



invited, enlightened, connected
XXVIII XI MMVIII

ANNUAL SIR BOB SCOTT DINNER

5th June 2008

Rising to the challenge; was the theme of a the Celsius dinner held in honour of Sir Bob Scott, chairman of South London Business, on June 5 at the Royal Automobile Club on Pall Mall.

In the elegance of the Mountbatten Room, the group's principal guest, Tessa Jowell MP, Minister for the Olympics and London, talked about challenges to be overcome and advantages to be gained by London's business community in the coming years. As Member of Parliament for Dulwich and South Norwood in South London, Ms Jowell said she shared the passion of those present for the fortunes of the capital. In the present global economic climate, she believes there are specific challenges for London; not least the need to remind the rest of the world that it is still open for business. She talked about the Government's apprenticeship initiative, which she reminded her audience is demand-led and involves a high degree of practical, work-based training. Turning to the 2012 Olympics, she invited businesses to become fully involved, not only in bidding for the thousands of contracts on offer, but by encouraging their staff to volunteer as stewards and hosts in an initiative based on one created by Sir Bob himself. She alluded to the wider opportunities offered by the games, such as the anticipated increase in international tourism in the four years between now and the start of the Olympics.

After an excellent dinner, Sir Bob returned to the Olympic theme in an impromptu address, reminding his audience that eight of the events are scheduled to take place south of the river, including tennis at Wimbledon and show-jumping in Greenwich Park. The man who brought the Commonwealth Games to Manchester and helped Liverpool to become this year's European City of Culture talked about South London's image as merely a supplier of labour to The City and the West End. He asked the area's major businesses, many of them represented in the room, to take a more active role in changing this inaccurate view. He said many cities and towns in other parts of the country would give their eye teeth for the advantages of being part of London and asked the principal towns in the area to improve their overall performance. He suggested they might do so by giving the private sector its head and allowing it to lead initiatives more often..

