

MR WICKS

cc Mr Alison  
Mr Ingham  
Mr Sherbourne  
Mr Addison  
Mrs Ryder

TRIPS

I understand you intend to hold a meeting about the Prime Minister's visits, following the discussion at the last diary meeting.

I would urge that the Prime Minister should not solely visit successful factories, new hospitals or strongly Conservative areas. Of course she must visit a full share of successes, but visiting the failures and the run-down areas, and talking to opponents might in the right circumstances pay dividends, both in publicity and in helping towards policy decisions.

For the Prime Minister to be associated only with successes reinforces the image that she does not know or care about the problems. And the Prime Minister can often soften her opponents (as the letter attached shows yet again).

The visit to the North East took place at a very difficult time for the area and with some trepidation. I don't know how much coverage it got, locally or nationally, but it may well have helped reduce the stridency of protests about shipbuilding closures: MPs who came to see the Prime Minister about the AOR order referred warmly to her discussions with Swan Hunter management, and the management themselves greatly appreciated it. She has herself I think been influenced by it to take a particularly close interest in the decisions in this area.

Security has of course to be a concern and the places need to be carefully chosen. But the North East visit shows it can be done. A visit to Middlesbrough is projected, which is



welcome. Other possibilities include hospitals which are soon to be replaced or streets which are to be enveloped, or council estates which are to be done up.

We don't have to wallow in problems, but it's right to recognise they are there and to show that the Prime Minister is aware of them and cares about them.

*DW*

David Norgrove

19 June 1986



The Reverend Martin Turner



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R1216

6th June, 1986

Ponie Minister 2

Our ref: That8606.1et/3W3

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

DKN  
18/6

Even meetings with opponents  
can do some good!

A few weeks ago you came to visit my Parish here in Monkwearmouth to commission the oil supply vessel.

From reports that have come back to me I have learnt, and you may be interested to hear that several people who, on account of their political beliefs, had been determined not to find any good in you were, nevertheless, in spite of themselves, impressed by meeting you and by hearing what you said on that occasion.

Now yet another threat of unemployment and redundancy hangs over this town of Sunderland with the very difficult position of the Shipbuilding Industry. On my visit today to one of the shipyards I learnt of your forthcoming meeting with the Borough Council.

The problem of unemployment is much worse than you can possibly guess from external appearances. The area of my Parish not a quarter of a mile in which you commissioned the vessel has unemployment rates of over 80%. I do urge you to do whatever you can when the Borough Council comes to visit you on the 21st June, in order to safeguard what little employment we have left here in the North East. As you yourself know, the quality of the work that can be produced here is of the very highest.

Yours sincerely  
M. Turner

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