



House of Commons
Committee on
Standards and Privileges

Conduct of Mr Jonathan Sayeed: Further Report

Fifth Report of Session 2004–05

*Report and Appendices
together with formal minutes*

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Committee on Standards and Privileges

The Committee on Standards and Privileges is appointed by the House of Commons to oversee the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; to examine the arrangements proposed by the Commissioner for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the Register of Members' Interests and any other registers of interest established by the House; to review from time to time the form and content of those registers; to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests referred to it by the Commissioner; to consider any matter relating to the conduct of Members, including specific complaints in relation to alleged breaches in the Code of Conduct which have been drawn to the Committee's attention by the Commissioner; and to recommend any modifications to the Code of Conduct as may from time to time appear to be necessary.

Current membership

Rt Hon Sir George Young Bt MP (*Conservative, North West Hampshire*) (Chairman)
Mrs Angela Browning MP (*Conservative, Tiverton and Honiton*)
Mr Wayne David MP (*Labour, Caerphilly*)
Mr Andrew Dismore MP (*Labour, Hendon*)
Rt Hon Derek Foster MP (*Labour, Bishop Auckland*)
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Mr Kevin McNamara MP (*Labour, Hull North*)
Mr Stephen Pound MP (*Labour, Ealing North*)
Mr Simon Thomas MP (*Plaid Cymru, Ceredigion*)

Powers

The constitution and powers of the Committee are set out in Standing Order No. 149. In particular, the Committee has power to order the attendance of any Member of Parliament before the committee and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of the Commissioner, be laid before the Committee. The Committee has power to refuse to allow its public proceedings to be broadcast. The Law Officers, if they are Members of Parliament, may attend and take part in the Committee's proceedings, but may not vote.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at: www.parliament.uk/sandp. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the back of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Dr Christopher Ward (Clerk), Miss Jenny McCullough (Second Clerk) and Lisa Hasell (Secretary).

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Conduct of Mr Jonathan Sayeed: Further Report

Introduction

1. Once we have reported on a complaint to the House, we do not normally expect to have to revisit it. Following the recommendations which we made in our Third Report¹ in the case of Mr Jonathan Sayeed, we had hoped to conclude this matter, as has generally been the case. We regret that we are unable to do so in this case, for the following reasons.

2. First, in the debate on our report on the original complaint against him on 8 February, Mr Sayeed alleged² that we had made a number of factual errors. Second, we have been made aware of comments made by the English Manner Ltd,³ the company in which he had a 30% shareholding at the time of our previous report, on that report. Third, further, related, complaints have been made against him, on which the Commissioner has now reported to us.⁴ Finally, as the Chairman indicated in his speech in the 8 February debate, the Committee needs to reflect on whether the Member had in fact adequately responded to its invitation to apologise for his actions.

3. In addition, the Commissioner has now received from the Department of Finance and Administration information on certain matters which came to light as a result of enquiries he made of the Department in the course of his investigation of the original complaint.

4. We report on each of these matters separately below.

Mr Sayeed's allegations of factual errors in the Committee's Third Report

5. On 3 February, Mr Sayeed issued a statement⁵ in which he made various criticisms of our report and conclusions. In the debate on 8 February, and with no advance notification to us, he made four specific allegations concerning the factual accuracy of statements in the Committee's Third Report. The relevant excerpt from his speech is reproduced at Appendix 1.⁶ He has expanded on these in an exchange of correspondence with the Clerk, which is reproduced at Appendix 2.

6. Both we and the Commissioner take considerable care to ensure that reports are soundly based on the evidence received and, to that end, the Commissioner shares a draft of the factual sections of his proposed report to us with the Member concerned before reaching his conclusions, and takes due account of any representations. A further opportunity for

1 HC 233.

2 *Official Report*, 8 February 2005, Vol 430, col 1464.

3 Appendix 4, WE 4, p 30.

4 Appendix 4, p 16.

5 Appendix 4, WE 4, p 27.

6 His speech is reproduced in full at Appendix 4, WE 5, pp 32–33.

the Member arises when we share with him or her, in confidence, a copy of the Commissioner's full report before we consider it. This is to ensure that we consider the report in the context of any points the Member may wish to make on it.

7. Mr Sayeed took advantage of both opportunities. He accepted the final version of the factual sections of the Commissioner's report. He gave written and oral evidence to us.⁷

8. We have given very careful consideration to Mr Sayeed's allegations in the House. Our detailed comments on them are set out in the Annex. In fact, on examination, only one of them turned out to be a disagreement on a matter of fact; and in our view none of them is of any substance. We are satisfied that our conclusions on the factual elements of the complaint, and our recommendations to the House, would not have been different had Mr Sayeed made the representations in advance that he made in his letter to the Clerk of 24 February.

The English Manner Limited's statement of 3 February

9. On 3 February, the day our Third Report was published, The English Manner Limited issued a statement to members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association.⁸ The statement was critical of both the quality of our report, and of our overall conclusions.

10. Mr Sayeed has informed us⁹ that he played no part in the preparation of this statement, was not consulted about its terms, and was not aware of them before the statement was issued by the company. The statement was, he says, issued by Mrs Messervy, one of the two directors of the company, after consultation with her solicitor. In view of what Mrs Messervy told us about her role in the constituency on Mr Sayeed's behalf we are surprised by this but have to accept the Member's word.

11. We are however concerned that this statement, reproduced with the Commissioner's report,¹⁰ misrepresents the Committee's position on a number of points and includes some factual errors. For example, it seeks to deny that Mrs Messervy, his constituency assistant since 1997 and paid in this respect from his parliamentary allowances, is part of Mr Sayeed's 'parliamentary staff' on the grounds that she is based in the constituency, rather than at Westminster. 'Parliamentary staff' is an all-embracing term encompassing members of staff paid for out of the public purse, wherever they are based.

12. However, the most serious and damaging misrepresentations are contained in the final paragraph of the statement. We have seen a recording of Mr Thomas' live interview on 3 February on 'The Daily Politics' programme. The statement inaccurately summarises what Mr Thomas said in a number of material ways. In particular, amongst other errors, the claim that he had stated "members other than he had wished to make a point to other MPs and therefore make Jonathan Sayeed a scapegoat" has no basis whatsoever in fact.

7 HC 233, Appendix 3, p 89; Appendix 4, p 94; Ev 1–13.

8 Appendix 4, WE 4, p 30.

9 Appendix 3, p 15.

10 Appendix 4, WE 4, p 30.

13. While the lack of accuracy of the English Manner statement is not a matter for us, what does concern us is that its principal author, Mrs Messervy, also contributed substantial evidence to the Commissioner's and our own inquiry into the original complaint against Mr Sayeed. **The inaccuracies and misrepresentations in the English Manner statement to the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association inevitably cast serious doubt in our mind as to the credibility of Mrs Messervy's evidence to both the Commissioner and the Committee.**

Further complaints against Mr Sayeed

14. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards has submitted a memorandum relating to further complaints against Mr Sayeed made by Mr Tom Levitt, Member for High Peak, and four constituents of Mr Sayeed. The Commissioner's memorandum is appended to this report at Appendix 4.

15. The complaints arose for the most part from two letters sent out by Mr Sayeed, using House of Commons notepaper and House post-paid envelopes, to a large number of members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association. The Deputy Serjeant at Arms has found this to be an inappropriate use of House stationery. In accordance with the usual practice, he will be asking Mr Sayeed to repay the cost of the stationery and envelopes improperly used.

16. The Commissioner finds that Mr Sayeed's consequent use of Parliamentary resources for non-parliamentary work was a breach of the Code of Conduct. **We agree with the Commissioner.**

17. The Commissioner also expresses astonishment that this further breach of the rules of the House should have occurred so soon after we had criticised Mr Sayeed in our Third Report. **We are dismayed that a Member with Mr Sayeed's length of experience in the House should apparently fail to recognise that sending letters to members of his constituency association on matters clearly intended to have a bearing on his continued adoption as their prospective candidate at the next General Election fell well outside the permitted uses of Parliamentary stationery and other facilities provided at public expense.**

Mr Sayeed's speech to the House on 8 February¹¹

18. **In paragraph 44 of our Third Report, we said that we considered that Mr Sayeed should apologise to the House. We have reflected further on the remarks which he made in the debate, and we find that the actions for which he apologised were narrower than those for which we had criticised him. In our view, he failed to recognise the seriousness of what he had done and to apologise fully.**

¹¹ *Official Report*, 8 February 2005, Vol 430, cols 1463–4.

Other matters arising from the Commissioner's original investigation

19. In the course of his investigation of the original complaint against Mr Sayeed, the Commissioner put a number of queries to the Department of Finance and Administration about aspects of Mrs Messervy's employment as his constituency assistant. While preparing its response, the Department noticed in its records some apparent discrepancies in Mr Sayeed's Additional Cost Allowance (ACA) claims, and drew this fact to the attention of the Commissioner. In particular, Mr Sayeed appeared to have made claims against the ACA not only for expenses relating to his London home, but also for some relating to his Bedfordshire home, which he had notified to the Department as his 'main home' for ACA purposes.

20. The Commissioner agreed to the Department's proposal that it pursue these discrepancies with Mr Sayeed, and let him know the outcome. He has now reported to us that the Department informed him on 10 March that Mr Sayeed had, on 28 February, repaid the sum of £12,583¹² in respect of ACA claimed against his main home in 2003–04 and 2004–05. The Department also reported that there are other ACA claims in respect of the two financial years, totalling about £9,500, which it has not yet been able to attribute with confidence to one home or the other, and on which discussions with Mr Sayeed are continuing. The Commissioner expects to receive a further report from the Department shortly after the end of this month.

21. We have asked the Commissioner to keep us informed of developments, and expect to report further to the House on the matter.

Conclusions

22. We have already set out our specific conclusions on Mr Sayeed's allegations in the House on 8 February of factual error in our Third Report; on the Commissioner's report on the further complaints he has received concerning Mr Sayeed; and on his apology. The allegations about our Third Report amounted in our view to a significant and unjustified attack on our report. It is a matter of regret that the Honourable Member felt unable to apologise fully. The subsequent complaints relate to matters which, viewed in isolation, would be relatively minor. In context though, they represent clear evidence of a continuing disregard by Mr Sayeed of the rules of the House.

23. We therefore invite Mr Sayeed, by way of a personal statement to the House, to accept the conclusions of this report in relation to the allegations he made in the House on 8 February about our Third Report, and to withdraw them accordingly. In the statement, he should also accept our conclusions in relation to the further complaints that have been made against him. He should apologise in terms that will enable us to conclude these aspects of the case. However, if by Monday 4 April he has not finalised arrangements with Mr Speaker for making a personal statement on these matters on an

¹² The total sum repaid was £12,867, which also included reimbursement of a double claim in respect of electricity charges at his London home.

early date and on terms agreed by Mr Speaker, we recommend that the House suspend him from its service until he does so.

Annex: Mr Sayeed's allegations of factual errors in the Committee's Third Report

Mr Sayeed made four specific allegations in the House concerning the factual accuracy of statements in the Committee's Third Report. He expanded in these in his letter to the Clerk of 24 February, reproduced at Appendix 2.

Paragraph 11

In the House Mr Sayeed stated:

“Paragraph 11 states that the programme was circulated in advance to the group leader. That is wrong. The programme was not circulated in advance to anyone”.

A copy of the programme concerned had been submitted to the Commissioner by Mr Sayeed on 26 October 2004.¹³ This is reproduced at Appendix 5.

On 24 January, responding to a specific question from us¹⁴ about the inclusion in the programme of an elective event for which arrangements had to be made over a month before the visit began, Mr Sayeed told us that the group leader had been given the programme with electives as she had agreed to take on the task of contacting fellow travellers by telephone to ascertain if they would like to attend certain events. He continued “other elective ideas were put forward at the beginning of May to no avail as [*the group leader*] could not get in touch with any more than two fellow travellers”.

This statement, the specific references in the programme to optional events “for those early arrivals with us” and inclusion of a contact through which to make arrangements for private transfers from the airport on arrival, led the Committee to conclude, on the balance of the evidence, that the programme had indeed been made available to the group leader in advance, as these various elements do not otherwise make sense.

Mr Sayeed's assertion in his letter of 24 February that the Committee had quoted from an item circulated with a Christmas card after the visit had taken place is incorrect. The Committee was quoting from the programme for the visit submitted to the Commissioner by Mr Sayeed.

Paragraph 12

In the House, Mr Sayeed stated in the House that paragraph 12 of the report was “materially inaccurate”. From his letter of 24 February, his disagreement appears to be with the sentence, “However, the visitors apparently met the cost [*of the buffet lunch at the House*] through an advance payment to The English Manner's American bank account; it

¹³ HC 233, WE 9, page 58. See also WE 11, page 64, paragraph 1.

¹⁴ HC 233, Appendix 4, p 94.

would therefore have been entirely understandable if they had assumed that The English Manner was responsible for the arrangements”.

There is no dispute that payment was made in advance to The English Manner’s American bank account; Mr Sayeed told us so on 24 January.¹⁵ The difficulty appears to relate to the conclusion the Committee drew that it would have been “entirely understandable” if the visitor had assumed that The English Manner was responsible for the arrangements.

Refreshment Department records show that the dining room was booked by Mr Sayeed on behalf of The English Manner. He also submitted a Sponsorship Agreement Form to enable the responsibilities of coordinating the function to be delegated to the company, which was also specified as the recipient of the final account.

Mr Sayeed’s disagreement is a matter of opinion, not a matter of fact. Against the backdrop set out above for the arrangements, it was reasonable to assume that The English Manner was responsible for them.

Paragraph 13

Mr Sayeed claimed in the House that “the concluding line of paragraph 13 is wrong”.¹⁶

This paragraph relates to the ‘familiarisation visit’ dinner of 27 March 2003. Again, the dining room was booked on behalf of The English Manner Limited, with Mrs Messervy named as the organiser on the accompanying Sponsorship Agreement Form.

It is a matter of judgement rather than a matter of fact as to whether in all the circumstances the guests would have made the distinction that the visit to the House was not just another element in their familiarisation visit. However, it is clear from the website account of the visit quoted by the Commissioner at paragraph 5 of his original report,¹⁷ the author of which was a director of The English Manner Limited,¹⁸ that she certainly saw the visit to the House as an English Manner function.

Paragraph 14

Mr Sayeed stated in the House that “In paragraph 14 it is clear that there has been a misunderstanding between the Committee and myself”.

The “misunderstanding” appears to relate to two points: Mr Sayeed’s evidence that there had been no discussion with guests that might help them to appreciate the distinctive status of their visit to the House;¹⁹ and his evidence that on the one occasion when Mr Sayeed

15 HC 233, Appendix 4, p 99. See also Appendix 2, pp 12–13.

16 The relevant sentence reads, “It would in our view have been a subtle distinction for the guests to have made, that all the visits, except the visit to the Palace of Westminster were for the promotion of the commercial interests of The English Manner Limited”.

17 HC 233, p 14.

18 HC 233, WE 7, p 50; WE 9, p 58.

19 HC 233, Ev Q 30.

invited another Member to join him at one of these events, he did not make clear to the Member the relationship between himself and The English Manner Limited.²⁰

On the first point, Mrs Messervy now asserts²¹ that “though Mr Sayeed may not remember making it clear that these visitors were his personal guests, I remember him doing so ...”. On the second, Mr Sayeed comments that, in the end, the other Member did not join him for the meal.

Paragraph 14 in our view accurately reflects the evidence given by Mr Sayeed. In this context, it should be noted that all three visits highlighted by the Committee involved dining rooms booked on behalf of The English Manner Limited. It is also immaterial whether the other Member actually attended the function. The Code requires that “in any activities with, or on behalf of, an organisation with which a Member has a financial relationship, including activities which may not be a matter of public record such as ... functions, he or she must always bear in mind the need to be open and frank with ... Members ...”. Mr Sayeed admitted that he did not disclose the financial link when the invitation was extended.

20 HC 233, Ev QQ 49–50.

21 Appendix 2, p 13.

Appendix 1: Excerpt from the speech of Mr Jonathan Sayeed on 8 February 2005

“... The report contains a few errors of fact. Paragraph 12 is materially inaccurate, the concluding line of paragraph 13 is wrong, and in paragraph 14 it is clear that there has been a misunderstanding between the Committee and myself.

Specifically, paragraph 11 states that the programme was circulated in advance to the group leader. That is wrong. The programme was not circulated in advance to anyone. As judgments appear to have been made as to whether I was an indirect beneficiary appear based upon these paragraphs, it is possible that the conclusions the Committee reached would have been different had I been able to correct those mistakes ...”

Official Report, 8 February 2005, col 1464

Appendix 2: Exchange of correspondence between Mr Jonathan Sayeed and the Clerk relating to his speech in the House on 8 February 2005

Letter to Mr Jonathan Sayeed from the Clerk of the Committee

In the debate in the House last night on the Third Report of the Committee on Standards and Privileges, you commented, at Col. 1464, as follows:

“The report contains a few errors of fact. Paragraph 12 is materially inaccurate, the concluding line of paragraph 13 is wrong, and in paragraph 14 it is clear that there has been a misunderstanding between the Committee and myself.

Specifically, paragraph 11 states that the programme was circulated in advance to the group leader. That is wrong. The programme was not circulated in advance to anyone.”.

I should be grateful if you could let me have a full and precise statement of the errors of fact that you were referring to, and the grounds on which you consider them to be errors, in order that I can bring them to the Committee’s attention.

9 February 2005

Reply to the Clerk of the Committee from Mr Jonathan Sayeed

In your letter of 9 February you have asked me for a full and precise statement of the errors of fact I was referring to. These are listed below.

I stated that:

1. ‘Paragraph 12 is materially inaccurate’.
- a) Mrs Messervy has stated as follows:

*“Likewise, a second visit cited by the Committee seeks to imply that this was arranged by The English Manner. Evidence shows that this visit was organised by Alexandra Messervy **personally** and sponsored by Jonathan Sayeed in the same way that Jonathan Sayeed is hosting a dinner for the St Albans Cathedral Appeal with Alistair Burt and John Gummer on 10 March. The **group** did not make payment to the company’s US bank account, one member of the party, the organiser, made the payment **purely** to save on transfer fees. The group visited Jonathan Sayeed at their request having met him previously and to discuss the possibility of an international celebration between our two countries in 2007. This was a case of fostering Anglo-US relations.”.*

I would refer the Committee to item 7v) on page 99 also 6) and page 97 and 26viii) on page 73 of the report.¹

- b) Each member of the group knew that the arrangements had been made by Alexandra Messervy **personally**, not by The English Manner and that the time I spent with them was on a personal basis. As far as I am aware, The English Manner was never mentioned at any stage, except the organiser said to Alexandra Messervy—‘How can I best get the money to you’. It is therefore **not** “*entirely understandable if they assume that The English Manner was responsible for the arrangements*” as they would have understood that it was Alexandra Messervy personally who had organised everything and The English Manner was not a company that anyone, except the organiser for payment purposes, knew anything about. Alexandra Messervy confirms that this is the case.

2. ‘The concluding line of paragraph 13 is wrong’.

- a) This refers to the familiarisation visit dinner. Mrs Messervy has stated that:

“the dinner guests could, would and did draw a clear distinction between ‘promoting the commercial interest of The English Manner’ and a purely interesting visit to Parliament. The evidence given on several occasions has clearly stated that those on this visit were mainly directors and potential staff members. The guests were in England to visit the stately homes and partners of The English Manner with whom they would be working. The purpose was not promotion of any kind”.

- b) Mrs Messervy continues

*“The Committee states that Mr Sayeed has confirmed that as far as he knew ‘there was no discussion with guests that might help them to appreciate the distinctive status of their visit to the House’. I can categorically state that this is wrong. Though Mr Sayeed may not remember making it clear that these visitors were his personal guests, I remember him doing so and **furthermore when I had contact with each and every visitor I personally made very clear to them prior to every occasion that invitations to dine or visit Parliament were on a purely personal basis and formed no part of any programme which they may pursue during their stay.**”.*

3. Paragraph 14—‘It is clear that there has been a misunderstanding between the Committee and myself’.

The first part of paragraph 14 is dealt with in 2b) above. The second part did not occur as the person I suggested joining me, in the event did not join me at dinner.

4. Finally I stated that ‘Specifically, paragraph 11 states that the wrong programme was circulated in advance to the group leader. **That is wrong.** The programme was not circulated in advance to anyone.’.

¹ Committee on Standards and Privileges, Third Report of Session 2004–05, HC 233.

What the Committee have quoted from is an item circulated with a Christmas card AFTER the visit had taken place. It was along the lines of 'look at what we can arrange'. It should not have been written or circulated and as the evidence shows I was not aware of it. However the critical point is that not one of those who came on the garden visit saw that item before they arrived nor did they see any written programme nor were they told that there would be anything involving Parliament.

The FIRST time that they saw a programme was on their arrival in London on Thursday 20 May and even then I am informed that the programme did not include anything to do with Parliament. When I met the visitors I was not introduced as a Member of Parliament nor did I then offer them a visit to Parliament. I refer the Committee to section 7iii) on pages 98 and 99 of their report.

The reason that a dinner scheduled to be held in the Goring Hotel was switched, at the last moment to Parliament was a) there was a dining room free after an earlier cancellation and b) as I was chairing the Energy Bill it was more convenient for me to meet in the Palace rather than away from it. The tour of the House was only requested by them and offered after the group had arrived for dinner in the House.

I trust that this answers your letter but if you have any further queries please let me know.

24 February 2005

Appendix 3: Exchange of correspondence between Mr Jonathan Sayeed and the Clerk relating to The English Manner statement of 3 February 2005

Letter to Mr Jonathan Sayeed from the Clerk of the Committee

The Committee on Standards and Privileges has been sent a copy of the statement which The English Manner Limited circulated to the members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association on 3 February 2005 following publication of the Committee's Third Report, and has noted its contents.

The Committee has asked me to establish what, if any, part you played in the preparation of this statement; and whether you were consulted about its terms, or were made aware of them, before it was issued by the company. If, in addition, there are any points that you would wish to make to the Committee about the substance of the statement, or the circumstances in which it was issued, it would be happy to receive them.

It would be helpful if you could let me have a response by Friday 11 March.

8 March 2005

Reply to the Clerk of the Committee from Mr Jonathan Sayeed

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 2005.

I can assure the Committee that I played no part in the preparation of the statement from The English Manner Ltd, I was not consulted about its terms and nor was I aware of them before the statement was issued by the company.

I understand that the statement was issued by Mrs Messervy after consultation with her solicitor, it was prepared in her home in Bedfordshire and distributed from there using private stationery and stamps.

9 March 2005

Appendix 4: Memorandum from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

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Complaints against Mr Jonathan Sayeed

Background

1. On 8 February 2005 Mr Jonathan Sayeed was suspended from the service of the House for 2 weeks following approval by the House of the Third Report of the Committee on Standards and Privileges of the current Session (HC 233). Following publication of the Committee's report on 3 February, a special general meeting was called of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association, to consider a motion of no confidence in Mr Sayeed. This, if carried, would have meant that Mr Sayeed would have ceased to be the Party's prospective candidate in the constituency at the next General Election. It was subsequently reported in the press that, when the meeting took place on 17 February, the motion was lost by 173 votes to 126.

The Complaint

2. On 22 February I received letters from Mrs AS Brown and Mrs VA Green (both constituents of Mr Sayeed and members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association) questioning whether it had been appropriate for Mr Sayeed to write to Association members on 9 February—that is, following his suspension from the House—using House of Commons facilities, including stationery and post-paid envelopes. The text of the letters I received from Mrs Brown and Mrs Green is at WE 1 and 2. I subsequently received similar complaints from 2 other constituents of Mr Sayeed, Mr THP Daniel and Mrs PRC McLuskie.

3. On 23 February, Mr Tom Levitt (Member for High Peak) wrote to me raising, in addition to points similar to those put by Mrs Brown and Mrs Green, a number of other questions about Mr Sayeed's conduct in relation to the 9 February letter. A copy of Mr Levitt's letter is at WE 3.

4. An article in the Times of 24 February indicated that Mr Sayeed had in fact written not once but twice to his constituency association members before the special general meeting. The first letter was sent on 3 February; the second, as previously noted, on 9 February.² A copy of these two letters and their enclosures is at WE 4 and 5 respectively. Both letters were sent in first class post-paid House of Commons envelopes. From the postal markings on envelopes seen by me,³ it is clear that the letters had been posted on the Parliamentary Estate.

Jurisdiction

5. On receipt of the complaints I alerted the Deputy Serjeant at Arms to them, as the rules on the use of House stationery and post-paid envelopes are approved by Mr Speaker following recommendations from the Administration Committee and administered by the

² Mr Sayeed also issued a press statement on the morning of 3 February.

³ See paragraph 10.

Serjeant on his behalf. The Serjeant also considers on behalf of Mr Speaker any complaints that these rules have been breached.

6. However, the fact that the letters had been posted from the House (and particularly, in the case of the second one, at a time when Mr Sayeed was barred from the precincts) indicated that Mr Sayeed's parliamentary staff might have assisted in the production and distribution of the letters. Any misuse of a Member's staff in this respect, or of any office facilities provided for Parliamentary purposes, would be a matter for consideration in relation to the Code of Conduct for Members, and be one in which the House's Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) and I would both have an interest. I therefore also alerted the DFA to the complaints.

7. In view of my shared interest with the Serjeant and the DFA in the complaints, the varied strands in those complaints, and the fact that they are a natural *sequitur* to the matters about Mr Sayeed already considered by the Committee, I have thought it right to take the lead in raising them with Mr Sayeed and in now reporting on them to the Committee. I have throughout kept in touch with the Serjeant and the DFA in relation to their respective interests, and they concur with the findings of this report.

The Relevant Rules of the House

8. The rules on the use of House stationery and post-paid envelopes provide that they "must not be used for purposes which are not properly a charge on public funds". This includes supporting the return of any person to public office. They may not be used for circulars or unsolicited letters.

9. The Code of Conduct for Members provides that:

"No improper use shall be made of any payment or allowance made to Members for public purposes and the administrative rules which apply to such payments and allowances must be strictly observed".

The Green Book on Member's allowances makes clear that both the Incidental Expenses Provision and the Staffing Allowance are provided to enable the Member to meet costs "wholly, exclusively and necessarily" incurred in connection with a Member's Parliamentary duties.⁴ They are not to be used to meet the costs of party political activities or campaigning, or to pay staff employed on non-Parliamentary duties. So, for example, the list given in the Green Book of examples of expenditure which are not an allowable claim against the IEP includes communications on party political matters.

My Inquiries

10. Having obtained original examples of both the letters of 3 and 9 February and of the envelopes they had been posted in (as well as of a letter posted by The English Manner Limited to Members of the constituency association on 3 February—see paragraphs 22 and 23 below), and after consultation with the Deputy Serjeant at Arms and the DFA, I wrote

⁴ The Green Book as updated in July 2004, paragraphs 5.1.1 and 6.1.1.

twice to Mr Sayeed on 1 March. My first letter concerned the complaints I had received from his constituents. The second concerned the additional issues raised by Mr Levitt. Copies of these two letters are at WE 6 and 7 respectively. In these letters I identified a total of nine different issues which were raised by the complaints I had received. These issues—and the comments made by Mr Sayeed about each of them in the reply he sent me on 2 March (WE 8)—are summarised below.

11. I should at this point note an important proviso about what follows. As the Committee knows, I invariably share a draft of the factual sections of my report on a complaint with the Member who is the subject of that complaint, before I finalise the report for submission to the Committee. Accordingly I sent Mr Sayeed on 8 March a draft of this report minus only my conclusions. I invited his comments on the draft, and responses to a few outstanding queries, in time to enable me to submit the report to the Committee for consideration at its meeting on 15 March.

12. Mr Sayeed replied the following day saying that, for various reasons (which did not at that stage include ill health), he would find it very difficult to comment in that timescale. I replied asking for any comments by first thing on Monday, 14 March. On Friday, 11 March Mr Sayeed asked to be given until 21 March to respond, giving the state of his health as one of the reasons in support of his request. I replied extending the time given until close of play on Tuesday, 15 March. On the afternoon of 15 March I received an e-mail from Mr Sayeed's PA indicating that Mr Sayeed was at home recuperating. He would not delay in replying, once he had fully recuperated.

13. I would not submit to the Committee a report about a complaint on which the Member concerned had not had a reasonable opportunity to comment. In my judgement, Mr Sayeed has had such an opportunity. Whilst I recognise and regret his ill health, I do not believe this a sufficient basis to justify his failure to respond (which contrasts markedly with the consistent speed of his responses to my earlier rounds of correspondence with him.) Moreover, a delay of the order Mr Sayeed has requested could well push a final resolution of this matter beyond the lifetime of this Parliament, and thus—given Mr Sayeed's very recent announcement of his retirement on the grounds of ill health—beyond his membership of the House. As the factual analysis which follows, including my findings of fact, is almost entirely based on what Mr Sayeed has himself told me in his letter of 2 March (at WE 8), I have felt it appropriate to make this report to the Committee.

Analysis of the Evidence

(1) Was it open to Mr Sayeed to use House of Commons stationery and envelopes during a period when he was suspended from the House?

14. I understand that a Member who is suspended from the House can continue to use House stationery in the usual way for permitted purposes.

(2) Was it proper for Mr Sayeed to write on 3 and 9 February using House of Commons stationery and post-paid envelopes, on what was an internal party matter?

15. This is the key question raised by the complaints. Did Mr Sayeed act correctly in relation to the letters of 3 and 9 February, regardless of the fact that he was suspended at the time the second one was dispatched? To put the point differently, if a Member who faced a vote of no confidence in his constituency association but was not suspended had sent out letters in a similar manner, would he or she have breached the rules regarding the use of House stationery?

16. In his letter to me of 2 March, Mr Sayeed refers to the concern in his constituency which followed the initial press speculation about the outcome of the previous complaints against him and the publication of the Committee's report on 3 February. Faced with many inquiries to his office and what he considered a biased local campaign against him, the letters of 3 and 9 February reflected his wish to set out his side of the story. About 220 copies of the letter of 3 February and between 170 and 190 of the 9 February letter were sent out

17. Mr Sayeed argues that:

- a) The matter was not just an internal party one.
- b) He was responding to concerns expressed to him, not only by party members. The letters were not therefore unsolicited.
- c) He was not canvassing support for himself, and was not therefore supporting the return of any person to public office.

18. I note that the letter of 3 February was addressed to "Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association Membership." The letter of 3 February includes a paragraph which says:

"Please rest assured that I remain the Member of Parliament for Mid-Bedfordshire and will continue to be working hard for you and all my constituents now and in the future."

19. The letter of 9 February was addressed "Dear Member". It includes the following:

"There has been considerable speculation in both the press and constituency about my status as a Member of Parliament for Mid-Bedfordshire and you have been invited to attend an Association meeting on 17 February, at which I intend to address everyone and answer questions. I also wanted to write to you to confirm my intention to remain as your Member of Parliament and to continue to work for you and for the people of Mid-Bedfordshire."

Later, it refers to Mr Sayeed's initial adoption as the (prospective) Conservative candidate in the constituency in 1995 and his intention to stand again at the forthcoming General Election and to organise his affairs in such a way as

"to leave me clear to devote myself to the constituency and to winning the next election."

(3) Was the time of any of the staff paid for out of Mr Sayeed's Parliamentary staffing allowance used in the preparation or distribution of either letter?

20. Mr Sayeed says that he prepared the documents (that is, drafted them), but his staff, paid out of the Parliamentary staffing allowance, distributed them. He continues:

"This was largely done out of hours and in their own time, late into the night."

(4) Were any other Parliamentary facilities, including any databases maintained by Mr Sayeed as a Member, used in connection with the preparation and distribution of either letter?

21. Mr Sayeed says that, as he was not permitted to use his local association database, he used a copy of his Christmas card labels list which he had in hard copy format. In addition to the use of stationery and envelopes, parliamentary facilities were used to reproduce the two letters and their enclosures. In addition the Parliamentary network was used to e-mail his press statement of 3 February to a number of people.

(5) Were Parliamentary facilities used in any way to prepare or distribute a letter sent on 3 February to Association members by The English Manner Limited?

22. Mr Sayeed says the answer to this is 'no'. Mrs Messervy (the Chairman of The English Manner Limited and Mr Sayeed's part-time constituency assistant) has a copy of his Christmas card list and used this when sending out her letter.

(6) Who wrote the letter of 3 February from The English Manner Limited?

23. Mr Levitt raised this query. Mr Sayeed says the letter was written by Mrs Messervy and her solicitor.

(7) In view of the similar typeface of the letter sent by The English Manner Limited and that distributed by Mr Sayeed on 9 February, were the letters produced and printed using the same Parliamentary facilities and/or staff time?

24. Mr Sayeed says the choice of typeface was purely coincidental. Neither parliamentary facilities nor the time of his parliamentary staff were used in the preparation or distribution of the letter from The English Manner Limited. Mrs Messervy paid for the envelopes, paper and postage, prepared the letter (with her solicitor) and arranged its distribution.

(8) Was Mr Sayeed breaching House rules when, in his letter of 9 February he invited people to contact him using his House of Commons fax number and e-mail address during a period when he was suspended from the House?

25. I understand that fax and e-mail facilities remain available to a Member who is suspended from the House for use in the usual way for permitted purposes. Mr Sayeed says that he gave these means of contacting him in his 9 February letter because they are the ones with which people in his constituency are familiar. He did not attend the House at any

time during his suspension. He arranged for all e-mails to be forwarded to his private e-mail address. His office informed him of messages it received and his PA met him at the weekend in her own time to pass letters, faxes and e-mails to him.

(9) Does the fact that the telephone number at the foot of the 9 February letter is both that of Mr Sayeed's constituency office and that of Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association indicate that Mr Sayeed is subsidising his Association from his parliamentary allowances?

26. Mr Sayeed says that he has signed an agreement with his local association relating to the provision of office and other facilities. Members are required to lodge copies of such agreements with the Department of Finance and Administration. The Department of Finance and Administration has confirmed that it holds a copy of Mr Sayeed's agreement with the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association. I have not seen any evidence which would indicate that Mr Sayeed is inappropriately subsidising his association from his parliamentary allowances.

Findings of Fact

27. Mr Sayeed's letters of both 3 and 9 February were distributed to members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association using House stationery and post-paid envelopes. In all, according to Mr Sayeed, some 390–410 letters and their enclosures were dispatched. The letters were drafted by Mr Sayeed. House facilities and some time of staff paid for from Mr Sayeed's Parliamentary staffing allowance were used to prepare, copy and distribute them and their enclosures. Some of the work of distributing them was also, according to Mr Sayeed, done by staff in their own time.

28. The address labels used to dispatch most but not all of the letters (for some were addressed by hand) were gathered from Mr Sayeed's Christmas card label list. The list is kept by him in hard copy form. The same list was used to dispatch The English Manner Limited's letter to Association members of 3 February. I have seen no evidence that would contradict Mr Sayeed's assertion that no parliamentary facilities were used in the preparation or dispatch of that letter.

29. Parliamentary e-mail facilities were used to distribute some copies of Mr Sayeed's statement of 3 February and to receive some responses to his letter of 9 February. Parliamentary fax facilities were also used in the receipt of some responses.

30. Use of none of the Parliamentary facilities mentioned was barred to Mr Sayeed as a result of his suspension from the House, but both the facilities of the House and his office and the time of his Parliamentary staff were only available to him for use wholly, exclusively and necessarily in connection with the performance by him of his "Parliamentary duties".

31. I am not aware of any evidence that an inappropriate subsidy is being made from Mr Sayeed's parliamentary allowances to the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association.

Conclusions

32. The relevant rules clearly provide that House stationery and post-paid envelopes must not be used for purposes which are not properly a charge on public funds. They are not to be used for circulars or unsolicited letters. Nor are they to be used to support the return of any person to public office.

33. The Staffing Allowance and the Incidental Expenses Provision available to Members are similarly provided to assist them in carrying out their Parliamentary duties. They are to meet costs “wholly, exclusively and necessarily” incurred in connection with those duties and may not be used for party political or campaigning purposes.

34. As I have pointed out at paragraphs 14–15 above, the fact that Mr Sayeed was suspended from the service of the House when the second letter was sent out is not a relevant factor. My conclusions therefore turn entirely on whether Mr Sayeed was entitled to use House stationery and post-paid envelopes, and staff and other resources provided at public expense, in sending his letters of 3 and 9 February to members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association. This in turn depends on whether the costs incurred in sending them were a proper charge on public funds, and whether this was part of his parliamentary duties.

35. Mr Sayeed argues that he was entitled to act as he did. He maintains that there was widespread concern in his constituency to know his side of the story following the Committee’s report on the earlier complaint against him; his future as the Member for Mid-Bedfordshire and as the prospective Conservative candidate at the next General Election was of more than party interest, and he had sent similar letters to constituents who were not party members; and in writing as he did he was not supporting his own return to public office.

36. I do not think any of these arguments stand up to scrutiny. Both letters were addressed in terms to the membership of his local Conservative Association. They were not specifically solicited, though it is possible that some recipients had previously contacted the constituency office expressing concern about events. They appear to have been designed to put Mr Sayeed’s case to members ahead of the special general meeting on 17 February, at which his future as the prospective Conservative Party candidate in the constituency (and therefore his chance of securing re-election) was at stake. The letter of 3 February was dispatched after Mr Sayeed learned on the same day of the calling of the special general meeting. That of 9 February refers to Mr Sayeed’s determination to continue to serve as the Member for Mid-Bedfordshire, to stand again at the forthcoming General Election and to organise his affairs in such a way as to win that election.

37. There is no doubt, in short, that the letters were primarily written as part of an internal Party, rather than a Parliamentary, process. In my view they breached the rules on that ground, as well as on the ground that they amounted to an attempt to support Mr Sayeed’s continued adoption as the prospective Conservative Party candidate and thus his potential re-election as the Member for Mid-Bedfordshire. They were also, in effect, a circular.

38. This assessment is shared by the Deputy Serjeant at Arms. In accordance with the usual practice, he will therefore be asking Mr Sayeed to repay the cost of the stationery and envelopes improperly used.

39. It is also clear from the letter of explanation offered me by Mr Sayeed on 2 March that other parliamentary facilities, including some of the time of his parliamentary staff paid for from public funds, were used in connection with the copying and distribution of the letters and their enclosures. Parliamentary facilities were also used in the dispatch of some copies of the press statement of 3 February. This means that these facilities were used for a party political purpose and not in accordance with the Parliamentary purpose for which they were provided. **Their use in this manner breached the House's rules, and therefore the Code of Conduct (see paragraph 9 above).**

40. Viewed solely on its own merits, what happened in relation to the two letters may seem relatively insignificant. No large sum of public money was involved (the total cost of the stationery and envelopes and the copying involved (excluding any time of Mr Sayeed's staff) is estimated at around £150). However, I find it astonishing that, so soon after he had been heavily criticised in the Committee's Third Report, Mr Sayeed should have behaved in this respect with such disregard for the rules, and that in his letter of explanation of 2 March he should again have shown a complete absence of any recognition that he might have acted improperly.

16 March 2005

Sir Philip Mawer

Written Evidence received by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

1. Letter to the Commissioner from Mrs Audrey S Brown

I am a member of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Party and have been most concerned about the furore surrounding Mr Jonathan Sayeed MP.

Enclosed is a copy of the 'defence' letter sent by Mr Sayeed to local Party members, together with a copy of the envelope containing the letter. The letter is dated during the time of his suspension and yet the distinctive address label has seemingly been produced off his Parliamentary database.

Should he have used the facilities of the House whilst under suspension?

Incidentally, a letter was also received from English Manner at about the same time **with an identical half label**. Again, should House facilities have been used for the benefit of English Manner?

21 February 2005

2. Letter to the Commissioner from Mrs Valmai A Green

I enclose the letter and envelope sent to me by Jonathan Sayeed.

Both are dated and franked after 8 February, the date I understood he had been suspended from Parliament.

Please advise if he should have used House of Commons stationery and facilities.

21 February 2005

3. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr Tom Levitt MP

There have been several aspects of this case, especially *since* the Standards and Privileges Committee published its third report, which worry me as a former long serving member of that Committee. The first, which I understand you are already looking into, relates to the manner of his apology to the House, which was, I feel, far from adequate.

The second is the period of his suspension, which was supposed to be two weeks but appears to have only been 13 days. I have written to the Speaker about this.

Other matters concern items of correspondence which have come into my possession. I ask you to consider whether these constitute a breach of the rules and I would be grateful for your comments.

One is an unsigned letter from English Manner to members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association dated 3 February. It is disrespectful of the Committee and claims to rebut its findings. If it was written by Mr Sayeed then I would ask you to consider whether it constitutes a breach of the code of practice. It is written with the same typeface and style as a letter which certainly did come from his office (see later).

If the letter was not distributed by Mr Sayeed then perhaps a data protection matter arises.

Another is a letter to all members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association from Mr Sayeed dated 9 February, the day following his suspension from the House. It seeks to reassure Conservative Party members

about his suitability to continue as their MP when questions were being asked in the local Association. I make the following observations:

- although I only have a photocopy, the letter was printed on original Commons crested paper and, I am assured, posted in House of Commons pre-paid envelopes
- the letter is clearly of an internal party political nature and over 600 of these could have been posted
- it asks people to contact him at his House of Commons fax number or email address during a period of his suspension. Are such facilities available when a Member is suspended?
- the telephone number at the foot of the letter is both Mr Sayeed's constituency office AND that of Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association. This may imply that Commons expenses are subsidising the Conservative Association's operations.

Copies of the relevant documents are enclosed.

I look forward to your reply.

23 February 2005

4. Letter to the members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association from Mr Jonathan Sayeed

To: Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association Membership

From: Jonathan Sayeed MP

Standards and Privileges Committee Report

There have been a number of devious, dishonest and malicious leaks and rumours about me in the press over the last week, which I imagine will continue over the forthcoming weekend.

As you may be aware, the Standards and Privileges Committee released their report today, following allegations made against me by a Labour Member of Parliament some months ago. I thought you would like to see the statement which I have issued in response.

The Committee for Standards and Privileges has confirmed that "*there appears to be no basis for the newspaper assertions that The English Manner Limited charged substantial (or any other—my insertion) sums for arranging access to the House*" and that "*there is no evidence that Mr Sayeed received any direct benefit from any of the occasions on which he entertained in the House guests who had links with The English Manner*". **However the decision to impose a penalty of such severity on me is wrong, unjust and contrary to the evidence accepted by the Parliamentary Commissioner and recognised by the Committee.**

Please rest assured that I remain the Member of Parliament for Mid-Bedfordshire and will continue to be working hard for you and all my constituents now and in the future.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

3 February 2005

Statement by Mr Jonathan Sayeed MP, 3 February 2005

I recognise that a complaint had arisen because of a lack of sufficient internal controls in a company in which I have an interest. I am pleased and relieved that after a 5 month investigation the Committee for Standards & Privileges has confirmed that “*there appears to be no basis for the newspaper assertions that The English Manner Limited charged substantial (or any other—my insertion) sums for arranging access to the House*” and that “*there is no evidence that Mr Sayeed received any direct benefit from any of the occasions on which he entertained in the House guests who had links with The English Manner*”. **However the decision to impose a penalty of such severity on me is wrong, unjust and contrary to the evidence accepted by the Parliamentary Commissioner and recognised by the Committee.**

The complaint is one about fact not one about possible perception, particularly the perception of those who are determined to put, by however tortuous a route, the worst possible complexion on events.

The complaint is that: “*It is alleged by the Sunday Times that The English Manner Ltd charges clients up to £500 per day for access to the Palace of Westminster through Jonathan Sayeed*”.

It goes on to say “... *MPs should not use their access to the House or its facilities for commercial gain. The principle also extends to third parties attempting to gain commercially from use of the facilities of the House of Commons, ...*”.

The facts are:

I have never used my access to the House or its facilities for commercial gain, neither has The English Manner, it has never charged any client any amount at any time for access to the Palace of Westminster. I have never solicited or received any payment for any tour or entertainment within the Palace of Westminster. The evidence, agreed by the Parliamentary Commissioner and accepted by the committee confirms both these points.

In Para 63 of his report the Commissioner contends: “*If a member were to exploit the privileged access he had to the facilities of the House for the financial or commercial benefit of a company in which he had a registerable or financial interest, that would in my view be likely to bring the house into disrepute...*”. In Para 65 the report goes on to say: “*The key question is whether Mr. Sayeed has used or exploited his privileged access. ... for the financial or commercial benefit of The English Manner Limited*”.

The facts are that I have never done so and the evidence, agreed by the Parliamentary Commissioner and accepted by the committee, shows that to be the case.

The second part of the complaint, in relation to my constituency assistant is that: “*A dual role that may have resulted in an unacceptable conflict of interest*”. The complaint is not whether there is the possibility of a perceived conflict of interest but whether there is an actual conflict of interest and the evidence given to the Commissioner disproves that. I have made clear to the committee that I would be happy to accept advice on how to phrase her job specification so as to make obvious that there is no conflict of interest.

The facts refute the complaint. To impose a penalty it is unjust and wrong.

It is accepted by the Commissioner that I have never solicited nor accepted any fee at any time for conducting people around the House of Commons or for entertaining them there.

It is accepted by the Commissioner that for each of the examples of visits that he has adduced, a tour of the House of Commons and/or entertainment within the Palace:

Firstly did not comprise any part of the programme offered to the guest or form any part of their expectation of their visit to the UK;

Secondly, that it did not constitute any part of a programme for which they paid prior to arrival in the UK and that programme was for visits/accommodation etc., at locations away from the Palace of Westminster;

Thirdly, the reason those guests (apart from a New York Times journalist) were given a tour by me or entertained at the Palace was in all cases because I was personal friends with at least one of them and in certain cases could not get away from the Commons to meet them elsewhere;

Fourthly, on no occasion did The English Manner make any charge for any tour of the Palace of Westminster, and

Fifthly at no time have they made any profit or charged any commission or paid any fee for any component to do with the Palace of Westminster.

In my initial letter responding to the complaint, I stated: "*Being an MP is a privilege and not one I have ever or would ever use for personal financial gain ... and would not misuse or abuse my access to Parliament or my position as an MP*".

I have never been a director of The English Manner. As a consultant I had clearly defined responsibilities, which were advising on the establishment of the company, for providing strategic advice on markets (but not day to day marketing or PR), and for proposing the most cost efficient marketing strategies. **I have never had any input into the website** (the archives of which is where most of the material for the complaint originates) **or press releases and had no reason as a consultant to have vetted their contents.** This is confirmed by a number of pieces of evidence and the statement from the director in the US, which states: "*At no stage did Jonathan Sayeed have any input into promotional material.*".

Indeed it has been separately confirmed that I gave instructions that my name was not to be used in any promotional material nor was The English Manner permitted to promote tours to or entertainment in the Palace of Westminster. A statement made to the Commissioner says: "*Indeed, as far back as early 2002, he (Jonathan Sayeed MP) specifically cautioned her (a person in the US) and others working on TEM business that he was not permitted to use his position as a Member of the British Parliament for personal gain; that his name must not appear on any promotional material and that as anyone could visit Parliament in the UK, it followed that TEM did not have a USP (unique selling point) in relation to Parliament and should not suggest that it had*".

I accept that it would have been preferable, had I regularly checked the company website (separately maintained in the US) and demanded sight of all the press releases or other promotional activity that The English Manner engaged in. However, I had no reason to believe that my very clear instructions were not being adhered to. When the person in the US, working on TEM business but not employed by them, was sacked for not complying with these instructions, I was assured that any reference to me or to Parliament would be removed from any TEM material. This had to be executed via the US office. **Clearly, despite the reassurances that I had been given, this was incompletely carried out.** I understand that most of the material cited by the Sunday Times had already been duly removed from the website as being contrary to my instructions and was only retrievable from an institutional archive.

The Commissioners report does not make clear that a US self-employed travel operator working on the premises of a US a travel agent and cited by the Sunday Times, was obviously uncomfortable with the approach of the Sunday Times undercover journalist Joe Lauria and asked that he speak to the UK on specifics.

She told him she was there to provide the **administration** for travel with The English Manner and she made it clear that the programmes were not her responsibility or area of expertise. She asked Joe Lauria to wait to speak to the UK. He did not do so. Finally she later confirmed that The English Manner did not offer tours of the Palace of Westminster or entertainment there. Mr Lauria and the Sunday Times ignored any facts that detracted from their preconceived agenda. I did not speak to the Sunday Times before the first article appeared as I was away on holiday. The article was not time sensitive and the Sunday Times could have waited a few days for those who knew the facts if they'd had any interest in the truth.

Although I had briefly met the US operator I have never given her instructions or been in communication with her and certainly, as a consultant to The English Manner had no responsibility for her.

This is not the first time that the Sunday Times have attempted to ‘blacken’ my name. During the ‘Cash for Questions’ affair they implied I was implicated. When an earlier Standards and Privileges committee obtained a transcript of my conversation with the Sunday Times it showed that I rejected the advances of the Sunday Times. I was commended for this.

In Para 71, of the Commissioner’s report states: “*I have seen no evidence to suggest that either Mr. Sayeed personally or The English Manner benefited directly through the receipt of fees in relation to any of these occasions.*” This confirms that the complaint is not true.

He then goes on to say: “*I am in little doubt, however, that, taken as a whole, their effect was to give credibility to the company’s overall marketing claim that it could gain access for its clients to institutions, people and places which it would otherwise be difficult for these clients to access.*” I do not agree that this applied to the House of Commons.

With the exception of the US journalist who came to the UK to write about class and etiquette, I have made clear and it has been accepted by the Commissioner, that there were exceptional reasons as to why visitors were in the Palace at all, and a visit to the Commons was not part of their programme. Nor had they come to the UK because of the website, though I am not aware that the Commissioner checked this. As their programme did not include the Palace of Westminster, **the privileged access that the Commissioner talks about and for which they had an expectation of, referred not to the Palace of Westminster** but to places such as ducal residences, private gardens, collections, facilities and acknowledged experts in specialist fields.

The Commissioner believes that I have “*at the least been negligent*” or “*at the worst have acted carelessly*”.

Knowing now of the possibility of the deliberate and malicious distortion of my actions and motives, I would do things differently. However, at the time, having made clear to the company my concern that nothing should be done that could harm the reputation of Parliament, and having been assured, rightly that no guest was visiting the UK in expectation of receiving access to Parliament, I believed that not only was I acting properly, but that I had protected the position of Parliament and of myself from any suggestion of commercial exploitation.

It would have been negligent or careless not to have done either of those things.

However, there remains the point about impression or perception. As I am certain that none of the guests of The English Manner were under the impression or perception that they were paying for and getting privileged access to Parliament, then any impression or perception to the contrary can only flow from the website and press releases. Many of these cited by the Sunday Times had been removed from the website.

These were written, organised and controlled in the United States, the person who disregarded instructions was sacked, and although I had no contractual responsibility for vetting them, as a MP I would have been better advised had I done so, but had no reason to believe that I needed to.

I did misclassify my constituency assistant and have apologised for it. The reason for this lapse is laid out in letters to the Commissioner. However there was no effect on the public purse.

As regards the late notification of the Registrar of Members’ Interests of two visits to the United States I accept that ultimately I am to blame. The reason was due to forgetfulness on the part of my office.

The complaint should have been explicitly dismissed in the final paragraph of the committee’s conclusions as

- i. I did not “*use the Palace of Westminster for commercial purposes,*”
- ii. “*The English Manner Ltd*” has never charged “*up to £500 per day,*” or any other amount “*for access to the Palace of Westminster through Jonathan Sayeed*” or anyone else, and
- iii. As for the employment of my Constituency Assistant, no “*unacceptable conflict of interest*” took place.

The committee's conclusions should have made clear that whilst I had not exercised adequate direct control over a company in which I had an interest and should have checked more carefully its activities in the United States, the clear and accepted evidence directly refuted the complaint. They should have explicitly rejected the complaint in their final paragraph rather than only doing so in the body of their conclusions.

I do not accept that the imposition of such a severe penalty is either fair or reasonable.

3 February 2005

Jonathan Sayeed MP

Statement by The English Manner to the members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association, 3 February 2005

Statement to the members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association

The Parliamentary Committee on Standards and Privileges

Further to the publication of the Report today, the complaint against Jonathan Sayeed was based on whether 'Mr Sayeed had abused Parliamentary privilege' in respect of The English Manner and whether any fees had been accepted by Mr Sayeed or The English Manner. The basis of the complaint was fact and not supposition. The English Manner has **never received payment for tours of Parliament** or for entertaining guests there; nor have Mr Sayeed or I received payment for such tours. The complaint has absolutely no foundation and has not been upheld.

However, as the Committee continued their deliberations, the basis of the complaint appears to have shifted from fact, to perception, and this appears to us to be deeply unfair, and wrong.

There can be no perception that The English Manner or Mr Sayeed benefited from paying tours of Parliament, because there were no paying tours of Parliament, and these have never been available for sale.

Furthermore, in the Report published today, the Committee makes several fundamental errors. This is nothing short of sloppy. The evidence given to them over the period of five months has been comprehensive, helpful and detailed.

The Committee has stated that they 'do not consider Mr Sayeed's assertion that anyone entertained by him should have drawn a distinction between what had been provided by the company contractually and what he provided on a personal basis'. No paying client of The English Manner has ever been offered a visit to Parliament or access to Jonathan Sayeed MP on the basis of payment. It is likely that most visitors did not even know that Mr Sayeed was a shareholder or involved in The English Manner because they were entertained as personal friends.

The Committee cites particularly the programme devised for a visit by a Garden Club, but **incorrectly, despite evidence to the contrary**, state that the programme was "circulated in advance to the group leader which contained details of a tour with Senior MPs ...". The programme was not circulated in advance to any member of the group participating.

A second visit cited by the Committee seeks to imply that this was arranged by The English Manner when the evidence shows it was not. The group did not make payment to the company's US bank account, one member of the party, the organiser, made the payment purely to save transfer fees. The group visited Jonathan Sayeed at their request having met him previously and to discuss the possibility of an international celebration between our two countries in 2007.

It has been noted by the Committee that some material which was on the company website, designed and maintained in the USA by voluntary staff, which had been archived some time before the articles and complaint were issued, could have misleadingly given potential clients the perceived impression that tours of Parliament could be possible. This is acknowledged by us and in hindsight, we realise that this impression

could have arisen but it was completely unintentional and contrary to specific instructions given as the evidence shows.

It is clear to us that the archived material was 'dug up' for malicious purposes and an undercover journalist attempted to acquire information from an external part time consultant in the USA who is not an employee of The English Manner. Opportunities were given for him to speak to the Chairman, who would have disabused him of the impression he was seeking to create, but he declined and an article was subsequently published which led to the official complaint against Mr Sayeed by a Labour MP.

The Committee Report has **incorrectly** stated that the 'familiarisation visit' dinner would draw a very subtle distinction between promoting the commercial interests of The English Manner and a purely interesting visit to Parliament. The evidence given on several occasions has clearly stated that guests on this visit were mainly directors and potential staff members. No distinction would need to be drawn. They were in England to visit the stately homes and partners of The English Manner with whom they would be working. The purpose was not promotion of any kind.

The Committee states that Mr Sayeed has confirmed 'that there was no distinction with guests that might help them to appreciate the distinctive status of their visit to the House'. The English Manner refutes this. All guests have been invited to visit either Mr Sayeed himself or by the Chairman. Every guest will have had personal contact with Mrs Messervy prior to their visit and it was made very clear to them on every occasion that invitations to dine or visit Parliament were on a purely personal basis and formed no part of any programme which they might pursue during their stay.

The Committee states that the website gave the impression that access to Parliament was offered beyond that available to the general public. **Any member of the public can tour Parliament.** The company would not bother to offer access to something which everyone could enjoy.

There is no doubt that there has been a campaign of leaks, allegations and innuendos designed to damage Mr Sayeed and his reputation. Mr Sayeed remains a shareholder of the company, and has acted with propriety, honesty and integrity throughout.

We **utterly refute** the conclusion that the effect of visits to the House were likely to give credibility to the company's overall marketing claim, as the evidence shows above. There has been no beneficial effect on the company's business, which offers learning experiences in social fields, either in perception or in monetary value.

The Chairman of The English Manner, Alexandra Messervy, has also been subject of part of the complaint in terms of a possible conflict of interest in her role as majority shareholder and Mr Sayeed's part time Constituency Assistant. The Commissioner has confirmed that he has found no evidence to suggest this which clearly shows this is not the case. Furthermore, the Report incorrectly states that Mrs Messervy is part of Mr Sayeed's parliamentary staff, she is not. She is employed on a part time basis to assist in constituency liaison and rarely visits Parliament.

The English Manner has co-operated fully with the enquiries of the Commissioner in the course of his investigations and has offered oral and written evidence. We firmly believe that the conclusions of the Report do not properly relate to the evidence which has been so freely given, the facts printed for publication are wrong, the therefore damaging to the company and the individuals concerned, and that any court of law charged with making an objective finding of fact could never have reached the same conclusion as the Committee. The recommendation to suspend Mr Sayeed from the Commons for two weeks is totally inconsistent with the evidence and the factual findings of the Report.

Finally, we would draw your attention to the television interview given by Mr Simon Thomas MP, a member of the Committee, immediately after Report publication, when he stated that the Committee had clearly agreed no fees had been taken or paid, but that the members other than he had wished to make a point to other MPs and therefore make Jonathan Sayeed a scapegoat. This is a Committee of Parliament, not a Court of Law.

5. Letter to members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association from Mr Jonathan Sayeed

Dear Member

You will have now received a statement I sent out last Thursday 3rd and read the negative press which followed, particularly in Labour-dominated papers. I am enclosing a copy of a speech I gave on Tuesday 8th in the Commons in which I formally responded to the Committee on Standards and Privileges' Report.¹

There has been considerable speculation in both the press and constituency about my status as the Member of Parliament for Mid Bedfordshire and you have been invited to attend an Association meeting on 17 February, at which I intend to address everyone and answer questions. I also wanted to write to you to confirm my intention to remain as your Member of Parliament and to continue to work for *you* and for the people of Mid-Bedfordshire.

Firstly, I would like to assure you that I remain committed to working hard on your behalf, as I have done for the past 8 years. I continually liaise with businesses, charities, schools, healthcare teams, local councillors and constituents. I hold regular advice centres and update meetings to ensure that we can all work together effectively to get the right things done.

I have canvassed regularly since my selection as your candidate in 1995 and continue to lead teams around constituency to seek views and support. I have one of the best records in Parliament for assisting constituents and responding to their letters. I became an MP to help people and I enjoy my role immensely. I have never done anything consciously to diminish the Monarchy, Parliament or democracy.

I was elected in the General Elections of 1997 and 2001 to support and represent you and I intend to stand again at the forthcoming General Election. I recognise that there are issues to which you deserve an explanation, and I am ready to give this at the meeting.

I have been accused of risking the reputation of Parliament as a result of my involvement with the English Manner. I have divested myself of any interest in the company in order to show that I recognise that I have been criticised and to leave me clear to devote myself to the constituency and to winning the next election. Over the coming months I will be operating on a near full time basis from my home in *** to enable me to achieve this.

I would be very grateful if you would let me have your comments before 17th so that I can be sure to address whatever questions you may have. If you have reservations or concerns, please tell me; if you are kind enough to support me, then please let me know. Comments can be faxed to ***; emailed to me at ***, or sent by post to ***.

I look forward to being permitted to continue to serve you and Mid Bedfordshire.

9 February 2005

Mr Jonathan Sayeed's speech in the Debate on the Committee's Third Report of Session 2004–05 in the House of Commons on 8 February 2005

Mr Jonathan Sayeed (Mid-Bedfordshire) (Con): I accept that a complaint was brought because of ineffective internal controls in a company in which I had an interest and that as a Member of Parliament I was negligent in not checking the actions of that company. For that I apologise unreservedly to the House.

1 Official Report, 8 February 2005; cols 1463–1464.

To ensure that no such thing should happen again, I have relinquished my shares in the company and resigned as a consultant to it. As the Commissioner's report suggests, I never became involved in the company to make money; rather I agreed to help a friend with a small business start-up.

It is a fact that I gave specific instructions to that company stating that nothing should be said or done by it that affected Parliament and furthermore that I was not permitted to use my membership of this House for personal gain. It is also a fact that my consultancy with the company was strictly limited in scope and did not include any element of company management or the vetting of promotional or other material including that on a company website in the United States.

However, while I had no contractual responsibility in those areas, and was assured that my instructions were being followed, I should have recognised that as a Member of this House I needed to do more. I should have checked what was being done by the company in the United States. I did not do that, and that is why this complaint has occurred.

In addition, I misclassified my constituency assistant. The misclassification did not attract additional allowances and had no effect on the public purse. There were late registrations in the Register of Members' Interests, and I accept that it is my responsibility to ensure that the register is accurate and kept up to date. However, I never sought to hide my involvement in the company. For both these errors, however, I apologise to the House

I am pleased and relieved that after a five-month investigation the Standards and Privileges Committee has confirmed that

“there appears to be no basis for the newspaper assertions that The English Manner Ltd. charged substantial”—

and, may I add, nor any other—

“sums for arranging access to the House”

and that

“there is no evidence that Mr Sayeed received any direct benefit from any of the occasions on which he entertained in the House guests who had links with The English Manner”.

That refutes the main part of the complaint that has been made against me.

I can assure the House that I have never used my access to the House or its facilities for direct or indirect commercial benefit and I have never solicited or received any payment for any tour or entertainment within the Palace of Westminster. I can also assure the House that the Palace of Westminster did not comprise any part of a programme offered to a guest or form any part of their expectation of their visit to the United Kingdom, nor did it constitute any part of a programme for which they paid.

Some colleagues may not be aware that the findings of the Standards and Privileges Committee are not seen by the subject of the complaint until one hour before their publication. Consequently, there is no opportunity to correct errors of fact. The report contains a few errors of fact. Paragraph 12 is materially inaccurate, the concluding line of paragraph 13 is wrong, and in paragraph 14 it is clear that there has been a misunderstanding between the Committee and myself.

Specifically, paragraph 11 states that the programme was circulated in advance to the group leader. That is wrong. The programme was not circulated in advance to anyone. As judgments appear to have been made as to whether I was an indirect beneficiary appear based upon these paragraphs, it is possible that the conclusions the Committee reached would have been different had I been able to correct those mistakes. The inability to correct errors of fact is a matter that the House might care to consider in the future. Whether or not that happens, I acknowledge that though I have acted in good faith throughout, a Committee of the House has found that I should have acted with greater care and that I may have risked damaging the reputation of the House. For that I apologise.

Had *The Sunday Times*, which ran the story nearly six months ago, been interested in the truth rather than its preconceived agenda it would have reflected accurately what it was told and would have disclosed that material it said was on the company website had been removed because it was contrary to my instructions. If it had acted responsibly, it would have found that no one who visited the Commons ever came because of the website, it would have recognised that none of the guests of The English Manner were under the impression or perception that they were paying for, and receiving, privileged access to Parliament, and it would have ensured that it contacted those who knew the facts before publishing a tissue of lies.

Whatever the deficiencies of *The Sunday Times*, I recognise that as a Member of Parliament I should have thought to do more to check what was happening in the United States than my contractual duties demanded. Although the specifics of the complaint have been shown to be false, had I been more vigilant the complaint may never have occurred.

I was first elected to this place in 1983. I have never even contemplated the possibility that anything that I did or did not do would call into question either my loyalty to the House or my use of it. That my lack of care has caused questions to be asked and judgments to be made about my conduct I find deeply humiliating, and for which I tender my profound and unreserved apology to the House.

Official Report, 8 February 2005, cols 1463–4

6. Letter to Mr Jonathan Sayeed from the Commissioner

Complaints from Mrs A S Brown, Mrs V Green and others

I have received complaints from a number of your constituents, including Mrs Brown and Mrs Green, about letters circulated by you and The English Manner Limited (TEML) to members of your constituency Conservative Association in advance of the Special General Meeting of the Association held on 17 February. I enclose a copy of the letters of complaint I have received from Mrs Brown and Mrs Green, the enclosures to those letters and the initial response I sent each complainant.

The complaints I have received raise a number of separate though related issues:

1. Given that you were suspended from the House on 8 February for a period of 2 weeks, whether it was open to you to write the following day to constituency association members on House of Commons notepaper;
2. Whether, regardless of your suspension, it was in any event proper for you to write on 3 February and again on 9 February using House of Commons stationery and post-paid envelopes on what was an internal party matter;
3. Whether the time of any of your staff paid out of your parliamentary staffing allowance was used in the preparation or distribution of either document;
4. Whether other parliamentary facilities, including any database maintained by you as a Member, were used in connection with the preparation or addressing of either letter sent by you;
5. In her letter of 21 February, Mrs Brown raises the question whether (as the half label on the envelope she received containing the TEML letter appears to be the same as that on the 2 envelopes containing the letters from you) parliamentary facilities were used in any way in connection with the preparation or distribution of the TEML letter.

The House's rules on the use of its stationery and post-paid envelopes are approved by Mr Speaker and administered on his behalf by the Serjeant at Arms. The Department of Finance and Administration and I have an interest in any misuse of a Member's Incidental Expenses Provision (IEP) or staffing allowance in connection with the preparation or distribution of circular letters by Members. I have alerted both the Deputy

Serjeant at Arms and the Department of Finance and Administration to the complaints I have received and am writing with their knowledge and copying this letter to them.

As regards point (1) above, my understanding is that a Member who is suspended from the House can continue to use House stationery in connection with discharging his parliamentary duties. However, the rules on the use of original House stationery and post-paid envelopes (a copy of which I enclose) provide that, whether a Member is suspended or not, they may not be used for purposes which are not properly a charge on public funds, including supporting the return of any person to public office. They may not be used for circulars or unsolicited letters. A Member cannot use post-paid envelopes in connection with supporting the return of any person to public office. A Member cannot use House stationery, even if he has purchased it himself, which amounts to a circular used for advocating the membership of a political party or supporting the return of any person to public office.

As regards the use of the time of your staff I note that the envelopes used to despatch the 3 February and 9 February letters to Mrs Brown both carried a London SW8 frank, indicating that they were posted from the House.

I should be grateful for your response to the complaints I have received. It would be helpful if you will cover in this points 2–5 listed above, and if you will let me know how many of each of the letters dated 3 and 9 February respectively you sent out. The Committee on Standards and Privileges next meets on 8 March and it would therefore be helpful to have had your response by the end of this week if at all possible. As you are already familiar with the procedure for handling a complaint, I am not sending you another set of the guidance notes about this but if you want advice on any point or a word, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

1 March 2005

7. Further letter to Mr Jonathan Sayeed from the Commissioner

Complaint by Tom Levitt MP

I wrote to you earlier today about the complaints I have received from constituents concerning letters sent by you and The English Manner Limited (TEML) to members of the Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association. After composing my letter to you, I saw a letter from Mr Tom Levitt MP in which, as well as raising matters similar to those raised by your constituents, Mr Levitt raises a number of other related points. A copy of Mr Levitt's letter is enclosed.

The distinct issues raised by Mr Levitt are these. I number them consecutively to the points listed in my earlier letter in case you find it easier to send me a single composite reply.

6. Mr Levitt raises the question whether the TEML letter dated 3 February was written by you (or, as I had assumed, Mrs Messervy).

7. He points out that the typeface and style of the TEML letter and yours of 9 February are similar. This not only raises the question of the authorship of the two letters but of whether they were produced and printed using the same, parliamentary facilities and/or the time of your parliamentary staff.

8. He notes that your letter of 9 February invited people to contact you at your House of Commons fax number and e-mail address, and asks whether these facilities are available when a Member is suspended. My understanding is that these facilities remain available to a Member during suspension but, of course, as he is barred from the Parliamentary estate he cannot access them directly from his office but only indirectly or remotely. Moreover the facilities are not to be used at any time for non-parliamentary purposes.

Can you please say:

- a) Whether any use was made of these means of contact by recipients of your letter;
- b) How you were made aware of any responses to your letter received through these means.

9. Mr Levitt says that the telephone number at the foot of your letter is both that of your constituency office and that of Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association. He suggests that this may imply that Commons expenses are subsidising your Association's operations.

My recollection from my earlier inquiry is that you have signed an agreement with your Association relating to the provision of office and other facilities details of which are known to the Department of Finance and Administration. I should be grateful if you would confirm this and for your comment on this as on the other points Mr Levitt raises.

I am copying this letter to the Department of Finance and Administration, with an invitation to them to comment on their own understanding of the position in relation in particular to this final point.

1 March 2005

8. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr Jonathan Sayeed

Complaint from Mrs A S Brown, Mrs V Green and others and complaint by Tom Levitt MP—your letters dated 1 March 2005

I am in my constituency and will not be in the House of Commons until Tuesday 8 March. I am therefore sending across by hand a hard copy of my response to your letters of 1 March 2005, though it will have my electronic signature as I will not [be] there in person to sign it. I hope this is acceptable.

Preamble

Before dealing with the specific issues listed in your letters on 1 March, it may be helpful if I set out the background to the two mailings: the first was a copy of my statement on 3 February, and the second was my letter of 9 February and included my speech of 8 February.

You will be aware that I complained to Sir George Young Bt on 30 January 2005 that very specific leaks of the Parliamentary Commissioner's report had occurred prior to its publication and appeared in a variety of Sunday national newspapers including The Sunday Times, The Mail on Sunday and The People, and similar information appeared in the local Bedfordshire media. The comment was highly selective and only included those of the Commissioner's conclusions which were damaging to me but did not report any of the conclusions that confirmed that on no occasion was there any evidence that I or The English Manner has directly benefited in any way from anything to do with Parliament. Under the rules of the House, if I had immediately responded to those articles, I would have been in contempt of the House.

However, the media interest sparked very considerable concerns within my constituency and between 30 January and 17 February my office received directly or indirectly almost 2,000 messages from people who wanted to know what was going on, what truth there was in the accusations that appeared in the media and who were generally confused as to what was happening. The first occasion I was permitted to respond was at 11 am on Thursday 3 February when the Committee's report was published.

I understand that the Chairman of the Standards and Privileges Committee was concerned that I issued such a statement but I would suggest that not only was it proper for me to do so, but also it was necessary in order to redress the balance of the highly selective and profoundly one-sided media comment.

I immediately sent out a copy of my statement to those constituents who had requested it and to some members of my Association who are also constituents. In all, about 220 copies of the statement were sent out. As I was not permitted to use my local Association database, called 'Bluechip', I used a photocopy of my 'Christmas card' labels list for this and a subsequent mailing when writing to constituents who are also

members of my Association. This Christmas card list is maintained in a hard copy format with a copy in my office, one in my home in Bedfordshire and one held by Mrs Messervy. There are some 650 members of the Conservative Association in Mid-Bedfordshire but I was only able to send out between 170 and 190 letters to them as I was precluded from using the 'Bluechip' database and was forced to reply on my Christmas card list and other addresses I have personally collected over the 10 years since I was selected.

On 3 February, the Association Chairman, Mr Ashley Green unilaterally and without consulting the officers of the Association or the governing body, the Executive Council, sent out a notice of an emergency Special General Meeting to consider the following proposition:

“That the members of this Association have no confidence in the current Member of Parliament for Mid-Bedfordshire and wish to withdraw Mr Sayeed’s adoption and to seek another candidate to represent the Conservative Party in this constituency at the next General Election.”

The first I knew of this meeting was when someone who heard it on the local news on 3 February immediately rang my office and it was after this that copies of my statement were sent out. I was not personally informed by the Association office or the Chairman of the Association of the meeting on 17 February until I received a fax that I had requested on 8 February, even though members had been informed on 3 / 4 February.

Another letter and enclosures from the Chairman followed the notice of the meeting, again using the Bluechip database and Association funds. This was partisan, one-sided and clearly prejudicial to me. Each of these caused a furore within the membership, and considerable local speculation from constituents who are not members of my party, as well as those who are. Many rang to ask if I had resigned, was I resigning, what was happening and would I clear up the considerable disquiet and confusion. It was in response to that confusion that my letter of 9 February together with a copy of my speech of 8 February was sent.

The responses I sent out were *not unsolicited*, in that they were a response to the very large number of inquiries my office had received. Though not all the Association members who received my letter of 9 February had requested it there was such disquiet and confusion in the constituency that it was very clear that every constituent who had received the Chairman’s letters needed to know my position. Although many of the letters were the same, that was occasioned by the need for a swift response so that at least some people were aware of my position. In addition, the inquiries my office had been receiving were all of a similar nature and posed largely the same questions, thus prompting identical responses.

I do not believe that my letter of 9 February can be construed as “advocating the membership of a political party of supporting the return of any person to public office”.

I am informed that a similar letter to that of 9 February was sent to constituents who are not Association members who but who had made inquiries and requested a response. However, given that previous private meetings of the Association Executive had been consistently ‘leaked’ to the press, I was confident that the speech I was to give on 17 February and the questions that I would be required to answer would similarly appear in the press, even though the meeting was meant to be private and eligibility of those attending checked. I was therefore sure that any answers to questions that constituents, who were not Association members, had would appear in the press and therefore they would be aware of my answers. That is what transpired and three days afterwards in a constituency-wide newspaper called ‘Beds on Sunday’ a verbatim but partial report of this private meeting was published.

That letter of 9 February set out to do the following things:

- a) To give the recipient a copy of my speech so that they were aware that I recognised I had made mistakes and had apologised for them
- b) To re-assure them that I was not resigning despite the media and other speculation, particularly prompted by the motion instituted by the Chairman of the Association
- c) To state that I recognised that I had to answer for what I had done or not done

- d) To seek their comments whether they were for or against me so that I could address their concerns or views during my speech on 17 February. I was *not* requesting that they support me.

Turning now to the complaints of Mrs A S Brown, Mrs V Green and Tom Levitt MP.

Mrs V Green is the wife of the Chairman of the Association, Mr Ashley Green and as the photocopy of the envelope shows, my letter was sent to both of them. My office did query whether, in view of the Chairman's consistent and actively negative stance, I should send him a copy of my letter. My response was that as the Chairman of the Association, he had a right to know what I was saying. Mr Green, the Chairman of my Association had wrote the letter, which purports to be from Mrs Green. A Mrs Brown was none of those who contacted my office requesting a reply from me but whether it was the Mrs Brown who has made a complaint I cannot say.

You have asked me to respond to questions 2–8 and my answers are below:

2. *“Whether, regardless of your suspension, it was in any event proper for you to write on 3 February and again on 9 February using House of Commons stationery and post-paid envelopes on what was an internal party matter”.*

This was not just an internal party matter. It was a concern expressed by my constituents at large though the decision as to whether I would be permitted to continue as the Conservative candidate at the next election and hence, hopefully as the MP was a decision that only party members could make. The concerns of party members reflected the concerns of the constituency at large. I therefore believe that it was proper for me to use House of Commons stationery and post paid envelopes, bearing in mind the solicited nature of my response as referred to in my preamble. I was responding to the concerns of constituents regardless of their party affiliation. I was not urging support for any party political measure, nor canvassing support for me, rather I was requesting that people told me what questions they would wish me to answer.

Whilst Mrs Brown's letter and Mr and Mrs Green's letter were labelled, not all letters sent out with my statement were addressed in this manner—some were handwritten.

3. *“whether the time of any of your staff paid out of your parliamentary staffing allowance was used in the preparation or distribution of either document”.*

I prepared the documents though my staff, paid out of the parliamentary staffing allowance distributed them. This was largely done out of hours and in their own time, late into the night.

4. *“whether other parliamentary facilities, including any database maintained by you as a Member, were used in connection with the preparation or addressing of either letter sent by you”.*

Except where mentioned, no parliamentary facilities or parliamentary database were used with the preparation or addressing of my letter of 9 February or for external distribution of my statement on 3 February. The only exception is that photocopying of both these items was done using parliamentary facilities. In addition, PDVN was used to e-mail my statement of 3 February to a number of people.

5. *“in her letter of 21 February, Mrs Brown raises the question whether (as the half label on the envelope she received containing the TEML letter appears to be the same as that on the 2 envelopes containing the letter from you) parliamentary facilities were used in any way in connection with the preparation or distribution of the TEML letter.”*

No parliamentary facilities whatsoever were used in connection with the preparation or distribution of the TEML letter. Mrs Messervy has a copy of my 'Christmas card list' so as to be able to add to it as necessary.

You have also asked me “how many of each of the letters dated 3 and 9 February respectively you sent out.” Unlike the 1300-odd letters sent by the Chairman, I only had access to a limited number of names. In total, for the letter dated 9 February, between 170 and 190 letters were sent out.

6. *“Mr Levitt raises the questions whether the TEML letter dated 3 February was written by you (or, as I had assumed, Mrs Messervy)”.*

Mrs Messervy and her solicitor wrote the TEML letter dated 3 February.

7. *“He points out that the typeface and style of the TEML letter and yours of 9 February are similar. This not only raises questions of the authorship of the two letters but of whether they were produced and printed using the same, parliamentary facilities and/or the time of your parliamentary staff.”.*

The typeface and style of the TEML letter are a typeface and style available to anyone who uses Microsoft products. You will be able to see from earlier letters separately sent by Mrs Messervy and myself that both of us use Times New Roman as a typeface. No parliamentary facilities or the time of my parliamentary staff were used in the preparation or distribution of the TEML letter.

8. *“He notes that your letter of 9 February invited people to contact you at your House of Commons fax number and e-mail address, and asks whether these facilities are available when a Member is suspended. My understanding is that these facilities remain available to a Member during suspension but, of course, as he is barred from the Parliamentary estate he cannot access them directly from his office but only indirectly or remotely. Moreover the facilities are not to be used at any time for non-parliamentary purposes.”*

The reason my House of Commons office fax number was used was because

- It is the one that constituents are used to using
- My home fax is the same number as my telephone and it is impossible to use the two at the same time.

My PDVN e-mail address again is the one people are used to using but I had requested PDVN to set up a ‘rule’ that forwarded all my e-mails from that PDVN address to a private e-mail address, even though that was not necessary.

I did not attend the House of Commons at any time during the period I was disbarred and left immediately after I gave my speech on 8 February. I attach a copy of a letter from [The Clerk Assistant],² which sets out what I was permitted/not permitted to do, the terms of which I strictly adhered to.

- a) *“Whether any use was made of these means of contact by recipients of your letter”*
- b) *“How you were made aware of any responses to your letter received through these means.”*

My office informed me of messages they had received either by way of a telephone call that either they or I initiated or by fax to my home or by e-mail to my private e-mail address. In addition, my PA met me at the weekend in her own time and was then able to pass on letters, faxes and e-mails to me.

9. *“Mr Levitt says that the telephone number at the foot of your letter is both that of your constituency office and that of Mid-Bedfordshire Conservative Association. He suggests that this may imply that Commons expenses are subsidising your Association’s operations”.*

The footnote on my letters is a standard footnote which appears on all my letters and as you say I “have signed an agreement with your Association relating to the provision of office and other facilities details of which are known to the Department of Finance and Administration”.

2 Not appended by the Commissioner.

In his letter of 23 February, Mr Levitt queries the period of my suspension. This is just one of the points of order he raised with the Deputy Speaker, though without informing me that he would raise it, as is customary. This point is dealt with in my answer to 8. and the letter from Douglas Millar.

In his fourth paragraph, he asks if I wrote a statement from The English Manner. I have answered this in points 6 and 7 above. I understand from Mrs Messervy that she and her family undertook the whole exercise in Bedfordshire during a weekend; she paid for the postage and for the purchase of the envelopes and the paper.

I hope this covers all the questions raised. If there are points on which you want further information, please do let me know.

2 March 2005

Appendix 5: The English Manner programme for "A Gardener's Weekend Treat"



A GARDENER'S WEEKEND TREAT

May, 2004 – The Centenary Year of the Royal Horticultural Society

Tuesday, 18th May

For those who wish to arrive early, guests have a unique opportunity to join senior British Member of Parliament Jonathan Sayeed, the Chairman of The English Manner Alexandra Messervy, and invited guests for a concert to be given by **The Parliament Choir. The Parliament Choir will perform in the historic parish church of Parliament, **St. John's Smith Square**, and will sing Braham's German Requiem.**

A pre-concert champagne and canapés reception will be arranged and after the concert, Jonathan will entertain guests to dinner at the historic **Carlton Club in nearby St. James's. **Arrangements for this invitation-only event must be made by 5th April**. For those who wish to attend, separate costs will be payable.**

19th and 20th May

For those early arrivals with us, these days will be free for optional or personal pursuits. A list of recommendations can be given for those who wish, but guests should be sure to visit the **Chelsea Gardener** in Sydney Street, Chelsea; a new vibrant shopping emporium **Duke of York's Square** close by in Sloane Square; the Turner exhibition at the Tate, the new **Faberge** exhibition at The Queen's Gallery in Buckingham Palace, and, not to be missed, the **Cecil Beaton** exhibition of Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery.

Changing the Guard at **Buckingham Palace** takes place at 11:30 a.m. each day and is just a ten-minute walk from the Stafford Hotel. The area of St. James's is widely known for art galleries and tailors, with custom-made shirt, hat and shoemakers, wine merchants, clubs and restaurants. The world famous Royal Grocer, **Fortnum and Mason** is just around the corner, and a personally guided tour can be arranged for shopping here as well as special visits to **Dunhill and Co** and their humidor and museum of treasures and gifts.

The **London Eye** gives stunning bird's-eye views over London and a perfect time to view is dusk. Each round trip takes 30 minutes and tickets are available through The English Manner at minimal cost.

view the private gardens of Her Grace The Duchess of Rutland, and join her for lunch in her private dining room. For those who wish to share this very special experience, additional costs will be payable separately.**

*Items marked ** are electives and are priced separately. In some instances, a minimum number of participants may be required to go forward.*

For guests who are happy to venture slightly further afield, visit **Kew Gardens** or the **Geffrye Museum**. **Alternatively, a private visit may be arranged to **Belvoir Castle** to For those wishing to attend a theatrical or operatic performance, details of what is available can be forwarded and bookings made. Reservations can also be made at restaurants of choice. The Chairman recommends **Racine** in Brompton Road, Knightsbridge; the newly re-opened **Savoy Grill**, the **Riverside Café** and for lunches with contemporary chic, the original Sloane Ranger Chelsea pub, now transformed in to the **Admiral Codrington** in Mossop Street just behind Harrods. For spectacular views, try the **Oxo Tower**, and the Portrait Restaurant of the **National Portrait Gallery**. For those who love seafood, traditional **Wiltons** or **Sheekey's** are a must, and perhaps a visit to Mayfair's oldest fish restaurant, **Scott's**. Visit London's hippest bar, **The Metro Bar** in Hamilton Place, close to Four Seasons London. The list is endless, so please ask for more recommendations.

Friday, 21st May

Today is the official start of your trip!

*(Special Note to Guests: After consultation with [REDACTED] and a few members of the group, certain excursions have been added to the original itinerary which are outstanding and exclusive opportunities. It was felt by your organising committee that although incurring an extra cost, these could not be missed, and so you will see that your updated itinerary illustrates new experiences. These electives are marked ** as noted at the bottom of each page.*

Arrive at the airport of choice, from where guests will make their own way to the **Stafford Hotel**, located in the heart of St. James's behind Piccadilly. **Note:** If guests would like private transfers to be arranged with transportation provided by The English Manner from the airport of arrival, please make your request known to Bambi Duvall, our stateside travel consultant, and for the return journey on 26th May.

Guests of The English Manner are welcomed with morning coffee and pastries and rooms will be available for occupation as soon as possible. Every attempt will be made to have your rooms ready on your arrival; however, this is one of the busiest times of the year in London and not all rooms maybe ready for occupancy on your arrival. To make you comfortable should you have to wait, the Stafford Hotel will provide a hospitality room with coffee, tea and nibbles until al our guests are checked in.

The Stafford Hotel is a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World and Pride of Britain groups, and is just 40 paces from Green Park, a delightful spot for a stroll across to Knightsbridge or the buildings of the British Parliament. The hotel is one of a handful in London to achieve AA Red Star status and has been voted number 1 hotel in London by Andrew Harper's Hideaway Report.

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There is a delightful lounge, spacious and airy dining room, and a cosy intimate bar filled with memorabilia of previous guests. Fine wines and champagnes are available for guests to enjoy, perhaps sitting by an open fire on a chilly spring day, or an after dinner liqueur in the atmospheric terrace bar.

For those who arrive early or leave later, the weekly **clock winding ceremony** at the **Wallace Collection** is great fun. Every Friday at 1 p.m. the ceremony takes place in this wonderful treasure trove. The Wallace Collection comprises some 775 magnificent paintings, collected by the Marquess of Hertford and his illegitimate son, Sir Richard Wallace. There are 25 galleries with unsurpassed displays of French 18th Century painting, furniture and porcelain together with superb Old Master paintings.

A wonderful collection of princely arms and armour is shown in four galleries and there are further important displays of gold boxes, miniatures, sculpture and Medieval and Renaissance works of art. Private tours can be arranged each weekday through The English Manner.

The morning will be free for guests to unpack and explore or shop at leisure before departing by private transport at 2:00 p.m. with **Jonathan Sayeed MP and Genie Ford** (U.S. Director of the English Manner) for a specially arranged visit to **Gorhambury**, home of the Earl and Countess of Verulam, inside the historic and ancient cathedral city of St. Albans just 35 minutes from central London.

The Countess is Patron of the St. Albans Cathedral Campaign, together with the Chairman who sits on the fundraising appeal committee, and we are delighted that Lady Verulam has arranged for leading garden historians Ann Mallinson and Nick Thompson to guide guests around the gardens of Gorhambury and talk about the Elizabethan ruins within the grounds with members of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust.

Guests will be greeted at 3 p.m. by Lady Verulam, Alexandra Messervy and Ann Mallinson at the site of the ruins of Gorhambury, which are clearly visible from the house and gardens. For those who wish, if the weather is fine guests may walk through the gardens to the house, or return to the house by coach, and afternoon tea will be served on the magnificent Palladian terrace if the weather is fine. Guests will be free to wander around the formally laid out gardens, and view the 18th Century house, built by Sir Robert Taylor. The ruins of the first house on the estate were an Elizabethan mansion and Elizabeth I stayed there, the home of Sir Francis Bacon, her trusted confidante.

Gorhambury is closely associated with the Cathedral, built in 1077, and on the estate is the Roman theatre, Verulam. Built on the hillside where Alban, the first Christian Martyr in the British Isles, was executed by the Romans in the middle of the third century AD, the Cathedral is a magnificent sight for miles around.

Dione Verulam is not only a gentle and gracious hostess, but also an accomplished artist and painter. She has a degree in archaeology and history and has four grown up children.

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She has worked on commissions for Claridges, Hambleton Hall and Cliveden and is also President of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust. Examples of the Countess's work can be seen all over the house and if an exhibition is current, guests will receive full details on arrival. Dione was appointed High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 2002, as personal representative of Her Majesty The Queen.

Departing at 5.30 p.m. at the latest, accompanied by Jonathan Sayeed, Ann Mallinson, and Genie Ford, guests will return to London and will be deposited at the hotel. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has made arrangements for guests to have drinks with Mrs. Marshall's daughter at 6.30 p.m. Guests will make their own dinner arrangements. Alexandra Messervy will say good-bye for the day and return home from Gorhambury.

Saturday, 22nd May

Guests may take breakfast (continental breakfast is included with your accommodations) at leisure before departing via taxi for Sloane Street. Genie Ford, our U.S. Director, will be on hand to coordinate taxis through the hotel concierge, but if you prefer to handle your own, we suggest **Dial a Cab**, tel: 0207 253 6969. The journey to Pulbrook and Gould takes about 15 minutes, so we should plan to leave the hotel by 9:30 a.m.

Arriving at 9:45 for a 10:00 a.m. start, guests will spend the day at the **Lady Pulbrook Flower School**, learning advanced floral design techniques with leading tutors at a special workshop with The English Manner. Subjects covered may include hand tied bouquets working with unusual materials and working with a single colour palette of English country garden specimens with fruit, seedpods and grasses (or perhaps a dual palette of strawberries and cream with plaited leaf tuition) for table arrangements. The exact syllabus will be confirmed.

A light luncheon is included in the day. The showroom of Pulbrook & Gould, located just off Sloane Street, will be closed to the public for this day, giving our guests the opportunity of working within the upstairs showroom as well as the workrooms, and using the variety of floral displays for guidance and ideas.

Just opposite the Lady Pulbrook Flower School is the main showroom of **Jo Malone**, renowned for her skin care and fragrance products, which some guests may want to take an opportunity to visit, making their own arrangements.

Departing Pulbrook & Gould at 3:30 p.m. by taxi, guests may return to the Stafford to change before a visit we hope to arrange to the gardens of ****Winfield House**, residence of the U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James, ****** accompanied by **Jonathan Sayeed MP, Alexandra Messervy and Genie Ford**. It is our goal to have these arrangements

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confirmed well before your arrival in England, as we believe this is an experience none of our guests will want to miss. Winfield House is not open to any members of the public at any time and we are delighted that access for our special visitors may be possible.

If a visit to Winfield House proves impossible (we are awaiting permission from the White House), guests will be able to visit the beautifully restored **Spencer House**, to which Todd Longstaffe-Gowan is gardens consultant. Details to be confirmed as soon as possible. Spencer House is a three-minute walk from the Stafford Hotel.

Guests have expressed a wish to visit the markets and shops of Portobello Road during the late afternoon, which can be easily be accommodated through your own arrangements.

Due to personal connections with The English Manner, it has been possible to obtain access via private membership to the very hip and much acclaimed private club, ****Home House.**** Our guests will be accompanied by **Jonathan Sayeed MP, Alexandra Messervy and Genie Ford**, for an enjoyable evening at this wonderful venue. More details will follow soon. Dinner here is a spectacular experience and membership is truly coveted. Please note that while this is a unique experience, it is also costly as it is a private club. The English Manner is in the process of negotiating favourable rates, but at this time we are not able to confirm the cost. We will notify guests well in advance of arrival as to whether this elective event will be available.

For those who wish, using their own arrangements, it is suggested that guests may like to depart for **151 Club**, 151 Kings Road, SW3, a famous and highly acclaimed nightclub in trendy Chelsea. Non-members are admitted for a nominal fee of about 20 pounds, and bookings must be made in advance. Please notify Alexandra Messervy if you wish to visit 151. 151 Tel: 0207 351 6826.

Sunday, 23rd May

Guests will depart by private transport arranged by The English Manner at 8:15 a.m. for the outstanding **RHS Gardens at Wisley** in Surrey, accompanied by **Genie Ford**, U.S. Director. Please gather in the Lobby of the Stafford Hotel at 8:10 a.m.

We will arrive about 9:30 a.m. For those who wish a short break at this point, morning coffee can be obtained and light lunches are available in the restaurant.

Extending over 240 acres, Wisley is the flagship garden of the Royal Horticultural Society, demonstrating for 100 years the very best in gardening practices. Highlights include the magnificent Rock Garden, rock pools and alpine house, the glories of the Mixed Borders, the Country Garden and Rose Garden and the splendid array of glasshouses. Battleston Hill was very badly devastated by the hurricane of 1987 and has been replanted to observe the effects of global warming and climate change. It has recently been featured on a BBC World programme of Gardeners' World.

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Over the top of Battleston Hill is the Trials Field, where each year more than 50 horticultural trials take place. The Model Gardens show designs on a realisable scale, reflecting challenging styles and new techniques. Battleston Hill was very badly devastated by the hurricane of 1987 and has been replanted to observe the effects of

A tour of the gardens by audio prompt will be arranged, highlighting the history of Wisley and the RHS and showing seasonal highlights at this very special time of year for English gardens, giving an opportunity to walk around at leisure and view the extensive collections on offer. You should allow at least 5 hours to walk around. Our suggested departure time will be around 3:00 p.m.

From Wisley, guests will travel a short distance to the wonderful home and gardens of gardener Rosamund Wallinger, at **Upton Grey**, arriving at 4 p.m. Rosamund, author of 'Gertrude Jekyll's My Lost Garden' will host a traditional English Afternoon Tea with scones and cream in her dining room, accompanied by a talk about her restoration project and then tour the magnificent gardens. The cost of this visit and tea is approximately \$86, and includes a copy of a beautiful book on Upton Grey. We depart for our return to London at approximately 5.30 p.m.

██████████ has made dinner reservations for the group at 8.30 p.m. at **Tamarind**, 20 Queen Street, W1 (Tel: 0207 629 3561), where guests will be seated at tables of five. Guests will be asked to pay individually. Separate tables of 5 and 5.

Monday, 24th May

Please gather in the lobby of the Stafford Hotel at 8:50 a.m. Genie Ford will be on hand to arrange taxis to take you to **Lambeth Palace**, to arrive between 9:30 to 9:45 a.m. **Alexandra Messervy and Genie Ford** will join you for a visit to the gardens of Lambeth Palace, seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the **Museum of Garden History**.

Guests will then depart for a light lunch at the **Chelsea Physic Garden**, where soup, sandwiches and salads are available at reasonable cost. A table has been reserved in the Garden Café, where you can enjoy lunch before a tour of the Garden. This will be followed by a lecture with internationally acclaimed garden historian and designer, **Penelope Hobhouse**. Guests will be served a pot of tea during this lecture.

Guests will depart using their own taxi transport arrangements at 4:45 p.m. for ****Malplaquet House,**** in the City of London and home to celebrated garden historian and designer, **Todd Longstaffe-Gowan**. Todd and his partner have created a magnificent private garden at their historic Georgian home, which is full of unusual sculptures and tree ferns and has been featured in several magazines and publications, including *World of Interiors* and the *London Historic Parks and Gardens* book. A new

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book, to be published in the summer months, entitled '*The Parks and Gardens of Hampton Court Palace*' may be available for guests to view and purchase. For a future visit, Todd has very kindly agreed to take our guests on a private tour of the gardens of Hampton Court and will give lectures on landscape history.

We expect to arrive at 5:30 p.m., and champagne will be served and guests will be free to wander at leisure after a guided tour until departure at 7 p.m. The cost of today's visit is approximately \$140 per person.

The English Manner is truly fortunate that Todd and his partner are opening their home to us. Todd has recently completed the restoration of the largest private garden in London (apart from Buckingham Palace!), Aubrey House, and is noted for his preservation methods. He is Gardens Advisor to Hampton Court Palace, Vice Chairman of the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust, and his first book, '*The London Town Garden 1700-1840*' was published by Yale University Press in March 2001. Todd read Landscape Architecture at Harvard.

Guests will return to the Stafford Hotel via taxi to change for a 9 p.m. dinner reservation at **J Sheekey's**, 28-32 St. Martin's Court, WC2 (Tel: 0207 240 2565). Separate tables are not possible for groups. A special note to our guests: This is a very difficult restaurant to access and cancellation must be made well in advance. Guests may pay individually for dinner.

Tuesday, 25th May

We will be making an early start today, departing at 7:15 a.m. via taxi, accompanied by **Genie Ford**, for the world famous **flower markets of New Covent Garden**. We will meet Judith Blacklock, the Editor of '*Flower Arranger*', the international NAFAS magazine. Judith runs her own flower school in the heart of London and will give guests a guided tour of the markets. Genie Ford will be on hand to book taxis the night before with the Stafford, due to the early start.

After our visit to New Covent Garden, we will depart at 10:15 a.m. for the trip by taxi for the **RHS Chelsea Flower Show**. Tickets have been arranged for guests to spend the day at the **RHS Chelsea Flower Show**, touring the spectacular display gardens, flower tents and show highlights. Guests will be accompanied by **Sonja Waites**, Managing Director of Pulbrook and Gould, **Genie Ford** and **Alexandra Messervy**, Chairman, The English Manner.

Penelope Hobhouse and other leading experts will give guests an idea of displays to visit beforehand, so the best possible use of time is available.

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Today, the RHS Bicentenary Plant Collection of 30 plants, including new cultivars, launches at the Chelsea Flower Show. The collection, from growers such as Hillier Nurseries, Thompson & Morgan and The Guernsey Clematis Nursery, includes four new David Austin roses.

After returning to the hotel to change, guests will depart by taxi (arranged for your convenience by Genie Ford) at 6:45 p.m. for the **Palace of Westminster**, for a unique private tour and champagne reception with senior Members of Parliament and the House of Lords, and the directors of The English Manner and Managing Director of Pulbrook & Gould. After dinner, if parliamentary business allows it, there may be an opportunity to listen to the business of the day in the debating chamber of the Lords or Commons.

Transportation back to the hotel will be via taxi at traveller's expense, but we will be on hand to help locate a sufficient number of taxis for our guests.

Wednesday, 26th May

Today we say goodbye. For those who have arranged it in advance, private transport will collect you at an appointed time. For those who are transferring to the airport via taxi we suggest you arrange this in advance with the concierge of the Stafford Hotel so that you do not feel rushed. For those who wish to stay longer, we have many more opportunities for you to enjoy your visit with The English Manner.

For those guests who wish to extend their stay, visits can be arranged to the ****Beth Chatto gardens at RHS Hyde Hall**, the HDRA **Organic Gardens Trust**** at Ryton in Warwickshire, ****David Austin roses**** in the West Midlands, the wonderful gardens of **Great Dixter** near Rye and other fabulous English gardens and growers. Further details available on request.

Arrangements can also be made for guests to visit the ****Spa of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel,**** which is renowned for aromatherapy treatments and facials. Details of treatments available will be released shortly, but it is recommended that a three-hour visit be made to include an aromatherapy massage, specialised aromatherapy facial and either a rejuvenating Indian head massage or rebalancing oil techniques.

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If wished, **a private demonstration may be arranged for guests to visit the Four Seasons London, where in-house floral designer James will be delighted to talk about flowers in season and demonstrate new techniques in large scale floral design. Details on request but minimum numbers of 6 will be required. Morning coffee, afternoon tea or champagne can be served.**

On *Wednesday 26th May*, **Penelope Hobhouse will be giving a lecture to the Iran Society at the Royal Geographical Society, in Kensington Gore at 7 p.m. A licensed bar is open from 6 p.m. and tickets for her talk, entitled '*Gardens of Persia: Visions of Paradise*', should be ordered well in advance from the Iran Society, for £10 per head or about \$19.50.** For details, please telephone direct: 0207 235 5122.

Useful Information

Currency exchanges are located all over central London and most hotels will help. Please note that American Express cards are not widely taken by specialist shops and may not be used at the Chelsea Flower Show in payment for goods. Master card is widely used, and Visa.

The American Embassy can be reached on +44 207 499 9000.

The Chairman of The English Manner can be reached on +44 1525 877 437 (home) and +44 7767 784 102 (cellphone).

An emergency dentist and doctor are available through The English Manner and practitioners can also be recommended by your hotel.

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Formal minutes

Thursday 17 March 2005

Members present:

Sir George Young, in the Chair

Mrs Angela Browning
Mr Wayne David
Mr Andrew Dismore

Mr Andrew Mackay
Mr Kevin McNamara
Mr Stephen Pound

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The Committee further deliberated.

Draft Report [Conduct of Mr Jonathan Sayeed: Further Report], proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 23 read and agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Several Papers were ordered to be appended to the Report.

Ordered, That the Appendices to the Report be reported to the House.—(*The Chairman.*)

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[Adjourned till Tuesday 5 April at 9.30 am.]

Reports from the Committee on Standards and Privileges in the current Parliament

Session 2004–05

First Report	Conduct of Mr Anthony Steen	HC 71
Second Report	Conduct of Mr David Blunkett	HC 189
Third Report	Conduct of Mr Jonathan Sayeed	HC 233
Fourth Report	Review of the Code of Conduct	HC 472
Fifth Report	Conduct of Mr Jonathan Sayeed: Further Report	HC 473

Session 2003–04

First Report	Conduct of Mr George Galloway	HC 73
Second Report	Conduct of Ms Diane Abbott	HC 285
Third Report	Conduct of Mr John Spellar	HC 339
Fourth Report	Conduct of Mr Iain Duncan Smith	HC 476 I–III
Fifth Report	Privilege: Protection of a Witness	HC 447
Sixth Report	Privilege: Protection of a Witness (Government Response)	HC 1055

Session 2002–03

First Special Report	Standards of Conduct: Letters from the Committee on Standards in Public Life	HC 516
First Report	Complaint against Mr Nigel Griffiths	HC 195
Second Report	Eighth Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: "Standards of Conduct in the House of Commons"	HC 403
Third Report	Complaints against Mr Michael Trend	HC 435
Fourth Report	Complaints against Mr Henry McLeish	HC 946
Fifth Report	Complaints against Mr Clive Betts	HC 947
Sixth Report	Pay for Select Committee Chairmen	HC 1150
Seventh Report	Guidance for Chairmen and Members of Select Committees	HC 1292

Session 2001–02

First Report	Complaint against Mr Geoffrey Robinson: Supplementary Report	HC 297
Second Report	Complaint against Mr Roy Beggs	HC 319
Third Report	Complaint against Mr John Maxton	HC 320
Fourth Report	Restrictions on the Initiation of Parliamentary Proceedings: A Consultation Paper	HC 478
Fifth Report	Complaints against Mr Keith Vaz	HC 605 I–II

Sixth Report	Registration of Interests by Members who have not taken their seat	HC 624
Seventh Report	Complaints against Mr Nigel Griffiths	HC 625
Eighth Report	Complaints against Mr Archy Kirkwood	HC 755
Ninth Report	A new Code of Conduct and Guide to the Rules	HC 763
Tenth Report	Complaint against Mr Peter Brooke	HC 1147