

# Women's Parliamentary Radio

in association with the  
Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Independent parties  
brings you a national photographic display of women MPs  
90 years since women first got the vote



WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY RADIO

Creative Director: Boni Sones  
Photographer: Kieran Doherty

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"The House of Commons Works of Art Collection documents significant moments in Parliamentary history. We are delighted to have added this unique photographic record of women MPs of today, to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women first being able to take their seats in this House" – Hugo Swire, Chairman, The Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art.





## **"The day the Carlton Club accepted women" – 90 years after women first got the vote**

On May 21<sup>st</sup> 2008 over half of all women Members of Parliament in Westminster gathered party by party to have group photographs taken to mark the anniversary of 90 years since women first got the vote (in February 1918 women over 30 were first granted the vote).

The four new composite photographs taken party by party aim to ensure that a more enduring image of women's participation in the political process survives

Until now the most often used photographic image of women MPs had been the so called "Blair Babes" picture taken on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1997 shortly after 101 Labour women were elected to Westminster as a result of positive action by the Labour Party. That photo included all but two of the Labour women MPs on the steps of Church House, waving and looking up with the Prime Minister Tony Blair in the middle of the group.

Fiona Mactaggart MP said they looked like "pilot fish" around the PM. It was a defining image of its time and disliked by many (but not all) of the women who took part. (Mo Mowlam MP, took credit for first coining the phrase "Blair's Babes")

The 1997 photograph was taken by Reuters photographer, Kieran Doherty, who had climbed up the steps to get the women looking up at him and waving.

On May 21<sup>st</sup> 2008 Kieran Doherty was invited back to Westminster at the invitation of Boni Sones, founder of Women's Parliamentary Radio, to take a new photograph of the women MPs at Westminster. The four new composite photographs taken party by party

aim to ensure that a more enduring image of women's participation in the political process survives.

Each party gave its permission for the photographs to be taken. For the Labour Party, Barbara Follett MP, the then Deputy Minister for Women and Equality, and Barbara Keeley MP, who was Chair of the Labour Party Women's Committee and Caroline Adams, who works for the Parliamentary Labour Party helped ensure that all but 12 of the Labour women attended.

For the Conservative Party, The Shadow Leader of the House of Commons and Shadow Minister for Women, Theresa May MP and the Chairman of the Conservative Party, Caroline Spelman MP, enlisted the support of their women MPs. All four of the women MPs who are members of the Shadow Cabinet arrived for the first photo call and one other.



Emily Thornberry MP and Harriet Harman MP

The youngest Member of Parliament, Jo Swinson MP, got fellow Liberal Democrats to participate for her Party.

While the photographs were being taken Boni Sones read passages from her book co-authored by Margaret Moran MP and Professor Joni Lovenduski, "Women in Parliament the new Suffragettes", while Seema Malhotra, of the Fabian Women's Network, read from a poster entitled "Votes for Women, Never" circulated in 1918 by "The National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage". The poster begins: "Men of England, our interests and those of our



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families, and the welfare of the country are in danger. Rally to prevent it."

The poster was lent by Liz St Clair, Women's Officer for the Conservative Party who did a subsequent reading at the second photo call on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Kieran Doherty assembled the women on the steps at New Palace Yard, under Big Ben in the heart of the Westminster village where the women are well used to assembling to have their photographs taken. The back drop of Big Ben with the new parliamentary building of Portcullis House, designed by Michael Hopkins and Partners and opened by Her Majesty the Queen in February 2001, just over the other side of Westminster Bridge, provides an atmospheric location.

Photographic permits were sought and permissions obtained. Kieran was assisted by Pete Cook, an associate of Women's Parliamentary Radio.

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The first photo call date May 21<sup>st</sup> 2008 came the night after the controversial vote on the Human Embryology and Fertilisation Bill when lowering the legal time limit on abortions from 24 to 22 weeks had been discussed and defeated. A free vote had been allowed and passions were running high. It was also the day before the Crewe and Nantwich by-election following the death of the longest serving woman MP, Gwyneth Dunwoody.

On the international stage, it was the day after Hillary Clinton had won the Kentucky primary by a landslide margin in her hard fought fight for the Democrat Party nomination to be the Presidential candidate against Barack Obama who was still in the lead.

Just as Kieran was about to start the photo call, the Dalai Lama bid his farewell to Westminster after speaking in Parliament Hall about his position on Tibet and the protests

surrounding the Olympics in Beijing. Kieran took advantage of the spontaneous photo opportunity.

Just a few minutes later the independent MP Clare Short was first to be photographed on the steps by herself. She had resigned her position as a Labour MP over the war with Iraq and is now an Independent Labour MP.

Back in the Chamber of the House, the Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the Conservative Leader, David Cameron, were exchanging jibes in the weekly Prime Minister's Question Time over the by-election in Crewe and Nantwich and Labour's planned abolition of the 10p tax rate.

Meanwhile, the Labour women MPs began to quietly leave the Chamber to assemble for the photo call. It took considerable organisation to get all the Labour women to attend, and there were over 60 for the first shoot. Others were in Crewe and Nantwich and had agreed to be there two weeks later at the photo call on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

11 years into the Labour Government and less than a year into Gordon Brown's new premiership, Crewe and Nantwich was an important by-election. Labour lost by a margin of 17.6 percent.

The Leader of the Commons, Minister for Women and Labour Party Chair, Harriet Harman QC MP, who had been campaigning in the Crewe and Nantwich by-election, arrived ten minutes after the others and was photographed with Emily Thornberry MP who was also a fraction late.

For the first time in British political history all the three main parties had women as their Chair, Chairman, or Chairwoman. All participated in the photo call, however like Harriet Harman QC MP they were all photographed separate from their parties, either arriving early or late.



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Caroline Spelman MP

Caroline Spelman MP arrived early, as she was on her way to chair a meeting, but eagerly conveying the news that for the first time in its history the Conservative Carlton Club had just voted to admit women as full members. She was quoted in the Times the next day saying she was "delighted" by the change but she saw "no reason to join", as she had a house in London. Theresa May MP was the first woman Chairman of her party and has been influential in changing her party's all-male image as co-founder of the Women2Win campaign. She was the first woman

Chairman of any major British political party.

The Chair of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party, Lorely Burt MP, arrived late for her group's photo call having been talking about last night's vote on the Embryology Bill to BBC Radio.

It's impressive to gather so many women across party together in this way and photograph them so quickly. The handful of women MPs who are independent members of parliament had also been invited to attend. None of the groups tried to create hierarchy when they posed for the cameras.

The second photo call on June 3<sup>rd</sup> was also successful. The week's news had been dominated by the tough task facing the Home Secretary Jacqui Smith MP to push through the power to allow pre-charge detention for terrorist suspects for up to 42 days. On the Monday she addressed a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and received a good press the next day for arguing her case persuasively. At the same time over in the USA there was speculation that Hillary Clinton would have to concede

defeat to Barack Obama. By the end of the week she did. Smith's 42 day reform won a narrow victory in the Commons the following week.

The June 3<sup>rd</sup> photo call had slightly misty weather, but the skies brightened, much to Kieran Doherty's delight. All the remaining 4 Liberal Democrat women arrived, as did 6 more Conservative women, but like the Labour women some were shot separately as they rushed to and fro. In that rushing Kieran Doherty took advantage of a lighter moment in the schedule when Vera Baird QC MP, the Solicitor General, arrived and as the tallest woman in Westminster met the shortest woman, Sarah Teather MP, the Liberal Democrat's Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory reform. They were photographed back to back on the steps of new Palace Yard. Vera is 5ft 11 1/2 inches tall and Sarah is 4ft 10 inches tall.

**For the first time in British political history all the three main parties had women as their Chair, Chairman, or Chairwoman.**

In the event the team came back the next day for an unscheduled shoot to meet Jacqui Smith MP and three other labour MPs after PMQs on Wednesday June 4<sup>th</sup> for a third and final photo call as Jacqui Smith MP wanted to attend but had not been able to previously. Boni Sones read from the poster "Votes for Women Never" this time. The MPs clearly found the poster funny and the police officers on duty watching the proceedings asked if they could take a copy home to show their wives!

In all, 104 out of a possible 125 women were photographed. Three women MPs had died since 2005.





## **"The day the Carlton Club accepted women" – 90 years after women first got the vote**

All the women MPs in the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinets took part. For Labour there were five, Hazel Blears MP, Yvette Cooper MP, Harriet Harman QC MP, Ruth Kelly MP, and Jacqui Smith MP.



Lorely Burt MP

The Conservatives' Shadow Cabinet had four women MPs: Cheryl Gillan MP, Theresa May MP, Caroline Spelman MP, and Theresa Villiers MP.

The Liberal Democrats had five: Lynne Featherstone MP, Julia Goldsworthy MP, Susan Kramer MP, Sarah Teather MP, and Jenny Willott MP.

For Labour 83 out of a possible 95 attended, all 9 of the Liberal Democrats, 11 of the 17 Conservative women and one Independent, Clare Short MP. A remarkable achievement for all.

### **Further history**

At the General Election of May 2005, 128 women were elected as Members of Parliament, the highest number ever, with one in five MPs now a woman. That number subsequently reduced to 125. Of these MPs, 95 are Labour, 17 conservative and 9 Liberal Democrat, 1 Democratic Unionist, 1 Sinn Fein and 1 Ulster Unionist, 1 Independent Labour.

The Representation of the People Act 1918 received Royal Assent on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1918, it gave the vote to women over thirty years of age. In 1928 the voting age for women was lowered to 21 years, the same as for men, by the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act. It received Royal Assent on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1928.

On March 8th 2008, International Women's Day, and 90 years since women first got the vote, women and men MPs from all parties

gathered round the statue of the suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst near the Lords "Black Rod" entrance to Parliament, to sing songs and celebrate the occasion. They also visited the broom cupboard where the militant suffragette Emily Wilding Davison, hid on the night of the 1911 census to give her address as the House of Commons. She died falling under the King's Horse on June 4<sup>th</sup> at the 1913 Derby, at Epsom.

The MPs sang the "Battle hymn of the Republic" written during the American Civil War with words adapted by Barbara Follett MP, the then Equalities Minister. An audio report of that celebration can be listened to on Women's Parliamentary Radio, [www.wpradio.co.uk](http://www.wpradio.co.uk).

Boni Sones is co-author of the book "Women in Parliament: The New Suffragettes", with Margaret Moran MP and Professor Joni Lovenduski. Most of the audio interviews for the book are now in a special archive at the British Library with permission of the women MPs themselves thanks to Dr Rob Perks, Curator of Oral History, of the Sound Archive. Margaret Moran MP held a copy of the book for the photo call. All interviews on wpradio.co.uk are archived by the web archive team at the British Library.

The House of Commons has already acquired one of the sets of 25 of the four portraits for its permanent collection. Hugo Swire MP, Chairman, The Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art said:

"The House of Commons Works of Art Collection documents significant moments in Parliamentary history. We are delighted to have added this unique photographic record of women MPs of today, to mark the 90th anniversary of women first being able to take their seats in this House."



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**Maria Eagle MP, Deputy Minister for Women and Equalities**

“ Britain is a more equal society today than it was eleven years ago when 101 Labour women MPs were elected. We had almost trebled the number of Labour women MPs and doubled female representation in the House of Commons in one general election. That increase has been particularly beneficial to women and, over the past decade, the gender pay gap has been reduced; maternity leave has been extended; the number of childcare places has been doubled and parents of children under the age of six have won the right to request flexible working.

However, still only 20% of the members of the House of Commons are female and we rank a rather shameful 51<sup>st</sup> on the international women's representation league table. Even more worrying is the fact that we have only 2 Black women MPs and not a single Asian one.

The Government is committed to correcting this democratic deficit by helping more women get into public life by extending all women shortlists for parliamentary candidates to 2030; setting up a taskforce to help more Black, Asian and minority ethnic women become councillors and introducing a new, 21<sup>st</sup> century, Equality Bill to make Britain fairer for everyone.

”

**Theresa May MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons and Shadow Minister for Women**

“ This is a wonderful achievement which marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women first getting the vote, but which I hope will have lasting benefit in showing women that politics is for them. We need to show positive images of women in Parliament to encourage others to aspire to stand and be elected. This is the first time that such a positive image of women across all parties in Parliament has been put on public view. Well done to all for achieving this milestone.

”

**Lynne Featherstone MP, Liberal Democrat Equalities Spokesperson**

“ These great images tell us two things about women in Parliament - one, how far we've come and two, how far we have to go. Sadly a similar photo of the males MPs would still take up four times as much wall space of the National Portrait Gallery.

In the first 90 years we have certainly made our mark, but it shouldn't take another 90 before the number of male and female MPs are equal. We owe a debt of gratitude to suffragettes who fought so hard for us to get where we are, but we must fight with the same zeal to finish what they started.

”





## **"The day the Carlton Club accepted women" – 90 years after women first got the vote**

### **Clare Short MP, Independent Labour**

“ It is important not to forget the contribution the original suffragettes made to the lives of women in this Country. This year marks 90 years since women over 30 were given the vote and in July, it will be 80 years since the voting age was lowered to 21 for women. I am pleased that women of all parties took part in this photographic portrait, party by party, so that there is a visual image to show just how far women have progressed and how much work there is still to do to get more women MPs in parliament.

”

### **Barbara Keeley, MP the then Chair of the, Parliamentary Labour Party Women's Committee**

“ Taking the photograph of Labour women MPs was an important event. I was elected in 2005 in the intake of Labour MPs which was two thirds women - the first time any political party had a predominantly female intake of MPs. In 2008, with important anniversaries of women's suffrage, the photo of the group of Labour women MPs makes an important statement about the progress we have made on the representation of women in Parliament. I would like to thank Boni Sones for organising this event.

”

### **Jo Swinson MP, who got fellow Liberal Democrats to participate for her Party**

“ 90 years on from women getting the vote, it is important to celebrate the achievements of the women's suffrage movement. Bringing all the women MPs together for photographic portraits is a lovely way to

commemorate the anniversary. However the small number of women MPs is a reminder to us all that we must redouble our efforts to get more women elected and make equality a reality.

”

### **Jackie Ashley, Chair of Women's Parliamentary Radio**

“ Kieran Doherty's photographic viewing is a remarkable achievement for all concerned. To be able to take photographs of this many women MPs this quickly shows the true talents of a news photographer at the top of his profession. Kieran remained cool throughout and fully in command of his art as the women leapt in and out of the photographs. He even managed to capture the Dalai Lama as he bid his farewell to Westminster after speaking in Parliament Hall and the tallest and shortest female MPs standing back to back. It was a really historic day on many fronts.

”

### **Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [wpradio.co.uk](http://wpradio.co.uk)**

“ When I co-authored the book "Women in Parliament: The New Suffragettes", with Margaret Moran MP and Professor Joni Lovenduski, in 2005, I stated in the introduction that when you walked around galleries like the National Portrait Gallery all you could see were male MPs waving order papers. A prominent national visual image of our women MPs in Westminster is needed in galleries and museums to show all women that politics is a career they can aspire to and to mark the considerable achievements of contemporary female MPs, 90 years since women first got the vote.

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**“The day the Carlton Club accepted women” – 90 years after women first got the vote**

## **Women MPs in Westminster photographs taken May 21st, June 3rd, June 4th, 2008**

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### **Labour**

1. Diane Abbott	<i>Hackney North and Stoke Newington</i>
2. Hilary Armstrong	<i>North West Durham</i>
3. Charlotte Atkins	<i>Staffordshire, Moorlands</i>
4. Vera Baird	<i>Redcar</i>
5. Margaret Beckett	<i>Derby South</i>
6. Anne Begg	<i>Aberdeen South</i>
7. Roberta Blackman-Woods	<i>City of Durham</i>
8. Hazel Blears	<i>Salford</i>
9. Lyn Brown	<i>West Ham</i>
10. Dawn Butler	<i>Brent South</i>
11. Katy Clark	<i>North Ayrshire and Arran</i>
12. Ann Coffey	<i>Stockport</i>
13. Rosie Cooper	<i>West Lancashire</i>
14. Yvette Cooper	<i>Pontefract and Castleford</i>
15. Mary Creagh	<i>Wakefield</i>
16. Ann Cryer	<i>Keighley</i>
17. Janet Dean	<i>Burton</i>
18. Angela Eagle	<i>Wallasey</i>
19. Maria Eagle	<i>Liverpool, Garston</i>
20. Louise Ellman	<i>Liverpool, Riverside</i>
21. Caroline Flint	<i>Don Valley</i>
22. Barbara Follett	<i>Stevenage</i>
23. Helen Goodman	<i>Bishop Auckland</i>
24. Nia Griffith	<i>Llanelli</i>
25. Harriet Harman	<i>Camberwell and Peckham</i>
26. Sylvia Heal	<i>Halesowen and Rowley Regis</i>
27. Patricia Hewitt	<i>Leicester West</i>
28. Meg Hillier	<i>Hackney South and Shoreditch</i>
29. Margaret Hodge	<i>Barking</i>
30. Sharon Hodgson	<i>Gateshead East and Washington West</i>
31. Kate Hoey	<i>Vauxhall</i>
32. Bev Hughes	<i>Stretford and Urmston</i>
33. Joan Humble	<i>Blackpool North and Fleetwood</i>
34. Sian James	<i>Swansea East</i>
35. Diana Johnson	<i>Kingston Upon Hull North</i>
36. Helen Jones	<i>Warrington North</i>
37. Lynne Jones	<i>Birmingham, Selly Oak</i>
38. Tessa Jowell	<i>Dulwich and West Norwood</i>
39. Sally Keeble	<i>Northampton North</i>
40. Barbara Keeley	<i>Worsley</i>
41. Ann Keen	<i>Brentford and Isleworth</i>
42. Ruth Kelly	<i>Bolton West</i>
43. Jane Kennedy	<i>Liverpool, Wavertree</i>
44. Fiona Mactaggart	<i>Slough</i>
45. Judy Mallaber	<i>Amber Valley</i>
46. Chris McCafferty	<i>Calder Valley</i>
47. Kerry McCarthy	<i>Bristol East</i>
48. Sarah McCarthy-Fry	<i>Portsmouth North</i>
49. Siobhain McDonagh	<i>Mitcham and Morden</i>
50. Shona McIsaac	<i>Cleethorpes</i>
51. Ann McKechin	<i>Glasgow North</i>



**“The day the Carlton Club accepted women” – 90 years after women first got the vote**

52. Rosemary McKenna	Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East
53. Gillian Merron	Lincoln
54. Laura Moffatt	Crawley
55. Madeleine Moon	Bridgend
56. Margaret Moran	Luton South
57. Jessica Morden	Newport East
58. Julie Morgan	Cardiff North
59. Kali Mountford	Colne Valley
60. Meg Munn	Sheffield, Heeley
61. Sandra Osborne	Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock
62. Bridget Prentice	Lewisham East
63. Dawn Primarolo	Bristol South
64. Linda Riordan	Halifax
65. Joan Ruddock	Lewisham, Deptford
66. Christine Russell	City of Chester
67. Joan Ryan	Enfield North
68. Alison Seabeck	Plymouth, Devonport
69. Angela Smith	Basildon
70. Angela Smith	Sheffield, Hillsborough
71. Jacqui Smith	Redditch
72. Anne Snelgrove	Swindon South
73. Helen Southworth	Warrington South
74. Phyllis Starkey	Milton Keynes South West
75. Gisela Stuart	Birmingham, Edgbaston
76. Dari Taylor	Stockton South
77. Emily Thornberry	Islington South and Finsbury
78. Kitty Ussher	Burnley
79. Joan Walley	Stoke-on-Trent North
80. Lynda Waltho	Stourbridge
81. Claire Ward	Watford
82. Betty Williams	Conwy
83. Rosie Winterton	Doncaster Central

**Conservative**

1. Mrs Cheryl Gillan	Chesham and Amersham
2. Julie Kirkbride	Bromsgrove
3. Mrs Eleanor Laing	Epping Forest
4. Miss Anne McIntosh	Vale of York
5. Theresa May	Maidenhead
6. Mrs Maria Miller	Basingstoke
7. Mrs Caroline Spelman	Meriden
8. Mrs Theresa Villiers	Chipping Barnet
9. Angela Watkinson	Upminster
10. Ann Widdecombe	Maidstone & The Weald
11. Ann Winterton	Congleton

**Liberal Democrat**

1. Annette Brooke	Mid Dorset and North Poole
2. Lorely Burt	Solihull
3. Lynne Featherstone	Hornsey & Wood Green
4. Sandra Gidley	Romsey
5. Julia Goldsworthy	Falmouth and Camborne
6. Susan Kramer	Richmond Park
7. Jo Swinson	East Dunbartonshire
8. Sarah Teather	Brent East
9. Jenny Willott	Cardiff Central

**Independent Labour**

Clare Short	Birmingham, Ladywood
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**“The day the Carlton Club accepted women” – 90 years after women first got the vote**

**Other 21 women MPs in Westminster since 2005 not photographed**

## Labour

Janet Anderson



Liz Blackman



Karen Buck



Celia Barlow



Ann Clwyd



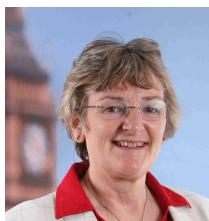
Claire Curtis-Thomas



Natasha Engel



Linda Gilroy



Glenda Jackson



Anne McGuire



Ann Moffat



Geraldine Smith





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## Conservative

Angela Browning



Nadine Dorries



Justine Greening



Jacqui Lait



Anne Main



Anne Milton



## Sinn Fein

Michelle Gildernew



## Ulster Unionist Party

Lady Sylvia Hermon



## Democratic Unionist Party

Mrs Iris Robinson



Women MPs who died in this parliament since 2005:

Patsy Calton, (LD)



Rachel Squire, (Lab)



Gwyneth Dunwoody, (Lab)





## **"The day the Carlton Club accepted women" – 90 years after women first got the vote**

To the three remarkable Garrett sisters of Leiston. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first English woman Doctor, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, the first president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, and Agnes Garrett, the first woman interior designer. To all women suffragists present and past. Their story is our story.

### Thanks

Thanks to Melanie Unwin, Deputy Curator, Palace of Westminster, and Neil Evans, Senior Press Officer of the National Portrait Gallery, for their advice on the photo call display.

Additional thanks to journalist Jackie Ashley, Vera Baird QC MP, Judy Mallaber MP, Margaret Moran MP, Guy Barnard, Dan Beagle, Lucy Fairbrother and Sophie Kainradl. Thanks to all who helped and co-operated with this project in all political parties.

Copyright for the photographs belongs to Boni Sones.



Boni Sones  
Creative Director



Kieran Doherty  
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Editing Pete Cook ScreenSpace.

Thanks also to



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As Caroline Spelman MP, Chairman of the Conservative Party, arrived for the photo call she announced that "The Carlton Club" had just voted to accept women. The display is entitled "The Day the Carlton Club accepted women – 90 years after women first got the vote."

## Labour's Vera Baird MP and the Liberal Democrats' Sarah Teather MP



Kieran Doherty took advantage of a lighter moment in the schedule when Vera Baird MP, the Solicitor General, arrived and as the tallest woman in Westminster met the shortest woman, Sarah Teather MP, the Liberal Democrats' Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. They were photographed back to back on the steps of New Palace Yard. Vera is 5ft 11 1/2 inches tall and Sarah is 4ft 10 inches tall.