



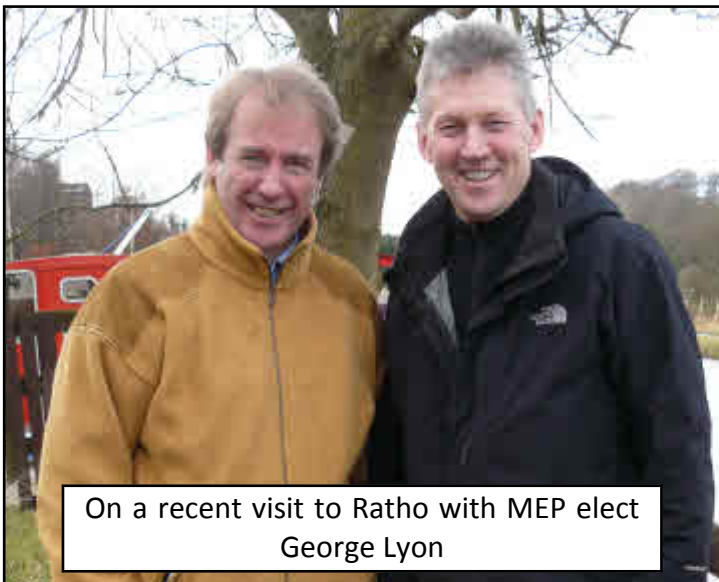
## John Barrett MP's Monthly Update

June 2009

*May and June have proven a busy few months in politics with preparations for the European election, the continuing expenses scandal and the ongoing responsibilities of an MP. This is not designed to be an exhaustive list of my work, but should give you an idea of what I have been involved in this month.*

### European Elections

The European elections were held on 4<sup>th</sup> of June and I would like to thank anyone who took the time out of their day to register their vote. While action in Brussels can seem very far from us here in Edinburgh, the European Parliament does still make an impact on our lives everyday and it is important to have our say. As far as the results went, In Edinburgh West the Liberal Democrats came first with the Conservative Party second and the SNP third. With the popularity of MP's at an all-time low I was pleased that I was the only MP whose party came first in their local area. To read more about the election campaign in Edinburgh West, visit my [blog](#).



On a recent visit to Ratho with MEP elect George Lyon

### Iraq War Inquiry

After a long campaign, the Prime Minister has finally agreed to set-up an Inquiry into the invasion of Iraq. However, in a manner typical of the approach of this government we have been told that the inquiry will be held in private and that it will not report until after the

next General Election. Everyone, from Freedom of Information campaigners through to Military Generals agree that this is plainly wrong and that the Government's reasons for holding the inquiry behind closed doors do not stand up to scrutiny. As someone who voted against the war from the start I have been campaigning in parliament for the Government to see sense on this issue. The public and particularly the families of servicemen and women in Iraq deserve nothing less than a full, open and honest public inquiry. Iraq was the biggest foreign policy blunder since Suez, we have to make sure we learn the lessons and never allow this to happen again. Reports that former Prime Minister Tony Blair intervened to persuade Gordon Brown to keep any inquiry secret are particularly concerning. Read my article 'Iraq inquiry must be fully transparent' [here](#).

### Treasury in Disarray

Earlier this month at the annual Mansion House speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England clashed spectacularly in public over the Governments regulation of the banking sector. Despite their strong words, the Government have been reluctant to clamp down on the short-term, high-risk culture of some areas of the industry. I along with my colleague Vince Cable have been calling for the Government to act quickly to avoid a repeat of the credit crunch in the future. To protect taxpayers, we have to split retail banking on the high street from the very high risk investment banking operations which have accumulated so much toxic debt. I will keep up the pressure to make sure the Government seize the moment and make the changes we need.

### Backing Local Business

Over the past few weeks, I have been talking to business owners across the constituency listening to their concerns in the economic downturn. Many have been telling me of the problems they are facing when banks have unexpectedly changing their lending criteria, disrupting their budgets. During Treasury Questions in the House of Commons I put these



concerns to the Chancellor directly. Clearly the Government believe that they are doing enough to help small businesses. I would encourage him to visit any of the hard-working businesses I have been speaking to as this is clearly not their perception. At the moment, most are surviving in spite of, not because of Government action. I will continue to push the Government to take a harder line with the banking industry. Read my online article [here](#).

## Jobs for Veterans

Ex-service men and women face can face a difficult time readjusting to life after their terms of service are up particularly when they have been posted to war zones and involved in conflict. For armed forces members leaving to forces this year not only do they have to deal with readjustment to civilian life, but they are trying to enter the toughest job market in years. I have been pressing the Government over whether the current training regime is properly preparing our servicemen and women for jobs after serving. Too often military qualifications are either not suitable or are simply not recognised by employers. We owe it to our servicemen and women to have a system in place that supports them into their new life when they leave he forces.

## High Speed Rail

For many years I have been campaigning for a high-speed rail link between central Scotland and London. This country used to export railways to the rest of the world but a combination of underinvestment and bad management has left us languishing far behind our European neighbours. An environmentally friendly High Speed Rail Link is now being considered by the Government but there is growing concern that it may not reach as far north as Scotland. During Prime Minister's Questions I challenged Gordon Brown to commit to a link to Scotland. We have seen from other European countries the benefits of a High Speed Rail Network that reaches every region in the creation of a better social, political, and economic integration. I will continue to bring the benefits of High Speed Rail to Edinburgh. Read my recent press story [here](#).

## Summer Fairs

The Summer is almost upon us and with it come the season of fares and gala's. The second week in June I had the pleasure of attending the Kirkliston and the Ratho village galas. While you can always count on great company and good fun, unfortunately the weather is not always so predictable. As well as the social occasion, fairs and galas are a great way to hear the views and concerns of local communities. Do let me know if you are organising a community event that you would like me to attend. I would also be happy to advertise any forthcoming events on my [community events](#) webpage. (pictured: John at the recent Saughtonhall gala fairtrade stall)



## MPs' Expenses

I have always published details of my own expenses on my [website](#) along with a full explanation. I am happy to talk through any questions that any constituents may have. Restoring public confidence has to be a top priority for parliament and it is up to individual MPs to take the lead.

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John Barrett