

# Lords DIARY



## Lord Faulkner observes ministers, merchants & martyrs

### Wednesday 16 October

I joined sub-committee F (home affairs, health and education) of the Lords European Union select committee during the summer. The process of scrutiny and cross-examination has been fascinating – and challenging. Today we put questions on the new psychoactive substances (so-called “legal highs”) to the Home Office minister, Norman Baker, the former transport minister who had taken over just a week earlier from Jeremy Browne, controversially fired in the latest reshuffle. Despite his newness in the job, Norman acquitted himself well, and made the point that the UK was some way ahead of the EU in dealing with this troublesome problem.

In the afternoon we joined forces with sub-committee E (justice, institutions and consumer protection) to decide our response to the evidence we had taken from the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Justice the week before on the Government’s intention first to opt out of all 130 police and criminal justice measures under Protocol 36 to the Treaty of Lisbon, and then opt back in to just 35 of them.

### Thursday 17 October

Each Thursday the House’s deputy speakers meet the Lord Speaker to look at future business and review what procedurally has gone on in the chamber and grand committee during the previous week. As always, this was a lively and frank discussion amongst colleagues from all parts of the House who get on well with each other.

I took the afternoon train to Worcester and enjoyed a brilliant performance of the *Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Story*, performed by Neil Gore and Elizabeth Eves, and organised by the Worcester Trades Council at the sixth form college as part of an extensive Great Britain tour.

### Friday 18 October

More drama of a different sort: a fantastic sold-out production of *The Merchant of Venice* by the Worcester Repertory Company in Worcester Cathedral.

### Saturday 20 October

I was on duty as a trustee of the Football Conference Trust, presenting a £15,000 cheque to Oxford City

football club before the start of their match against Worcester City (a pretty insipid 0-0 draw, I am afraid). Oxford City run an inspirational range of community projects, particularly for those with learning disabilities and amputee players.

### Sunday 21 October

A quiet family day, the highlight of which was lunch with our daughter and grandchildren. I had time to do some work on a project which the War Heritage APPG (which I chair) is about to launch with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of the WWI centenary commemoration.

### Monday 22 October

The morning was taken up by a regular meeting of trustees of the Science Museum Group (SMG) in South Kensington. I am chairman of the Railway Heritage Designation advisory board, the successor body of the Railway Heritage Committee (RHC) which was abolished on 31 March. Last year I persuaded ministers of the importance of maintaining the RHC’s statutory powers so that artefacts and records which form an important part of the history of Britain’s railways are preserved, and the SMG trustees happily approved our recommendations for designation.

### Tuesday 23 October

Today Boris Johnson came to the Olympic Legacy select committee, and was the last witness in our very extensive inquiry. He managed to keep us entertained for well over his allotted hour, answering questions with a refreshing frankness.

Then it was into the chamber for Questions and the Lobbying Bill debate, followed by a tea reception with Manchester Transport, a fascinating address at the death penalty abolition APPG, and then a meeting with Gordon Taylor and Clarke Carlisle of the Professional Footballers’ Association at the football APPG. A private dinner with an old friend from Australia rounded off the day. 🍷

Lord Faulkner of Worcester is a Labour Peer