

## Climate Change and a Sense of Proportion in a Busy Week

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

Worthing Herald Article

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The Six O'clock news studio on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1988 was invaded by demonstrators. Here is part of one report:

'Demonstrating an impressive level of sang-froid, Lawley continued to announce the headlines as the activists could be heard crying out "stop Section 28!" She commented, "we have rather been invaded" - while her co-presenter Nicholas Witchell found himself forced to take action to keep one of the protestors quiet.

"I found she had handcuffed herself to Sue's desk, so I sat on her and put my hand over her mouth," said Witchell, now BBC News' royal correspondent.

"I thought we would be taken off the air but Sue, very calmly, kept running through the introduction to the first piece."

Lawley asked viewers to try to ignore what was going on in the background. At the end of the broadcast she apologised and reported that "our unwelcome guests have now been taken away by the police."

Speaking later, she added: "It was a very alarming experience."

On Thursday last week, I was surprised that the BBC and other news broadcasters did not (choice or forgetfulness?) compare the precautionary action by Mark Field MP with the praised initiative of Nicholas Witchell.

For much of Friday I submitted to interviews including one at breakfast time. A kind constituent has written: 'I was full of admiration for the way you handled Charlie Stayt . . . you stopped him in his tracks after one of his questions became more of a speech . . . trying to justify his wet sympathy for the . . . woman. Your response was admirable, stating clearly and fairly that uninvited intruders can be and indeed should be ejected from private occasions.'

All the other demonstrators had stayed at the back and left when they had to. The one who advanced and then increased her speed towards the Chancellor and the Bank Governor could have been aggressive and dangerous. I would have done what Mark Field did: he interrupted her dash, he turned her around and he steered her out. As he did and as Nicholas Witchell did, I would have apologised; I would still have felt I had taken justified precautionary action. It is pathetic to say after a bad incident that I did nothing because no one else did.

I recall my desperate actions in 1985 at the Brussels Heysel stadium to prevent anticipated harm when a few hooligans caused crushing. About 40 people died. I believe in initiative and I believe in taking responsibility.

The speech of the Governor of the Bank of England was an important contribution to addressing climate change. That has been overshadowed by those campaigning for the same cause. In more recent days, the House of Commons has passed the net zero carbon emissions bill, amending the 2050 greenhouse net emissions reduction target in the Climate Change Act from at least 80% to 100%. This milestone legislation was overshadowed by the actions of a few Greenpeaceers. That appears neither green nor peaceful?

I shall be trying to meet constituents joining the climate change gathering. It is one of 14 important parliamentary engagements on one day. My feeling is that it is right to be full-hearted in dealing with issues and people in Worthing West, at Westminster and I will continue to be a supporter of Greenpeace and other charities and campaign groups for the important issues we lead on in fighting for a better world.

The weekend highlights included the Heene Community Fair and the famous Ambrose Gardens opening. Worthing and the nearby villages know how to come together. I am proud to be a witness to them all.

This week's highlights include the joyful celebration of the life of the great Baroness Trumpington in St Margaret's church in Parliament Square. Jean's memoir *Coming Up Trumps* is a good read.

On Wednesday, I chaired the Economic and Social Science parliamentary group meeting on Brexit. It is one of a series. Often we hear Professor Catherine Barnard from Trinity College, Cambridge (my college too). She was superb on Friday's *Any Questions*. This meeting featured Professors of politics Sir John Curtice and Anand Menon on "What does the result of the European Elections mean for the UK?". Quite a lot.