





Margaret Thatcher

Rt. Hon. Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven L.G., O.M., F.R.S.

Official booklet to mark the unveiling on 21st February 2007
of the bronze statue of Baroness Thatcher sculpted
by Antony Dufort for the House of Commons.

Edited by Malcolm Hay, Curator of Works of Art, Palace of Westminster.



Clay for the portrait head of Margaret Thatcher, June 2005 (Photo: Antony Dufort)



“This historic commission is a very fitting way to remember Margaret Thatcher’s time in the House of Commons and I am very pleased to welcome the statue joining those of the other Prime Ministers of the 20th Century in Members’ Lobby.”

Rt. Hon. Michael Martin MP
Speaker of the House of Commons



Baroness Thatcher is the latest 20th Century Prime Minister to be represented in Members' Lobby immediately outside the House of Commons Debating Chamber. This over life-size bronze statue by Antony Dufort recognises her contribution to British politics during her three terms of office as premier and records her rightful place in parliamentary history as the United Kingdom's first woman Prime Minister.

Her statue looks towards the doors of the Commons Chamber, facing that of Sir Winston Churchill by Oscar Nemon, which since the late 1960s has stood sentinel to this historic Chamber, its foot touched in the early years for good luck by Tory Members before giving speeches in the Chamber and more recently by all those visiting the House. Since then, statues of David Lloyd George and Clement Attlee have been added to this historic space, together with busts of James Ramsay MacDonald, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, Edward Heath, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Stanley Baldwin and Alec Douglas-Home.

Above and right Antony Dufort and Baroness Thatcher at the sitting on 28 May 2004 (Photos: Matthew Tugwell)



The Parliamentary Art Collection of the House of Commons includes many painted and sculpted images of parliamentarians over the centuries, widely dispersed throughout the buildings of the Parliamentary Estate. Portraits of Prime Ministers line the Committee Corridor of the Victorian building, with more recent figures joining the House's contemporary collection which is on display in Portcullis House.

Members' Lobby was chosen to display sculptures of Prime Ministers of the 20th Century, because of its pre-eminence as the portal to the Debating Chamber, the centre of political life. Both interiors were rebuilt during the late 1940s by the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott after the original Victorian Chamber and Lobby of the 1850s were destroyed by enemy action during the Second World War.



Commissioning the Statue

The bronze statue was commissioned from the sculptor Antony Dufort in 2003 by the Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art, under the then chairmanship of Tony Banks MP. It was agreed that Margaret Thatcher would be represented during her last term of office, 1987 - 1990, with the sculptor working from historic material as well as being given sittings from life. The current Chairman, and former Deputy Chairman, Hugo Swire MP, and Members of the Committee have overseen this project since 2005.

"This is a very significant commission for the House of Commons. It is entirely appropriate that Margaret Thatcher's premiership has been recorded in this way for future visitors to the House. I think the way in which Antony Dufort has succeeded in showing her mid-debate will strike a chord with all those - from all sides of the political divide - who remember her oratory. I share Tony Banks's view that history demanded this commission. I am only sad that he did not live to see the finished statue."

Hugo Swire MP

Above Antony Dufort and Tony Banks MP after the committee meeting in Portcullis House where the preliminary design for the statue was selected



The sculptor enlarges the full size clay of Baroness Thatcher from the half-size maquette, using a 3D 'Pantograph' (Photo: Antony Dufort)



Upper torso of the completed full-size clay figure, 30 September 2006 (Photo: Antony Dufort)



The Works of Art Committee is responsible for all aspects of the Parliamentary Art Collection, and follows an active policy of commissioning portraits in order to keep the Collection up to date. Efforts are also made to fill gaps in the historical collection where notable parliamentarians from the past are not represented. The management of the Collection is undertaken by a dedicated team of professional curators, led by Malcolm Hay, who support the Committee in their work.

The Parliamentary Art Collection already includes a number of images of Margaret Thatcher. During the 1990s a marble statue was commissioned by the Committee from the sculptor Neil Simmons, but regrettably this was damaged shortly after completion, when the head was vandalised. It was successfully repaired and is on public view at the Guildhall Art Gallery in London. Other representations of Margaret Thatcher within the Collection include portraits by Henry Mee and Ruskin Spear, one of the Spitting Image latex puppets by Fluck and Law, and a photograph by Jane Bown.



Photograph of Margaret Thatcher by Jane Bown (Copyright: Jane Bown)

Margaret Thatcher's years as Prime Minister

Margaret Thatcher served three continuous terms as Prime Minister, between 1979 and 1990. She is the Country's longest-serving premier since Lord Salisbury. Her radical economic policies and robust approach to politics were branded 'Thatcherism' and became widely influential both at home and abroad. She placed great importance on fostering Britain's historic links with the English-speaking peoples of the World, and nurtured the 'special relationship' with the United States. At a time when there was general acceptance that Britain's power was diminishing following the end of Empire, she worked hard to raise the profile of the United Kingdom on the World stage. Her success in defending the Falkland Islands against Argentinian aggression in 1982 won

her great praise. She is credited with bringing about the Country's economic recovery and with breaking many of the restrictive working practices of the past. The Country underwent significant change during her premiership. However, strong views and robust politics brought out a mixture of both positive and negative reactions in people, and in 1990, despite an unbroken line of three election successes, divisions within her own party mirrored the rising discontent within the Country. She resigned in 1990 after a leadership election.

In 1992 she was raised to the peerage, taking her seat in the House of Lords as Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven in the County of Lincolnshire. In 1995 she was raised to the Order of the Garter.



Antony Dufort – the designing and making of the statue

“Creating the statue was an enormous but fascinating challenge. I already had considerable experience of making large freestanding sculptures to go outside, such as my ‘Fast bowler’ for the MCC at Lord’s Ground, and the Tribute sculpture ‘Testing for Gas’ for the Coal Miners and Collieries of the Nottinghamshire Coalfields at Silverhill near Mansfield. But the context of the House of Commons statue was particularly complex. Not only would it have to complement the scale and style of the

three existing bronze statues of Prime Ministers in the Lobby, but also stand up to the scrutiny of Members as they passed it each working day. Moreover here was a sitter whose appearance the whole world felt they knew, though most had never met her. Finally, this was the first statue of a female Prime Minister, and there was no precedent to follow. However for me, Oscar Nemon’s splendid sculpture of Winston Churchill set a standard to emulate.”

Above Mould maker Liz Turner peels back the silicon rubber inner layer of the mould. This ‘intermediate’ mould is used to make a wax replica of the sculpture, as part of the ‘lost wax’ casting process (Photo: Antony Dufort)



During Late May and early June 2004, the sculptor was given three sittings with Baroness Thatcher. These took place in the River Room of the Lord Chancellor's Residence in the House of Lords.

"Baroness Thatcher chatted to her assistant Gillian Penrose while I sculpted her. This let me see her face in animation—vital for giving the sculpture a feeling of life. Her conversation was an intriguing mixture of reminiscence, observation, authority, seriousness and humour, which

gave me a powerful impression of the many sides of her character."

"In the breaks from modelling we discussed my preliminary designs and a range of photographs showing her speaking, including stills from her famous last speech to the Commons on 22 November 1990. She preferred those with "intensity", which showed her "concentrating on getting the message across". When I pointed out the hint of humour in the corner of her mouth,

Above At the foundry wax worker Dorota Rapacz removes the silicon rubber mould from the wax cast of the head and shoulders (Photo: Antony Dufort)



The separate sections of the hollow wax replica are assembled at the foundry to ensure a good fit. Dorota Rapacz prepares to 'weld' the seams, 23 October 2006 (Photo: Antony Dufort)



she explained the necessity of not just dominating the audience but “getting the message across by introducing humour...so the audience can relax.”

“As fundamental for the success of the sculpture as the accurate portrayal of her face would be the expression of her character through movement and gesture. We agreed that it was important not to replicate the gestures of any of the existing statues. She explained how she unobtrusively shifted her weight

from one leg to another during a long speech to avoid fatigue and would turn towards her “own people”, the Opposition or Mr. Speaker in turn”.

“She demonstrated this and a range of arm movements, and linked movements of the head and upper body as if she were giving just such a speech. She liked the idea of the sculpture “...just having papers in one hand, I think we will ruin things by having too much in.” The diamond brooch on her

Above The wax sections are covered with layers of ceramic shell. This shell forms the mould when the wax is melted out and the narrow void filled with molten bronze (Photo: Antony Dufort)



lapel was a special favourite. So was the bracelet of gold and semi-precious stones, given to her by her husband Denis, so that was included as well."

"Baroness Thatcher's professionalism in sitting, friendliness, and willingness to be consulted and to analyse her appearance and 'body language' objectively was enormously helpful to me in developing the design and composition of the statue."

From material and information gathered during these sittings, the sculptor developed the portrait likeness and the animated composition of the statue. This shows Baroness Thatcher leaning slightly forwards. She supports herself mostly on her right leg, with her left leg lightly flexed. This in turn raises the left heel slightly from the ground. She is 'making a point' with her raised right hand and holds notes in her left. Her head is inclined gently to the right.



Committee Members Peter Ainsworth MP, Frank Doran MP, Hugo Swire MP (Chairman) and Anne Main MP visit Bronze Age Foundry in December 2006 to view the bronze cast of the head and shoulders emerging from the mould (Photo: Terry Moore)



A choice from a series of three small preliminary maquettes presented by the sculptor, was made as the 'design option' for the half-size 'working maquette' by the Works of Art Committee in April 2005. This in turn was unanimously approved in early 2006, and work on enlarging to a scale of one and a quarter above life size began in the sculptor's former Baptist Chapel Studio in Gloucestershire in February 2006.

After eight months of continuous work, enlarging and then refining the detail and surface of the 7ft ft 4" clay model, moulds were made and taken to Bronze Age Foundry in London. Over the next three and a half months, under the sculptor's constant supervision, the sculpture was cast, welded, fettled and patinated. After completion on the 9th February 2007, it was transported to the House of Commons and erected on the vacant stone plinth in Members' Lobby, in readiness for the unveiling ceremony on the 21st February 2007.

Antony Dufort with the wrapped statue as it passes the marble statue of Gladstone in Central Lobby (Photo: Matthew Tugwell)



The statue is lifted onto the empty plinth in Members' Lobby by Keith Baker, James Elliot and associates on 10th February 2007 (Photo: Matthew Tugwell)

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Back Cover Baroness Thatcher and Antony Dufort in Members' Lobby after the installation of the statue on 10th February 2007 (Photo: Matthew Tugwell)

