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Via email

Dear Friends

BI REUNION – HILTON HOTEL, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
8 – 10 OCTOBER 2010

I am writing to you to tell you that after a good deal of thought and consultation a decision has been made to rearrange the date and time of the **Reunion Dinner** from **Saturday 9 October** to **Friday 8 October 2010** at 7:00 for 8:00 pm. The venue remains as before; the Gateshead Suite at the Newcastle/Gateshead Hilton Hotel.

This change has come about as a result of re-negotiated terms with the Hilton which are more favourable to us and offer more flexibility on our numbers. Bookings are steady but very unlikely to reach the requisite minimum number. It has therefore been agreed that the dinner be moved to the Friday evening and the cost will now be £35 – £40 per head. The overall cost for the reunion if someone books for every event is now around £86 per head (the final amount is still to be confirmed) which compares favourably with £96 per head at the Runnymede reunion in 2008.

I realised that this change will immediately have implications for everyone who has booked so far. In consultation with Travel Services Ltd, I explored other options, including keeping the dinner on the Saturday night but moving it to another hotel while remaining at the Hilton for the Curry Lunch on Sunday. However, this presents different problems with regard to capacity, quality, location and disabled access.

If we changed the location those people who have booked through Travel Services Ltd could have had their bookings transferred to the other hotel without charge but would have been obliged to go to the Hilton for lunch on Sunday. Those people who booked directly with the Hilton or through other agencies and who may have been unable to change their bookings would have had to make their way to dinner at the new venue. It was effectively splitting the reunion between two sites and this is a less than ideal arrangement. Finally, we were not convinced that any other venue was of an equal standard to the Hilton. For these reasons I decided that the best option was to agree to stay at the Hilton and move the dinner to the Friday evening. I am particularly grateful to Seb Rees of TSL for the meticulous way he has researched and negotiated these options on our behalf.

In consequence, the schedule for the weekend has had to be changed and I attach a revised copy. Apart from the change of date for the dinner the principal alteration is in the timing of the boat trip. My intention now is that we should depart later in the day (but not so late that we do not have sufficient daylight to see the river) and to enjoy an early evening meal on the boat on the return journey. This will leave Saturday morning and early afternoon free for people to explore Newcastle and its environs, shop or play golf as the fancy takes them. The Friday evening Ice-breaker will now take place and the Curry Lunch will remain as before at 12.30 pm on Sunday at the Hilton.

Turning now to the detailed implications for those people who have booked so far. As I see it they fall into three categories:

- 1 Those who have booked rooms at the Hilton through Travel Services Ltd arriving on Friday.

Provided their travel arrangements allow them to arrive in Newcastle in good time (and we have moved back the start time for the dinner by half an hour to help with that), the people in this Category should have little or no problem with the revised schedule.

- 2 Those who have booked rooms at the Hilton through Travel Services Ltd arriving on Saturday.

The revised schedule may cause problems to the people presently in this category. If possible, they will need to alter their travel arrangements to arrive in Newcastle on Friday. Providing they can do this they will be able to change their accommodation booking through Travel Services Ltd without charge. Seb Rees will be happy to advise and help with this. His telephone number is 0845 658 1658 and his fax number is 0845 658 1659. His email address is seb@travelservices.com.

- 3 Those who have booked rooms either at the Hilton or elsewhere through other agencies or who have not yet booked their accommodation.

We do not know enough about the people who presumably have booked their accommodation independently or who may have not yet booked anything at all. They may have problems with the revised schedule or they may not. If they have booked accommodation for Friday evening then they are in a very similar position to Category 1. If they have not then we just don't know what steps they may be able to take to change their travel and accommodation arrangements.

This letter is only going out to those people from whom we have already received booking forms. On your forms some of you have listed the names of people whom you would like to sit with but from whom we have not yet received booking forms. I shall be grateful if you will check with your friends and let them know just in case they are intending to come and have not heard about these changes.

This has been a difficult decision and I must apologise to anyone who finds themselves inconvenienced by it. I sincerely hope that one way or another everyone can rearrange their plans. If anyone finds that they simply cannot change their travel and/or accommodation arrangements and is consequently unable to attend the Reunion then I will cancel their Reunion booking and arrange for a full refund of their deposit on hearing from them.

With best wishes



Sue Spence
Reunion Organiser