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## REPUBLIC HITS THE STREETS

### Protest makes case outside Buck House

**PLUS:**

Parliamentary reception a big success

Commons motion gets strong support

**INSIDE: FREE** pullout 'Make Monarchy History' poster



**AGM NOTICE: PAGE TWO**

**Republic**  
The Campaign for an  
Elected Head of State

# REPUBLIC HITS THE STREETS

Republic staged its second demonstration outside Buckingham Palace in July, highlighting the real cost of the monarchy.

Republic published its own estimate of the total cost of the Monarchy: over £150m a year. The figure is equivalent to 8792 new nurses a year, or 7575 new police officers.

In a press release issued the day before the demonstrations, Republic told journalists: "The Queen will claim the monarchy costs around £37m a year. She will ignore the unpaid taxes, the huge security bill - estimated at around £100m - and costs to police forces and local councils around the country. Republic is saying the royal spin must stop."

"In this age of government prudence, and when our European neighbours pay less than £10m for their presidents, it is nonsense to suggest the monarchy represents money well spent."

There was a good turnout for the demonstration, which was joined by Claire Rayner and Peter Tatchell. Republic's figures were reported in a number of newspapers, as was the Commons motion which Republic arranged with Brian Iddon MP, which gained the support of 49 members of Parliament.

The story was somewhat overshadowed by the change of Prime Minister, which took place the same week. However, coupled with Republic's response to Prince Charles' report two days earlier, it proved a fruitful opportunity for publicity.

Unlike last year, the police asked the demonstrators to move away from Buckingham Palace after about thirty minutes (claiming the protest would offend the royals). Republic will be seeking clarification on the legality of that reasoning and will be lobbying for the removal of the ban on protests outside the home of the monarchy. ■



## Annual Conference in October

This year's Annual Conference and AGM will be on **Saturday October 27th** at a new venue on Holloway Road, London. The conference will be an opportunity to learn more about Republic's ambitious new plans for 2008 and beyond, and meet Directors, staff and other supporters.

### DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS AND PROPOSALS

If you would like to propose an amendment to policy or to Republic's constitution, or if you would like to nominate yourself for election to the Board of Directors or propose an agenda item for the Conference, you need to do so in writing (post or email) by no later than close of business Friday 14th September. If you would like to find out more about being a Director please call Graham Smith on 07747 608 770. ■

**Full details of the conference will be sent after nominations close.**



## FREE BOOK OFFER!

### EXCLUSIVE OFFER TO REPUBLIC SUPPORTERS

Order your **free** copy of *Monarchy: Politics of Tyranny & Denial* by William Gladys. This satirical and highly irreverent critique of the British monarchy during the twentieth and twenty first centuries is available to you for the cost of postage and packaging. In full colour with nearly 40 cartoons and matching texts, this book is a humorous take on a serious underlying message.



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Send a cheque for £3.99 P&P to Republic Book Offer, PO Box 69, Brighton BN50 9GS. You can also order over the phone by calling 08708 508 825. ■

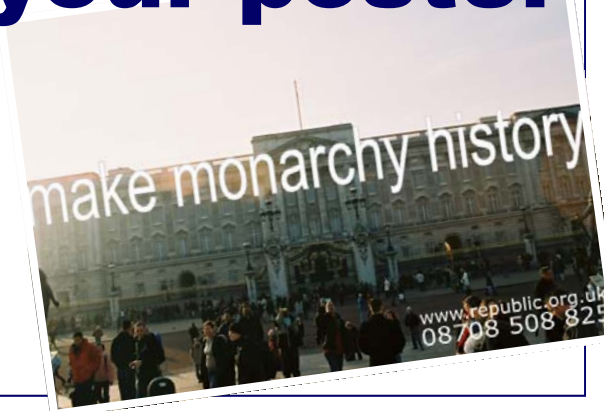
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## Put up your poster

### Where will you stick yours?

Your free pull-out *make monarchy history* poster is in the centre of this magazine. Why not stick it in your window, on a work notice board or in your college or university?

Tell us where your poster is: [enquiries@republic.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@republic.org.uk) ■



# Letters

The other day it was reported that the Queen is trying to have the BBC cancel the documentary about a year in her life. Surely one offending scene could be cut without such draconian censorship. From what I've read it sounds like the Queen sees the BBC documentary as a PR exercise, not a piece of journalism. I hope on this occasion the Beeb tells her 'no'.

Gerald King  
Norfolk

Why do the royals keep claiming to be 'value-for-money'? Just the other

day the Sun reported that Prince Andrew spent £6000 of government money to fly from London to Scotland so he could watch some golf. Good to see Republic being quoted by the Sun though. Keep up the good work!

Elizabeth Curry  
Devon

It's good to see Republic making more use of the internet, with websites like Facebook. I've been using it since it was launched and think it's a fun way to keep in touch and meet people. I hope all Republic members will join up.

John Lowe  
Powys

*Editors note: To meet the 280 plus*

*Republic Facebook members, visit the Republic website and follow the link.*

I was surprised to read Maureen Gobener's suggestion that we could have had Princess Diana as a president. I couldn't imagine a worse possible candidate. Surely this great country has plenty of talented men and women to choose from without choosing from the pampered aristocracy.

Yvonne Kimble  
Birmingham

Send your letters to  
imagine@republic.org.uk or *Imagine*,  
PO Box 69, Brighton, BN50 9GS.

## A busy time for Republic

...A message from the Chair...



John  
Campbell

It's been a busy time for Republic, a time for some frenetic campaigning and a time for lots of hard work on future plans and strategies.

We have been very busy lobbying parliament and challenging the recent royal financial reports. As you will see from the front cover and elsewhere in these pages, Republic staged a second demonstration outside Buckingham Palace, aimed directly at raising doubts about the honesty of the official claim that the monarchy only cost us £37m a year (I say only, but a president could cost as little as £1.5m - see page 11). Of course it goes without saying that the cost is not our motivation, but the way in which government money is squandered on this institution, and the manner in which those finances are reported and revealed, says a lot about the lack of accountability and transparency there is with the monarchy.

These were points we made in our press releases and media interviews time and again and I'm pleased to say that more and more we are being heard around the country.

However, we still have a long road ahead of us, and much more work to do to persuade the majority of the population of the rightness of our cause. To do that we need ambitious plans and a concerted and continuing fundraising effort. This is why we have recently developed a five year strategic plan which sets our sights high and which will aid the fundraising process. We have already had some small successes, with the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (JRRT) giving Republic £5000 to develop a campaigning network in Scotland and donations coming in from members, in response to our announcement of the Roadmap project.

You will have seen too, Claire Rayner's letter enclosed with this edition of *Imagine*, highlighting the huge difference legacies can make to our long term success. On page 9 there is also some information about how you can avoid inheritance tax by making donations during your lifetime, rather than in your will.

A key to our success is our ability to get people working on the campaign throughout the year. That means we need to recruit a team of volunteers to help do a wide range of jobs,

including membership support, research, e-Campaigning, general assistance with administration and campaigning and much more. Over the next month or so volunteer job adverts will be placed on our website, and on other recruitment sites, to seek out people for these positions. This will greatly help our staff, freeing up their time to concentrate on our core activities.

It's been a busy time for Republic, and busier times are ahead. We are set to grow and grow over the coming months and years and I hope you will be able to do your bit to help move us forward. ■

### Republic

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Photographs: Stephen Burrows

*If you would like to contribute an article to Imagine email [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk) or call Graham Smith on 08708 508 825 and ask for a copy of the Writer's Guidelines.*

# Royal accounts are all spin



▪ PETER TATCHELL

The Queen's spin doctors were working overtime recently to put a "value for money" gloss on the royal finances. When Elizabeth II's accounts for 2005-2006 were revealed in late June, her courtiers proudly boasted that the royal family costs the public a mere £37.4m a year, or 62p per person - a bargain, they claimed. What nonsense. This is PR manipulation worthy of the dark manoeuvrings of Alastair Campbell.

The palace is guilty of misleading the public. Even if it was true that the monarchy costs only £37m a year, this is 20 times the cost of the elected Irish president and nearly four times the cost of the president of Germany. It is not good value for money at all.

The real cost of the monarchy is more like £150m a year when you factor in security costs, grants, unpaid tax and the cost to local councils of royal visits. The expenditure on royal security alone was reported by the Times in 2004 to amount to nearly £100m annually.

If we had a low-cost, purely ceremonial president like the Irish, the surplus money could be spent on more worthwhile causes, such as funding treatments for NHS patients who are currently being denied vital drugs for arthritis and breast cancer because of budget deficits and cost-cutting. Alternatively, it could fund thousands more nurses, doctors, teachers and police officers.

The Queen's PR people want us to believe that we have a frugal monarchy - that the Queen is making great economies. Pull the other one. Take the example of the royal train. The Queen used it for 11 official journeys in 2006-7, at a cost of £700,000. This included one trip to Brighton, which left the taxpayer with a bill of £19,271 for a 100-mile round trip. Pure extravagance.

They can spin all they like, but yesterday's royal accounts are a sham. Sadly, much of the media and most politicians are too deferential and awed by the "majesty of monarchy" to challenge the way this



▪ Republic demonstrators outside Buckingham Palace on the day the Queen released her annual financial report.

super-rich family milk the public and then con us into believing that they are transparent and good value.

Despite our supposed democracy, proper public scrutiny of the royal finances is almost impossible. Even MPs are routinely frustrated in their attempts to get answers. Parliamentary questions are often disallowed. Persistent questioning over many months is often necessary, and even then lots of perfectly reasonable questions are deemed unacceptable and off-limits.

This is an outrageous abuse of royal privilege by palace courtiers and their flunkies in government and the civil service. If you don't believe me, watch my *Talking With Tatchell* TV interview with the Labour MP Andrew MacKinlay (visit [www.republic.org.uk](http://www.republic.org.uk)), where, among other things, he cites the obstruction he has faced in attempting to get answers about the true extent of royal income, property and tax.

These are the facts: we, the British people, are denied the right to know the Queen's income and the amount of tax she pays. In this modern, democratic era it is, frankly, quite intolerable for the monarch to exempt herself from the disclosures expected

of other public officials.

There is no evidence that the Queen pays tax on all her income, or that she pays tax at the same rate as the rest of us. She says she pays tax. I believe her.

But how much tax, on what income is a complete mystery. Like an absolute feudal monarch, she refuses to be honest and open with the people. Her lack of transparency fuels speculation that she is avoiding tax on a massive scale.

There are serious allegations that Prince Charles avoids paying around £500,000 a year in corporation tax and capital gains tax on his Duchy estate. The House of Commons public accounts committee, chaired by Conservative ex-minister Edward Leigh, last year called on the Prince of Wales to make a full and honest disclosure of all his finances, amid accusations that he has, over the years, avoided paying millions of pounds in tax. When he was chancellor, Gordon Brown defended exempting the prince and the Queen from capital gains and corporation tax.

Graham Smith, Republic's Campaign Manager, is highly critical of the way the royal household

mischievously portrays itself as being net contributor to the exchequer. He cites Professor Phillip Hall:

"It is claimed by the Queen that the monarchy costs this country nothing because she gives the revenue from the crown estate to the nation, and therefore is subsidising the royal family ... Because it is described as the Queen 'surrendering' the revenue from the crown estate in return for the Civil List allocation, it is mistakenly assumed that this 'surrendering' is a personal financial sacrifice on her part for the good of the nation."

"The crown estate and its revenue have never been the private property of the Queen, or any of her predecessors. The crown estate is officially described as 'hereditary possessions of the sovereign', not the personal possessions of the individual acting as sovereign."

"She cannot give us what she has never owned. Her role is simply one of an individual - Elizabeth Windsor - acting in her constitutional role - the sovereign - performing her constitutional duty and overseeing the transfer to the government of the income from a totally separate legal entity - the crown. The Queen incurs absolutely no financial loss in this transfer process."

"The crown's legal status is that of a corporation sole, an independent legal entity with the right to hold assets."

"If the monarchy were to disappear tomorrow, the crown estate would continue to do what it has always done for nearly one thousand years - provide income for the administration of this country."

I rest my case. The limited disclosure and large-scale massaging of the royal finances is a national disgrace. It brings the royal family into disrepute and reinforces the case for a democratically elected and fully accountable head of state. ■

This article originally appeared on the Guardian newspaper's website [www.guardian.co.uk/comment](http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment) and is published here with kind permission from Peter Tatchell.

*Opinions expressed in articles and letters are not necessarily the view or policy of Republic, its staff or its Board of Directors.*

# I am a republican



▪ MICHAEL COYNE

There are those defenders of monarchy who offer specious political ripostes to counter the

logic of republican arguments. It is wildly anomalous that many Conservatives, given their ideological insistence on people paying their way through life, should be so ferociously protective of the royals' unearned privileges. Another ludicrous response is that champions of abolition are surely communists. Previously I have suggested that if you strike oil in your backyard, you should get to keep the proceeds; that doesn't seem very communist to me. Another specious claim is that monarchy serves as a bulwark against the spectre of dictatorship. This is the rationale of the timid, devoid of faith in our capability to select our own leaders. The absence of popular sovereignty and our consequently indirect democracy have in recent decades shown Britain is vulnerable to the prospect of elective dictatorship, given the fatal confluence of big egos, big agendas and big majorities.

Thus we get the worst of both worlds - an unelected monarch and, more than once, a strong-willed premier utterly convinced of personal righteousness, unwilling to heed plebs who fail to see the big picture. Yes, it's true that a strong-willed leader could be directly elected by popular mandate; that's the risk we run in a democracy. Yet he would not be able to hide behind the 'royal prerogative', which currently invests the British government with potentially sweeping but carelessly-defined powers (despite recent announcements from our new Prime Minister). Most important of all, a leader directly elected by the people can be directly removed by the people. A more direct form of election might not have resulted in the man who took Britain to war in Iraq returned to 10 Downing Street for a third term.

There is one final pernicious argument peddled by the opponents of republicanism. It is to point to the United States and to suggest that if we, too, had a republic, we might end up with presidents of the same calibre (or lack thereof) as the worst ever to occupy the White House. This notion does us a disservice, and the United

*Continued page 9*



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**The winning numbers:** In April the winner was number 1071, W Summers, winning a cash prize of £67.20. The May winner was 1009, J Coten, winning £68.40 and June's winning ticket was 1142, Roger Kimber, winning a cash prize of £68.80.

The numbers were drawn at a meeting of the Board of Directors. *Remember, you need to be in it to win it!*

**GOOD LUCK FOR NEXT MONTH!**

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# Set the Windsors free!



■ GRAHAM SMITH

The inheritance of public office is indefensible in the 21st century - but the media's treatment of Prince

William and Kate Middleton shows it is also unfair to those doing the inheriting.

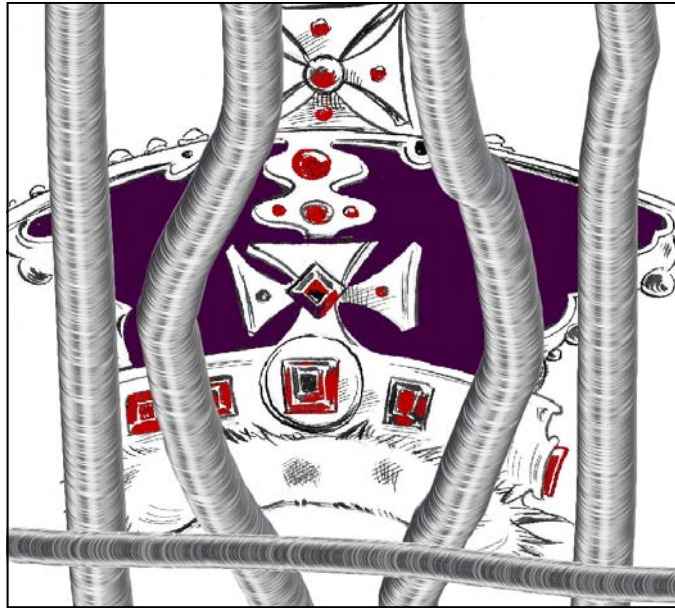
Let's be clear, republicans object to the inheritance of public office on grounds of democratic principle.

Such an inheritance tells us that some are born superior, both socially and politically, that the country is not ours but is a kingdom there for the benefit of a certain elite of families and hangers-on. It is fundamentally at odds with modern concepts of democracy. However, it is clear for all to see that this bizarre feudal institution is also cruel and unfair to those caught up in it, whether by birth or by marriage.

The recent report from the *Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee*, which has claimed Kate Middleton was the victim of persistent media harassment, reminds us of the extent to which the institution of the monarchy damages the lives of those it touches. Just as with Diana before her, the merest hint of a development in Ms Middleton's relationship with William led to endless speculation in the press. Even the BBC joined the fray - in typical BBC style - by giving what was essentially little more than the break-up of a relationship between two twentysomethings, headline coverage. "Experts" and "commentators" were drafted in to dissect every last detail of the relationship that had ended thanks to the endless speculation (at least, that's what the endless speculation concluded).

This is not an isolated example. Since the veil of secrecy and deference began to slip away from the Windsors back in the 1980s, the intrusions and pressures inflicted on

them by the feudal rules and traditions of the monarchy, by the family itself and - in recent decades - by the relentless media spotlight, has become ever more apparent. The Diana saga and the failed marriage of Prince Andrew are the obvious examples. Johann Hari's excellent book, *God Save the Queen?*, published in 2002, made clear the extent to which the pressures and downright weird practices of "royalty" affected the whole family from an early age. Christopher Hitchens



summed it up in typical Hitchens style when he said: "Here is the plain proof of the child-sacrifice that underlies our most absurd and sinister institution."

Still it continues. Back in 2005, when it was announced Charles wanted to re-marry, the nation watched with bemused amazement as the Windsors and their hapless advisors danced around in constitutional straightjackets. They were deeply concerned about the legality of the proposed marriage, when and where it could take place and whether it was "constitutionally appropriate" for the mother of the groom to attend the ceremony. They had to contend with a system in which a man in his 50s was required to ask the permission of his mother, the prime minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury before he could marry the woman he loves. It is

surely hard to claim that this is a fair and reasonable system, one that has a place in a modern democracy.

And now Charles' adult children, William and Harry, cannot pursue a career they are really interested in, they cannot choose their faith, and they cannot choose to be openly gay or to fall in love with a Catholic. If William marries a Catholic girl he loses his inheritance. This hardly reflects the values of modern Britain. They are trapped in this royal circus as much as we are lumbered with it.

The absurdity of the monarchy means that, unlike any other public office, the future holders of that office are subject to the most invasive scrutiny from such a young age. It was without any apparent irony that those who blamed the media for Diana's death so quickly demanded that the 15-year-old William be immediately elevated to be next in line to the throne, with all the pressures and impositions that would entail.

And so it goes on. William is probably at least 20 years away from the throne, potentially 40 years

away (if the throne lasts that long). And yet the intrusions have already begun. It might be difficult to feel sympathy for people who live such pampered lives, at the taxpayers' expense - and no doubt if asked they would deny any desire to free themselves from this nonsense. But can we in good conscience accept this highly personalised institution, one that is not only defective in principle, but which is also so harmful to those who occupy it? The inheritance of public office is indefensible in the 21st century - but the treatment of Prince William and Kate Middleton shows it is also unfair to those doing the inheriting. ■

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This article originally appeared on the Guardian newspaper's website [www.guardian.co.uk/comment](http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment)

# I AM A REPUBLICAN

*continued from page 5*

States a fierce injustice. It is a smug form of calumny implying that we, as intelligent, politically mature individuals, would be incapable of electing from among us men and women of honour and integrity, without the restraint of our 'social betters'. Thirty years ago, my teenage republicanism was frequently met with the spectre of Richard Nixon and Watergate - despite the fact that the outcome of the scandal actually vindicated the American system, proving even the President is not above the law. The other sorry example used to support this argument is still current. There is much evidence to suggest the democratic process was derailed in Florida in 2000; but that is an argument for greater vigilance, not for dispensing with a republic.

Neither Richard Nixon nor George W. Bush are any argument for

favouring monarchy rather than a republic. The same electoral system produced George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. All these men came from among the people: e pluribus unum. Some were born poor, but all attained distinction on merit. Guardian columnist Jonathan Freedland, in his superb book *Bring Home the Revolution*, contrasts the vibrancy, optimism and mobility of America with the drab stratification which infects much of British life. He argues that Britain actually had a political revolution in the eighteenth century. The problem was it happened in America. The fledgling United States benefited from the radical philosophy of men such as Thomas Paine, while Britain remained mired in the age of monarchy. Freedland makes the case that it is time for Britain to become a freer, more fluid society - with

establishment of a republic a crucial early step.

The present monarch, of course, is known to dread a republic. But then, as George Bernard Shaw observed: 'Any political system which finances itself by taking from Peter to pay Paul can usually count on the support of Paul.' We will never be a truly first-class country until we have a first-class political system. We can never have a first-class political system if we settle for one that stops short of popular sovereignty. That means we need a republic. Without a republic, we will remain Lilliputians subsidizing Ruritians. If we ever do vote for a republic it will be a vote for our own dignity, our future, our self-confidence, and our self-respect. Above all, it will be a vote for ourselves. ■

This is the fifth and final part of a full length article - serialised in *Imagine* - which was originally published in *The Drouth* magazine.

## 49 MPs SUPPORT COMMONS MOTION

A motion put to the House of Commons earlier this year was supported by a total of 49 MPs, including Vince Cable, Glenda Jackson, Dianne Abbott, Evan Harris, George Galloway and Andrew MacKinlay. The motion was tabled by long-standing Republic supporter Brian Iddon MP.

The motion was tabled to put further pressure on Prince Charles over the financial management and accountability of the Duchy of Cornwall. Republic was pleased with the level of cross-party support the motion received. The media picked up on the call from MPs for Charles to clean up his financial act, when the Duchy released its annual report in July.

The Commons motion is one part of a developing lobbying campaign being conducted by Republic. ■

## HOW TO SUPPORT REPUBLIC AND AVOID INHERITANCE TAX

• SUZANNE CAMPBELL

Many of you have told us you have made a will, and that Republic will receive a legacy in due course – for which we are very grateful. However, I would like to let you know how to make a gift to Republic now and, in doing so, avoid Inheritance Tax (IHT).

Let me explain further. IHT is a tax on your estate when you die. If the value of your estate exceeds £300,000 when you die (tax year 07/08), then a 40% IHT will be levied by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on all assets that exceed this amount (unless you're the Queen!)

There is no tax payable if one spouse dies – the assets simply pass to the surviving spouse. However, on the second death, IHT is applied. This is a complex area and one on

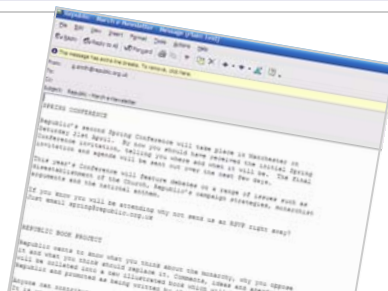
which professional advice should be sought and taken. Planning of one's affairs can be very beneficial in reducing, or even avoiding, this liability altogether. Many people forget to use the annual exemptions that apply to IHT. For instance up to £3,000 can be gifted every year, to friends, family or organisations and this amount will be exempted from IHT. Likewise you may gift up to £250 per annum to as many people or organisations as you wish (and can afford), and again these are exempt from tax.

So I would like to ask, if you feel that you can afford to gift something in this tax year, and feel like avoiding IHT, then please consider a gift to Republic instead of the tax man, using one of these exemptions. ■

Suzanne is a member of Republic's Board of Directors and an Independent Financial Advisor.

## e-Newsletters

Are you receiving Republic's monthly e-Newsletters? If not it probably means we don't have your email address on our database - if you'd like to get our monthly bulletins send an



email to [g.smith@republic.org.uk](mailto:g.smith@republic.org.uk). You can also opt to receive *Imagine* by email. Let us know if you'd prefer to get the magazine online - send an email to [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk). And don't forget, all copies of *Imagine* can be found on the website. ■

# COMMONS RECEPTION 'A HIT'

Republic's 2007 Parliamentary reception, held in July, was a huge success, with over thirty researchers and MPs attending.

The reception, part of Republic's growing lobbying campaign, was hosted by long-time supporter Norman Baker MP and held in Portcullis House. The invitation alone stirred up some controversy, with some MPs objecting (in private at least) to the idea of Republic even holding such an event. The event went ahead nevertheless, and greatly enhanced our profile within the 'Westminster village'.

The reception was made possible by the generous donations from our members, who responded so enthusiastically to an appeal earlier this year. The event is set to become an annual feature of our lobbying campaign. ■



## ROUND UP



### In the news

Republic was in the news again recently, responding to the royals' 2007 annual financial reports. Although the reports were pushed down the news agenda by the change of Prime Minister, which happened that same week, we were interviewed for TV, radio and the national press.

The Sun newspaper also reported Republic's response to news that Prince Andrew had spent £6000 of taxpayers' money to go to a golfing tournament in Scotland.

### Republic Day

Republic Day was marked this year with a repeat of the *Republic Day Bash*. The event was held at a pub in central London and included a free buffet and prize draw. The following day members met up to discuss the formation of a campaigning group within London (more news on that at a later date). Peter Tatchell helped to mark the day by contributing an article to the Guardian's *Comment is Free* website. Peter told readers:

"The establishment call it "Coronation Day"... we democrats celebrate June 2 with a vision of what Britain could be: a democratic republic with an elected head of state, a representative of the nation who is chosen by us, the people."

### Local Republic

As part of this year's Republic Day, a number of supporters launched a new initiative by declaring Pepler House,



Local residents declare a *Local Republic* in North Kensington.

in North Kensington, a *Local Republic*. The scheme which is backed by Republic (see [www.republic.org.uk/localrepublic](http://www.republic.org.uk/localrepublic)) is designed to get people talking to neighbours and friends about the issues of republicanism and

democracy. The Pepler House residents used the scheme as a vehicle to raise awareness of their own local issue - the future of their homes, which are under threat from local government. The *Local Republic* launch gained widespread local media coverage.

### Volunteer Recruitment

Republic is preparing a new volunteer recruitment programme. Vacancies will be advertised in *Imagine*, on the website and on other volunteer recruitment websites. Volunteers will be asked to commit to specific roles and a minimum number of hours per week. If you think you might be interested get in touch.

### Republic Scotland

The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust has granted Republic £5,000 to pursue its campaigning objectives in Scotland. Republic members will be meeting in Edinburgh and Glasgow over the next few months to discuss ways of establishing an active campaigning network. Scotland is traditionally a stronghold for republicanism, and with talk of Scotland's future high on the agenda this is an ideal time for Republic to be campaigning. ■

# Pay the easy way

**Have you thought about paying your membership subscriptions by Standing Order?**

Paying this way saves Republic money, meaning more of your subscription goes on campaigning, and makes it easier for you to renew each year.

If you don't already pay by Standing Order, please consider doing so when you next renew. You can pay either monthly or annual instalments. We automatically send a new form with your renewal reminder letter, so all you need to do is complete the form and send it back to us in the post.

It couldn't be easier! ■

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## Answer Back

Welcome to *Answer Back*. In this column we highlight the common arguments in favour of the monarchy - and answer back.



**They Say** - "The monarchy is 'value-for-money' and is as cheap or cheaper than republics like the US or France."

**We Say** - The monarchy is many things, but it is certainly not value for money. This claim is based on a number of assertions, all of which are either misleading or false. Firstly there is the claim that republics would be just as expensive, and France and the US are used to illustrate this point. In the US, as in France, the president is an executive figure, a member of the political process. If we compare our ceremonial head of state with other ceremonial presidents, say in Ireland, Germany and Austria, republics win in the cost stakes hands down. Ireland's president costs the taxpayer around £1.5m a year. The Austrian presidency sets them back about £3.5m and the German president, the most expensive of its kind in Europe, costs £9.9m each year. The monarchy, according to their own figures, costs us £37m each year. Republic believes this figure is actually closer to £150m.

If you raise these points monarchists will quickly change tack, arguing instead that revenue from tourism should be factored into the equation. With this blatant and bare faced bit of spin, the royals claim as their own the results of other people's labour. In truth the monarchy does very little for tourism. Of the top 20 tourist attractions in the UK only one royal residence makes it into the list, Windsor Castle, in at number 17 (beaten comfortably by Windsor Legoland at number 7). Royal residences account for less than 1% of total tourist revenue. Indeed, the success of the Tower of London (number 6 in the list) suggests that tourism would benefit if Buckingham Palace and Windsor castle were vacated by the Windsor

family. It is clear that people visit this country for a wide variety of reasons, and Buckingham palace is just one of a number of famous sites tourists will want to see. There is no evidence people visit London or the UK because the royals occupy the palace.

Challenge a monarchist on tourism and they will soon pick up on another fallacy which is often added to the royal sums: the Crown Estate. It is claimed, by the Queen herself no less, that the monarchy costs this country nothing because the monarch gives the revenue from the Crown Estate to the nation, and therefore is subsidising the Royal Family and their position in our society.

It is officially described as the queen 'surrendering' the revenue from the Crown Estate in return for the Civil List allocation, and is therefore assumed to be a personal financial sacrifice by the Queen. This myth is, of course, repeated ad nauseam by monarchists. In fact, the Queen loses nothing in this arrangement.

The Crown Estate is described as "hereditary possessions of the Sovereign", and is not the personal property of the person currently on the throne. It is no more the possession of Elizabeth Windsor than Chequers is the property of Tony Blair or Gordon Brown.

The Queen cannot give away something that does not belong to her. People often suggest that if the monarchy were to be abolished the Crown Estate revenue would revert to the Windsor family. In truth, if the monarchy were abolished, the revenue would continue to flow into the bank accounts of the Treasury.

In short, the cost of the monarchy is substantially higher than the cost of elected heads of state. To be "value-for-money" something must produce a return on the investment. There is no return from the monarchy - just a big bill for the taxpayers. ■



**Tell us what arguments you'd like us to answer - write to *Imagine*, PO Box 69, Brighton BN50 9GS or email [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk) and we'll Answer Back!**

# ACTION PAGE

your turn

There are many things you can do to support Republic. Our new 'Action Page' both here, in a new leaflet form and online, gives you some quick and easy ways you can make a difference.

Some actions are internet-based, but most can be done whether or not you have access to the internet. Why not tick them off as you do them?

# 1

## Sign the Republic Petition

**Add your name to the Republic petition, and get others to do the same.** The petition is online at [www.republic.org.uk/petition](http://www.republic.org.uk/petition). You can also get paper copies so that you can collect names and addresses from friends and family. If you don't have internet access, we can add your name over the phone or send you forms in the post. Call us on 08708 508 825.

# 2

## Sign the Downing St. Petitions

**The Number 10 Downing Street online petitions have been in the news a lot in recent months. There are now a number of new petitions for you to sign, calling for various reforms to the monarchy, as steps toward abolition.** These petitions can be valuable lobbying tools, so please add your name. Either check out the website or call us on 08708 508 825 for more information.

**NEW!**

# 3

## Write to your MP the easy way

**Writing to your MP has just been made whole lot easier. Using the 'writetothem.com' website, which is now linked to our Action Page, you can find your MP using your postcode, and then send a message direct to their email address.**

If you don't have access to the internet you can still write to your MP at 'House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA'.

# 4

## Join the FACEBOOK Group

**Meet hundreds of Republic supporters online - join the Republic Facebook group.** Facebook is an online networking website which allows anyone and everyone to link up as friends or in groups, discuss the latest issues or trends or simply register your support for a cause or campaign. The Republic group can be found by following the link on the Republic website homepage. Join the debate.

**NEW!**

# 5

## Get your Republic Merchandise

**Say it in style with Republic merchandise. The Republic shop, which you can visit at [www.republic.org.uk/shop](http://www.republic.org.uk/shop) has a wide range of gifts, clothes and accessories to choose from. There's also the Republic book shop, in association with Amazon books. Check out the very best in republican writing. Anything you can buy from Amazon, you can buy from the Republic book shop.**

# 6

## Lobby the BBC over royal bias

**If you think that the BBC's reporting on the monarchy is biased against the republican view, you can help us put it right. Take part in our new *Lobby the BBC* campaign.**

You can contact the BBC via [www.republic.org.uk/bbc](http://www.republic.org.uk/bbc) or you can call 08700 100 222 or write to them at BBC Complaints, PO Box 1922, Glasgow G2 3WT. You can also contact programmes directly or through programmes such as *Points of View* (TV) or *Feedback* (Radio).

[www.republic.org.uk/action](http://www.republic.org.uk/action)