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Kids honoured at Try Angle awards

Page 4



Class gets a taste of Japanese culture

Page 16

Prosser offers a full account

MP on the defensive in blacked-out expenses scandal

Report by Kathy Bailes

kathy.bailes@kvmmedia.co.uk

A PANASONIC TV costing £718, a £200 TV stand, a £330 bed and a £170 armchair are just some of the items Dover and Deal MP Gwyn Prosser has paid for with your cash.

Using the second homes allowance, the Labour backbencher also bought £229 light fittings, £199.50 blinds and pot plants worth £49.99. The claims were made between 2005 and 2007.

Mr Prosser, who has two flats in the

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MR GWYN PROSSER-DOVER/DEAL LAB Account as at: [Redacted] Reprinted on: [Redacted]

31 MAR 2009

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Revealed: Blacked-out expenses claims by Gwyn Prosser that have been published on his official Parliament website



100 stories

Fishing trouble



A SKIPPER of a Dover-based fishing boat has accused French customs of "piracy" after his vessel was boarded by armed officers.

Paul Alexander and 10 anglers had sailed into the English Channel for a day trip on June 17 when they were approached by a French customs ship.

See page 5

Musical culture



AFRICAN drumming, Portuguese jugglers and a samba band from Whitstable were among the attractions at the Dover multi-cultural festival on Saturday.

See pictures and report on page 42

Parking issue

A couple have accused the district council of not providing enough car parking spaces for disabled people.

Marie and David Girdwood say it has become increasingly difficult for them to collect Marie's prescriptions and shop in Dover town centre as she is having to walk too far.

See page 8

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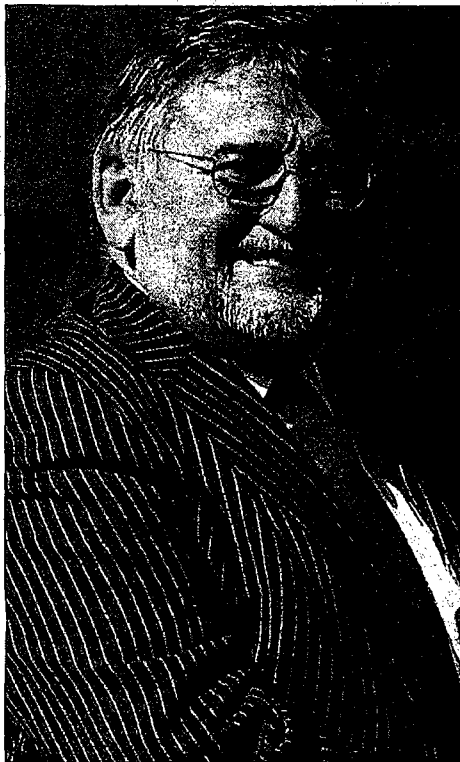
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Under scrutiny: Mr Prosser has defended the claims

'I was told I could not reveal all'

Tories on attack over food bill

From the front page

capital and a family home in River, also racked up £11,118.66 in food bills from April 2004 to March 2008 and claimed £3,384.13 in January 2006 for items which have been blacked out on expenses documents made public last week.

On top of Mr Prosser's salary, which was upped from £61,820 a year to £64,766 on April 1, the father-of-three also claimed for items including £32.50 for Fairtrade coffee and hot chocolate for his Dover office, £24 for a toaster, £229.99 for a washing machine, £219 for flooring, £35 for kitchen utensils and £44 for a fan.

In March Mr Prosser slammed attempts to keep expense claims under wraps, saying secrecy shattered the public trust in MPs. He told the *Express*: "There is the impression that we are all crooks."

Mr Prosser, elected in 1997, has defended the claims, saying: "When my washing machine at home blows up I pay for that, but there are

additional costs for having a home in London and if I didn't have to live away I wouldn't have those costs."

The father-of-three has expressed dismay at the huge swathes of information blacked out by Parliamentary authorities and has offered to show the *Express* unredacted copies at the end of this week.

He said: "The Clerk of the House and Chief Executive gave written warning to all MPs in all parties that publishing their accounts in their raw condition could make us liable for prosecution under the Data Protection Act. In my view they have been over protective and the whole-scale redaction of documents has only served to reinforce people's views that there's a big cover-up going on."

Tory parliamentary hopeful Charlie Elphicke said: "I struggle to understand how it can be appropriate under any circumstances to claim for food but rather than commenting on Mr Prosser I am more interested in reform and rebuilding trust. We need to move forward."

The figures

■ Taxpayers stumped up £134,053 in allowances for Mr Prosser from April 2007 to March 2008, on top of his £61,820 salary.

■ Mr Prosser claimed £14,611 in second homes allowance, covering the price of staying in London.

■ He was paid £418 in travel costs for his wife Rhoda and £85,218 in costs for his three staff, £4,782 below the maximum allowance.

■ Last year Mr Prosser was revealed as one of 43 MPs declaring rental income from a property while claiming the second homes allowance.

■ The release of MPs' expenses claims last week caused uproar because large chunks of the details were blacked out.

■ As well as censoring addresses, Commons officials blacked out receipts, rail tickets and details of some claims.

■ The documents censored addresses on the basis of security but this also covered second home details.

■ A claim by Mr Prosser in February 2006 totalled £3,384.13 but the items have been redacted. The only clue is part of the payment was made to HM Land Registry.

In brief

A256 turnings may be closed

A DECISION to close two turnings on the A256 Dover to Sandwich road is expected to be made tonight (Thursday).

District councillors on the joint transportation board will discuss an Experimental Traffic Order to prohibit right turns at Tilmanstone and Eythorne.

The proposal follows two road deaths at Tilmanstone in the last three years and one at Eythorne in the same period.

A report for the board says: "The main factor in the fatal crashes was the difficulty the driver turning right had in judging the high speed of oncoming vehicles. The closure of these two gaps would have prevented the manoeuvres at these locations which resulted in three deaths."

Ian Taylor, of the Kent branch for the Association of British Drivers, says the closures are unnecessary. He said: "The crash resulted from incorrect judgement of the speed of oncoming traffic, failure of a pretty basic driving skill."

"These junctions have adequate turning lanes and good sightlines. Improved signage, road markings and lighting are options."

If agreed, the order will be made for six months.

The meeting at the council offices in Whitfield starts at 6pm. It is open to the public.

Lumley at fete

ACTRESS Joanna Lumley will open Guston Primary School summer fete on Saturday. The event in Burgoyne Heights runs from 11am to 2pm.

Family fun day

DOVER Museum is having a family fun day on Saturday, where youngsters will be able to design their own bookmark.

For more information call 01304 201066.

Smuggler jailed

A LORRY driver who tried to smuggle heroin through Dover in Peperami stocks was jailed for 11 years by Canterbury Crown Court last Friday.

Thomas Findlay, 52, of Skares in Ayrshire, was arrested in February 2007 after a search of his vehicle uncovered 12 kilos of the drug.

You say



Mary Berry and Les Stevens

New Romney grandad-of-four Les Stevens, 91, said: "It is disgusting. They should dissolve Parliament and have an election and none of those involved in the expenses scandal should be allowed to stand."

His friend Mary Berry, 71, of Dover, said: "They could be spending that money on old



Mick Smith

age pensioners. I have worked since I was 15 and I have to pay for every single thing I get. Our pensions don't go up: it's scandalous."

Dad-of-three Mick Smith, of Dover, said: "I don't think they should be allowed all that money when all they do is sit around drinking gin and tonic."

Time for change

■ Mark Wallace, of the Taxpayers Alliance, said: "These claims are a classic example of why the system is too generous and needs to be changed. There is no way taxpayers should have to pay Gwyn Prosser's supermarket bills and hot

chocolate invoices. No matter where you are living you need to eat and it is not an extra expense of being an MP."

"It is not good enough to say that everybody is at it or the system doesn't work. A decent MP would never have claimed for these things in the first place."

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