger was less ‘prickly’, by then with his own printer in situ and all up and running. Thank goodness! Sue had an appointment, so Roger and I escaped for a leisurely, peaceful lunch in a very nice hostelry. Afternoon extremely hot when Sue and I did more delivering. Took a cold drink break (non-alcoholic, of course!) then back out again - more blessed leaflets. By this time Colin was back from work and out with Roger at the other end of the ward. Sue and I were practically on our knees by then, only to discover Colin had a bad foot and was resting in M.P. Tom’s office! Whilst Roger had 300 leaflets still to deliver. Eventually the four of us staggered home where we ate bangers and mash on our laps because, yes you’ve guessed it, the dining table was full of computer paraphernalia. We just had to have some wine to relax (hic!) as we were pretty het up. 11.30pm, to bed, exhausted and wondering what Polling Day would bring.

Thursday, Polling Day - I was on polling duty at 7.am, no other representatives from other parties there. Back home (now the Committee Room) at 9.45am. Roger was living up to his name again as he couldn’t get into the election program on the computer, Colin was trying to help!!! Clare (who was not studying, today) and I beat a hasty retreat until M.P. Tom’s father, Mike arrived and sorted it out, (BLESS!). Time then for “Today is Polling Day” leaflets. Sue, Clare and I all went out delivering and again it was extremely hot. Sue had a slight accident when she pushed a gate open, only for the gate post to go also and she landed flat on the path as well, not too injured thank goodness..... ah! the joys of election day! We bought ice creams on the way back to cool down only to be spotted by a passing car ‘tooting’ at us. It contained M.P. Tom; we brandished leaflets to prove we were not ‘skiving’. A quick lunch then at the Riverside Cafe on the Durand Estate in the ward, and then back for another

two hours at the polling station where I started in the morning. By this time, Roger’s student son, Andrew, was constantly feeding ‘info’ into the computer. I found my time at the polling station a joy. The officers, council security staff and community wardens were outstanding all day and very helpful. Copious



*Colin making sense of the computer figures,  
Andrew Thistle (Roger’s son) amused by it all*

amounts of coffee given, which was wonderful. We were pulled out of 'telling' at 8.pm to be moved into another area deemed to be struggling. A quick glass of wine and slice of pizza and then off to an area in Wallington known as 'Clockhouse' approx. 8.45pm. The evening now descended into hysteria. Colin had gone to one part with a lady from Tom's office called Nirma; Sue and Clare were in another part. Roger and I arrived into a really chaotic situation. One doorbell we rung somehow started the neighbour's ringing!



*Roger taking a breather with a glass of water!!!*

The householder gave Roger a good talking to while I hid behind a tree uncontrollable with mirth. It was 9.30pm when hysterics took over so we picked up the others and went back to get ready for the count. Clare went to bed (had enough)! The count was done so speedily and efficiently. Firstly, joy as Lib Dems took all three Labour seats in the St. Hellier ward, wiping them off the council. Lib Dems lost some seats, which was inevitable, but the Tories, even though they took some of our seats looked really glum. More of that in Friday's diary as to the reason why. Sue, Colin and Roger won easily with majorities over the Tories of over 500 each, (to die for, 'eh'?, in Bognor Regis & Littlehampton?) Lib Dems now have a majority on the council of 10, a good working majority. I phoned home, Mum and Dad watching it all on TV and eager to know about 'The Wrythe'. What avids aren't they? Back home, Sue and Roger phoned Sheila in Australia with the result, she had been texting regularly throughout the campaign. We had tea and biscuits to relax a bit. Roger went home as dawn broke, glad it was just around the corner I should think! To bed at 4.45am tired but glad it's over.

Friday - 2 hours sleep, up at 7.am. The recycling collection waking me! Colin went into work, still on a high I suppose! Clare went off to Grandma's for more study. Sue and I cleared up and many phone calls made and received. In the afternoon, Roger was back in Tom's office. Sue and I went to the Civic Centre. I met two councillors who also had hilarious stories of door bells that wouldn't stop ringing (what is it about Sutton's doorbells??). Whilst Sue was in the Leader's office I met up with librarian, Trevor Knight (just awarded the O.B.E.)

who invited us to tea in his office along with Graham (Lord Tope of Sutton). This is where I found out why the Tories were glum. Graham told me 'they' had expected to take the whole council not just a few seats. The cheek of it! Sue



*All too much for Sue,  
and the cat as well, by the look of things!!*

and I dashed into the supermarket as we had to shop for dinner and get Roger to clear the table SOON! Quiet, pleasant, celebratory dinner, the three councillors and myself. Colin was home from work and surprisingly still on his feet! Much joking about me being their 'food taster' as the four of us

had eaten together all week and often travelled in the same car. Not wise!

By 11.30pm all comatose with exhaustion and hilarity (ok.... and the wine!).

Saturday - AM - Councillors had a group meeting so Colin was initiated into the ways of the 'Group' with his wife as 'Group Chair' (um!). Clare and I had time to catch up with a chat and get ready for the evening party.

Saturday - PM - The 'Thank-you' Party. An excellent speech from Leader, Sean Brennan. All the 32 councillors presented and photographed. Both M.P.s and his Lordship (Graham Tope) present. I received many thanks for going up to help, which was nice as I had really an enjoyable time and loads of fun although exhausting. Cllrs. Sue and Colin Stears and Roger Thistle have said they would like to come and help us next May as a way of a thank-you. Will they notice a difference here! Another late night, even my umbrella rained champagne ..(too much information, or what!??)

Sunday - Feet and legs still throbbing, ribs aching from so much laughing. Packed my case, left tired but very happy for the two re-elected and one newly elected councillors of 'The Wrythe'. Also to see a Lib Dem council well and truly held.

Job well done.

p.s. A week later, Sue informed me the Labour Group office was emptied and had 'vacant' on the door. All say "Ahhh..!"

# ‘ QUOTES ’

“Sir Menzies Campbell could surprise us all yet. ...He is now turning out to be both sharper and bolder. “

*Peter Riddell, The Times, 7 July*

“At PMQs Tony Blair had to answer questions put by Ming Campbell. It was as though he had been in the nets facing the bowling of the late Freddie Trueman. The first ball knocked his middle stump out of the ground. He took guard again and the second ball again spread-eagled his stumps.”

*William Rees-Mogg, The Mail on Sunday, 9 July*

“The Liberal Democrats are still vibrant, able to retain existing voters and attract new ones”

*Leader, Guardian 1 July*

“The Liberal Democrats remain a potent threat to both Labour and the Conservatives. Three-party politics is still very much with us.”

*Leader, Independent, 1 July*

“The swing in Bromley was a powerful demonstration that they need not be squeezed by Mr Cameron’s pitch for the centre ground.”

*Rosemary Bennett, Times, 1 July  
(Referring to Lib Dems nearly taking the seat)*

---

## Hospital News

As you have seen on the TV , didn’t all our Bognor Regis Councillors do well in connection with the Hospital publicity? And the well received rallying speech by Dr. James Walsh at the West Sussex County Council meeting which was very highly supported.

## IF I WAS IN NUMBER

10

In this brand new feature, we ask a local party member to tell us the top 10 things they would do, both serious and light-hearted, if they became Prime Minister.

Here, Chairman Greg Burt gives us an idea of what life would be like in Britain under a Burt Government!!

1. In a previous career, I was a taxi driver. One of the most annoying things was looking for houses that weren't clearly numbered or labelled. So I would pass a law saying that all properties should be clearly marked. This would make life so much easier for so many people, including political activists hand delivering postal vote letters to save on stamps!!

2. All councils should allow you to include yoghurt pots, margarine containers and all the many other plastic items in your recycling. To assist further, there should be a heavy tax on Easter Eggs which generate a disproportionate amount of packaging to the amount of chocolate inside.

3 Like all kids, I looked forward to the long school holidays but I hated seeing only days after breaking up, signs saying, "Back to School". Thus, this practice would also be banned.

4. All elections should be on Sundays. Lots of other countries do this and attract much higher turnouts, with the event turning into a real national occasion. It's about time we modernised our electoral system and wrestled it of the control of the

Dinosaurs. Sometimes I think that politicians don't want people to vote!!

5. All motorists should have a disc in their windscreen to show that they have valid car insurance. Despite attempts to tighten up on the Road Tax system to try to ensure more car drivers are insured, there are still a lot or irresponsible people out there with no insurance. It is reckless and can cause a great deal of misery to victims of car accidents caused by such people.

6. Unnecessary street furniture!! Why do councils like putting up poles for even the smallest signs, when they could be affixed to another adjacent pole or street lamp? Moreover, if the sign becomes redundant and gets removed, the pole stays put for years and the council seems unable to arrange for it's removal. Hence, some streets resemble pole-land. In a similar vein, the yellow perils that are the small signs that Developers' put up to direct visitors to their new housing schemes. Most do not have permission from the highway authority, and they are still up years after the development has been finished. In the same vein, I hate Happy Birthday banners on roundabouts made from old sheets that never get taken down.

7. Talking of developers, most agree that it would make more sense to reuse old buildings or incorporate them

into new developments. However, the main reason that developers do not, is because VAT rules make it more advantageous to knock down and build afresh, rather than repair and restore what is already there. To me this is barmy and needs changing.

#### 8. Fibre-Optic Christmas Trees!!

Don't know why, I just hate them, so they would be banned as well!!

9. Expand the railway network would be a definite. The only way we are going to get motorists out of their cars will be by offering them a good alternative. Despite £millions going into bus services, motorists will not swap their cars for a bus. However, new rail services have demonstrated that drivers will abandon their cars and use rail. The trouble is, because

of short sighted rail closures in the past, most carried out under Labour Governments, railway lines don't all go to where we want them to. Hence I would have many old lines reopened and new routes built. It has got to happen one day, so why don't we start now?

10. I love Christmas and I get really annoyed at shops who put up Christmas Decorations up in October, and then take them down BEFORE Christmas! I don't care if they want to get ready for the January Sales (which start in December!), why can't they leave the decorations up? Hence there would be law to cover this very serious matter.

So, who'll vote for me?



WINNERS of the DRAW will be notified.

The 100 Club is a very beneficial source of fundraising for the Local Party and you have a chance of winning the prizes. Some of our members who own a number of shares have regular wins!

The more shares you have - the more times you win!!

Details of how you could become a regular winner from  
Cllr. Nick Wiltshire or ring 01903 716582



## SUMMER BARBECUE 2006



DJ - Cllr Ian Harding & assistant!



Thank you, Chef !



Bognor Regis Councillors -  
it could almost be a 'group' meeting !

Our Summer Barbecue, hosted by Michael and Jeanette Chapman raised over £200. Thank you to those who were generous; thank you to those who organised it and those who attended and above all thank you to Michael and Jeanette and family and friends for all their hard work and the welcome we were given to their garden. There was lots of food and drink and a most enjoyable time was had by all, it was a great evening.