

# EUROPEAN DAY - KEYWORTH - NORTHERN REGION 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

**Chair - Griselda Kenyon CER    Welcome by Catherine Pinion for N. Region**

This year's CER meeting was held outside London, providing an opportunity for local members to take part in a National event. As a result, the Centenary lounge, a comfortable and pleasant venue, was filled to its capacity of fifty. We were honoured that the Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP, the local MP, was able to accept our invitation to be our main speaker. Mr Clarke's talk on "The New European Treaty and the Future of Europe" ranged through a number of matters of importance to the European Union, but was mostly concerned with emphasising that the E.U. needed to clarify its aims and to follow a Common Policy. The Lisbon Treaty should facilitate such aims if properly interpreted and all could agree. Institutional arrangements wasted time, while matters such as common policies on energy, security, climate change and the environment were crucial. The Atlantic Alliance was crucial to Europe. Common rules and controls on immigration should be introduced, vetos should be eliminated and there should be a non-voting President. Questions on "Federalism", Austrian Banking, the constant to and fro between Brussels and Strasbourg, among others, were answered at length. However Mr Clarke was adamant that there will be no "United States of Europe" in the foreseeable future. That idea has had its day. Mr Clarke spoke with his usual eloquence, expertise and humour, holding his audience with great authority.

After a buffet lunch Dr Linda Hadfield of BFWG Cambridge spoke on the RAISE project of which she was the sole U.K. representative. The project, aimed at promoting sustainability, was reviewed in the Winter 2008 edition of News. Workshops had been held on various topics of importance to the environment and members are now in the process of evaluating further research, including that on transport. Dr Hadfield's work, and that of her co-members, helps to remind us of opportunities available for us all to support, and work for a sustainable future.

The third speaker, Ed Maxfield, is a prospective Liberal Democrat candidate for next year's European elections. He has researched both the history of the E.U. in all its forms from the early days of the EEC to the current work of the E.U.. Clearly he understands its structure and method, and the workings of the European Parliament, with its successes and problems. Looking to the future he maintained the need for Russia to "return to Europe" (join the E.U?). Turkey should also be made more welcome. If he is successful in his aims he will surely prove to be a well-informed and very useful member of the European Parliament.

A successful and enjoyable day. Thanks to Su Allen and her team.

D.Newham