

# **UK Renewal**

***A newsletter for those who want to restore our country's  
independence and self-belief***

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## **No dissent at Farage's Clapfest**

### **UKIP Conference 2008 at Bournemouth**

The 2008 UKIP conference was held at the Bournemouth International Conference Centre over two days, Friday and Saturday, September 5-6.

It seems that everything in the garden is lovely, for not a single word of dissent was heard from any of the speakers during the whole of the two days. But then party conferences these days are not about debate; they are rallies of the faithful. So everyone dutifully applauded when it was thought right to applaud, dutifully laughed at even the weakest of jokes, and dutifully rose for the customary standing ovations.

The facilities at the Bournemouth International Centre were excellent, and this was matched by the UKIP organisation on the ground. Tribute must be paid to the local branches working in conjunction with Head Office staff for the way the conference was handled – as far as I could see it was faultless.

John Whittaker, the outgoing chairman, manfully tried to raise spirits. "I think this Party is in fine shape", he said at the start of the conference.

Bob Spink, the MP who has come over from the Conservatives, eulogised Nigel Farage "as a man of principle" (applause). His was a cheerful speech, but just a little too platitudinous.

The next speaker was a James Whale. Your correspondent (who follows the Middle Class Commandment – thou shalt have no radio but Radio 4) has to confess to not knowing quite who James Whale is. But James Whale is obviously some sort of celebrity, and his presentation was obviously intended as the comic turn. He did his best to cheer everyone up. His political message, as far as I could gather, was that he liked Nigel Farage, he detested smoking, and he wanted the Welsh language ("only spoken by a couple of Druids and some shepherds in Patagonia") abolished.

I waited for someone to shout out *Naddigon am y tro !\** (he had been going on a bit too long), but there did not seem to be any Druids in the audience. Anyway heckling is no longer appropriate at a UKIP conference. It would be like shouting out in church – it might relieve your feelings, but it would upset the devout.

(\* = 'That's enough for now'),

After a refreshment break, we had the parade of a limited selection of candidates for the 2009 European Parliament elections. There was, of course, no suggestion that the method by which they had been selected is being widely criticised for its dubious nature. Each candidate was introduced by Clive Page, from the press office, and at least his jokes were funny. Whatever it is that James Whale does for a living, Clive would almost certainly do it better.

An old and important business associate of mine lives in Bournemouth, and as he was flying to Singapore the next day, Friday lunch was the only opportunity we could meet. This meant that I missed Nigel Farage's speech, which of course was *lèse-majesté*, but everyone, after expressing astonishment that I should take the trouble to come to conference and then miss its highlight, assured me that it was "very good". I have of course studied it since, because some have claimed that there are hidden messages of veering to a less anti-EU stance. If there are, I cannot see them.

There was a policy forum in the afternoon, with another on the Saturday morning, and I found these the most positive features of the conference. The policies which have been produced under David Campbell Bannerman's working parties ('Restoring Britishness', 'The British Constitution', 'Welfare and Workfare', 'Transport' and 'Defence') achieve the difficult combination of being well thought out, based on principle, and being electorally attractive.

A question and answer session, with pre-selected questions (none of them awkward), showed that John Whittaker is good on tax and finance, and that Nigel Farage, as we know, is quick on the uptake and able to give punchy replies. I did not note down, and cannot remember, a single thing that any of the other panellists said.

Tim Aker of the Taxpayers Alliance and UKIP's own Tim Congdon gave illuminating addresses on Monday afternoon, the first describing shocking examples of the Government's financial wastefulness, and the second, closely argued, showing how the Northern Rock crisis was atrociously mismanaged, partly because of trying to comply with EU requirements, or interpretations of those requirements.

There were three conference motions where selected delegates from the floor could actually speak, and they were on the 'safe' subjects of genetically modified crops, giving UKIP the strapline of the 'Common Sense Party', and global warming.

The level of debate of these motions was high, with all the contributions intelligent and well argued. Perhaps, therefore, one day we can have a proper party conference, where ordinary party members get to speak for 80% or 90% of the time instead of less than 15%.

Certainly a positive feature of this conference was the higher than usual proportion of articulate young people who are coming forward in UKIP.

One session that could have been done away with had Gawain Towler, Mike Natrass and Graham Booth all telling us what a dreadful institution the European Parliament is. We knew that. What we do not know is why they are all so keen to get there, but no-one tackled that question which is of course the Great UKIP Conundrum.

## ***Concerns at the Collingwood***

The Collingwood Hotel in Bournemouth was the setting for a fringe meeting on the eve of the UKIP conference. Geoffrey Kingscott had invited a number of UKIP colleagues to join him for a discussion on concerns of what is happening to the Party, and others, who had heard about the meeting, had asked if they could attend. The meeting was very different in atmosphere and personnel from the 'Grassroots' and 'Phoenix' meetings held earlier in the year, since many of those at those previous meetings had decided not to come to the conference. Those present at the Collingwood included five persons who had tried to take part in the selection process.

The main subject for discussion was the process of selecting UKIP candidates for the 2009 European Parliament elections. After much discussion it was agreed to ask for the "parade of candidates" due to take place the following morning to be cancelled because of the serious question marks over the whole selection process, and that the whole process should be re-structured and re-run under the supervision of an independent body such as the Electoral Reform Society.

Another subject for discussion was the re-structuring of the Party, and ways to make the National Executive Committee (NEC) both more accountable to the members and more representative of the different areas of the country. One system proposed was for branch chairmen to elect county chairmen, who themselves would elect NEC representatives. The argument was that activists knew who the ablest and most reliable people in the Party were.

A graphic description was given to the meeting of how Nigel Farage dominated the NEC discussions, and how the 'silenced majority' (everyone except David Abbott, Eric Edmond and Delroy Young) never dared contradict him or vote against him.

No names (apart from Geoffrey Kingscott) of anyone attending the meeting are given in this report, in order to protect the participants.

## Charlemagne Prize for UKIP ?

A group of us are thinking of proposing the UK Independence Party for the Charlemagne Prize, awarded annually to an individual or organisation which has contributed the most to advancing the cause of European unity.

UKIP, we maintain, is now the most EU-centred of all the British political parties.

Just look at the facts.

Firstly, the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties all know that the European Parliament is a sham parliament, a political irrelevance, and one that is not covered by the British media. So they send their third and fourth teams, politicians who are not thought up to playing in the big leagues any more. Only UKIP sends its first XI and only UKIP presents the spectacle of its leading figures clambering over one another to get an MEP's seat. UKIP is the only British party which seems to think that its presence in the European Parliament is important.

UKIP's young members are to be EU-blooded. At the UKIP party conference held in Bournemouth it was announced that the leaders of the UKIP youth movement would be rewarded by giving them positions as "stagiaires" in Brussels. It is rather like the old days of fox hunting when a youngster hunting for the first time had the privilege of having his face being smeared with the blood of the fox, a sort of rite of initiation. But, to change the metaphor, perhaps it is to give them a taste of the gravy on the gravy train.

Then there is UKIP's overt pan-Europeanism. The European Union wants everyone to think of themselves as European first, and then Regional next (East Midlander, Breton etc.). National identities are to go by the board. This is why the European Parliament dangles money in front of greedy MEPs if they will cease to be national in character and instead join pan-European groups. UKIP of course fell right into this trap and helped to create the IndDem Group.

We should recall that in the 1994 European elections David Steel, anxious to show how pan-European his Liberal Democrats were, fought a seat in Italy. But the attempt did not succeed, and has never been imitated by any political party in any EU country. Until now. Only UKIP intends to put up, in the 2009 European elections, someone who is not a British citizen, and not even (we understand) a UKIP member – Marta Andreassen. How admirably pan-European.

And where is UKIP's press office? It is actually housed in the European Parliament building in London. I do not think any other British political party would even dare to admit that its press office was housed in an EU building.

It certainly looks as if, behind all that anti-EU rhetoric, UKIP is really playing along with the EU. How many times, for example, have we campaigned against the EU-imposed regions? But how is UKIP itself organised? By EU regions, with Regional Organisers (MEP-appointed, not elected) to keep us all in line.

By the way, this might be a good time to consider the implications of the constitutional policies put forward at the 2008 UKIP conference. Elections to the UK Parliament, UKIP say, should continue to be constituency-based but use the alternative vote system. Quite so. An excellent proposal which will command wide respect. The Labour and Conservative parties are themselves hypocritical on this issue. They would not dream of using the first-past-the-post system when it comes to electing their own leaders; it would be so demonstrably unfair. There is a proper elimination process, and that encourages those vying to be party leader to seek consensus.

BUT: there is one British political party which uses first-past-the-post system to elect its leader. Now which one can that be? Yes, you've guessed it: UKIP. We used to use the alternative vote, but in the last constitutional changes someone sneaked in first-past-the-post to replace it. So Nigel Farage is the only party leader who was elected on a first ballot by a minority of his party, not by a consensus.

It is all part of the same pattern. UKIP is the "Do as we say, not as we do" Party.

So UKIP condemn the EU gravy train, but UKIP MEPs do seem to have taken to the Brussels lifestyle. And now we hear that the Liberal Democrats have briefed their canvassers to say to anyone thinking of voting for UKIP: "Oh, they are the MEPs who are not transparent with their expenses and allowances".

All we need now is for those who award the Charlemagne Prize to look behind the UKIP rhetoric, and judge UKIP by its actions. We are confident they will conclude that UKIP, as represented by its leadership, is the most EU-oriented party of all. What a triumph that will be! The Charlemagne Prize for Britain!

## **Paul Nuttall becomes UKIP Chairman**

It was announced at the Party Conference, and on the UKIP website, that John Whittaker has resigned from the chairmanship of the Party and that he has been succeeded by Paul Nuttall.

Paul Nuttall accepted without knowing the appointment was subject to NEC approval.

Geoffrey Kingscott wrote to John Whittaker on Sunday, September 7, "I am sorry to trouble you again, but the party website states unequivocally that Paul Nuttall has been appointed Party Chairman. But surely he cannot become

chairman until he has been approved by the NEC (Constitution, article 11.1). Is this a political party or a one-man band?"

John Whittaker replied on September 9 that "Paul was formally approved as party chairman by the NEC at its meeting yesterday; his chairmanship had been informally approved prior to conference by a majority of NEC".

In any properly democratic organisation, that would not be good enough. A constitutional appointment needs to be made at a duly convened meeting. There was no suggestion at conference or on the website that the appointment was subject to NEC approval.

In any case, even for "informally approved", the question immediately arises: "Approved how"? Let us guess. Either Nigel Farage telephoned all his Men of Putty and Women of Putty on the NEC (leaving out David Abbott, Eric Edmond and Delroy Young) asking for their approval, OR – and in our opinion at UK Renewal I am afraid we think this is the more likely – he did not even bother to do that. He knows they will never gainsay him.

Because, if you think about it, all it would have taken would be a form of words at the conference – "Nigel Farage is going to propose at Monday's NEC that Paul Nuttall be appointed as your new chairman", and the niceties would have been observed.

In the difficult task of winning political support it is often a good idea to observe the niceties, rather than let your contempt for democratic procedure show too openly.

### **Newspapers fall for Annabelle Fuller story**

A bizarre story appeared in the Independent newspaper on Saturday, September 6, the second day of UKIP's Bournemouth conference, with a truncated version of the same story in the Mail on Sunday.

The journalists with bylines over the story were James Macintyre for the Independent and Brendan Carlin for the Daily Mail, but they do not seem to have queried the kernel of the story given to them.

In both cases there were photographs of Annabelle Fuller, presumably taken on the same occasion (the clothes were identical) looking sad and vulnerable. The story was that she had been forced to resign from her post as "the party's press officer" (Independent) or "top aide to UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage" (Mail on Sunday) because of threatening telephone calls, including one at 3 a.m. (both papers had this) accusing her of being "a whore". The Mail on Sunday must have asked the obvious question, because Fuller is quoted as saying that she had never reported it to the police because she had been told that is what happened in politics and the perpetrators were not trying to get at her but at Nigel Farage. Farage is quoted, again by the Mail on Sunday, as defending Fuller and saying: "She is a bloody good writer

and a very good press officer. She decided to move on because she got p\*\*\*\*\* off with politics. I don't blame her".

Did she receive abusive telephone calls of the type described over a two year period without saying anything about them? We have to take her word for her on that. If such calls did take place, then that is of course deplorable. There are some loonies and fanatics in politics, and anything is possible. Certainly any future calls of that nature must be reported to the police.

It will be noted that there is no reference to Fuller leaving her job after the leak of a media test interview with John West to YouTube, complete with unflattering comments, after John West had protested against his elimination from the MEP selection process. She said she had unfortunately left the laptop containing all the media interviews in a taxi. So the Independent reporter does not seem to have delved very far into the circumstances of her departure from her press officer job. There was another mysterious reference, as another reason for Fuller's resignation, to "an irrevocable breakdown in working relationships with my closest colleagues", which is not explained, and is difficult to interpret.

But the important point is the interpretation that has been put on the abusive calls in the stories given to the papers. They were "part of a wider plot to undermine Mr Farage". The Mail on Sunday does not take this point any further, but the Independent really goes to town on this.

Farage, we were told, if facing an attempted coup to unseat him by several factions in the Party, including one with links to the BNP and another "still loyal to his predecessor". Really?

At UK Renewal we believe that Farage is a disastrous leader, and we would like to see him leave that post, but no-one has confided in us about these plots. Indeed we cannot see any immediate chance of getting rid of Farage, because he is supported by a unswerving (some would say, intimidated) majority on the National Executive Committee.

One plot is apparently led by Andrew Edwards, "former UKIP member who was removed from the party after it had emerged he had links to the BNP". Andrew Edwards, who he? All we know is that his name is connected with emails which go out criticising UKIP and implicitly promoting the BNP. He is out on the far periphery of Eurosceptic politics and has zero influence in UKIP. He must have been very flattered to have been approached by The Independent.

Then there is the curious phrase: "Back at Ukip's headquarters, at least four senior party figures – including one who gave money to the US associate of the BNP – are said to be seeking Mr Farage's removal".

"At Ukip's headquarters" is an odd phrase, but one interpretation is that it could be part of a ploy to shut down the head office at Lexdrum House and move everything to somewhere more closely under the leader's control.

One of the four senior party figures is identified. It is our Dr David Abbott, who incidentally hardly ever visits Lexdram House. His donation to the American Friends of the BNP, which is constantly raked up whenever Farage wants to discredit David Abbott, happened between eight and nine years ago, before David Abbott rejoined UKIP. As has been explained time and time again, David Abbott is someone known to give generously to a wide range of causes, and advantage was once taken of this readiness to give money readily. "Dr Abbott", the Independent reports, "was working for Mr Farage's removal from the leadership, saying 'UKIP needs effective leadership'. Well, David Abbott was working in Canada at the time of the UKIP conference, but he did receive an email from the journalist James Macintyre, and confirmed that he would like to see Farage removed from the leadership. Indeed, he makes no secret of this.

The other three "senior party figures" are difficult to identify, but mentioned further in the article are Piers Merchant, Roger Knapman and Tim Congdon. As they all live in the south-west (though more than one hour's drive away from 'UKIP headquarters') perhaps they are the culprits.

The plots thicken. "In recent days, as the conference has approached, another party member, John Smith, has sent an email to fellow members in an attempt to rally a move against Mr Farage". Again, John Smith, who he? At UK Renewal we have never heard of him. Nor have we received such an email.

Someone seems determined to construct a house of cards out of all this supposedly subversive activity. Our guess is Farage must know that a lot of people in UKIP are dismayed at his leadership, and imagines they must all be engaged in nefarious plotting; after all, that is what he would be doing in their place. It might be incipient paranoia, or it might be a deliberate desire to get his knife in first. But whichever it is, this attitude may have been, directly or indirectly, communicated to the Independent journalist.

The story goes on. At the Bournemouth conference "the leader was said to have faced a 'heated' question-and-answer session as the two-day conference got under way". What utter rubbish. That question-and-answer session was as anodyne an event as could be imagined; Sooty and Sweep would not have been disconcerted by the patsy questions let alone a hardened politician.

But the story is not finished yet. "Last night a series of plotters were at a hotel in Bournemouth to discuss how to overthrow their leader". Hey, that's us, folks! They mean the meeting at the Collingwood Hotel, held on the Thursday evening (not the Friday as stated in the report). It had been called on his own initiative by Geoffrey Kingscott, that sinister snake-in-the-grass henceforth to be known as the Catiline of the Collingwood. Oh, and by the way, what does the word series in "a series of plotters" mean in this context? And why did The Independent not contact us directly?

So sinister was the meeting that Geoffrey Kingscott, out of courtesy, notified the party chairman (then John Whittaker) that he was going to hold it.

But The Independent report has some curious omissions.

Just read this carefully: "A private memo, seen by The Independent, sets out the meeting agenda: 'Subjects for discussion can include ...the campaign strategy ... the restructuring of the party, method and control for elections to the NEC, role of the leader and leadership...financial controls and internal party communications'. Outside, the air in Bournemouth was thick with rumours and plotting."

Now what is really interesting here are the dots: .... , i.e. what has been deliberately missed out, because this reinforces the impression that this is a story fed in by someone with an agenda. The full text would read: "Subjects for discussion can include (1) the 2009 European elections – the selection process and the candidates chosen, the campaign strategy, the prospects, and what we expect our 2009-2014 MEPs to do if and when they are elected; (2) the re-structuring of the Party, method and control for elections to the NEC, role of the leader and leadership election 2010; (3) financial controls and internal party communications".

Now who would want to omit any reference to the selection process for MEPs, or discussion of what UKIP MEPs should do if and when they are elected. And to go so far to prove current plotting against the leadership as to cut out the two key words "election 2010" from the phrase "leadership election 2010"! So far from plotting against our anointed leader, so wimpish were we, the assumption was that we could not get rid of him until the next legitimate leadership election!

### **New Campaign Director for UKIP**

It is understood that a new campaign director for the 2009 European Parliament elections has been appointed by Nigel Farage. He is Kenneth Irvine, a former Conservative. He was introduced to an election campaign meeting of regional organisers and MEPs held in Bournemouth during the party conference. It is not clear where this leaves Stephen Allison, who has hitherto been in charge of election campaigns and indeed spoke at the conference in that capacity.