

July 1984

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Tonight we pay tribute to Ken Godbeer's remarkable career of service to No. 10.

Ken's first job was not as a driver but as a tea-taster (from 1936 to 1939). Some wag might say that it was a natural step from being a tea-taster to joining the Civil Service. At any rate, he has always blended in very well.

Ken came to No. 10 via wartime service in the RASC, from 1939 to 1946, when he started his career as a driver. He joined the Government Car Service in July 1946 and became the No. 2 driver at No. 10 in October 1946.

So he completes this year 38 years' service to No. 10. Not many of us can match that record. I will have to be Prime Minister to the year 2017 to do so.

While Ken has been at No. 10, the Prime Ministers for whom he has driven have been:-

Mr Attlee

Sir Winston Churchill

Mr Eden

Mr Macmillan

Sir Alec Douglas-Home

Mr Wilson

Mr Heath

Mr Callaghan

For all those years Ken, as the No. 2 driver, was always the blushing bridesmaid and never the bride.

Being the No. 2 driver is even more difficult than No. 1 because No. 2 has always to keep his eye on No. 1 !

Ken became the No. 1 driver following the sad death of George Newell in 1981, and I have always had complete confidence in him.

Ken's service is recognised by the award of the MBE to him in this year's Birthday Honours List in addition to the BEM he received in 1966. The MBE is a very unusual level of award for a Government driver

but Ken's record is a very unusual one.

I have been asked to present to Ken a gift which the No. 10 staff have joined in making to him. We hope that it will always be a happy memento of No. 10 for him and Mrs Godbeer.

We are very happy to see Mrs Godbeer here tonight and I am delighted to present to her this bouquet of flowers which - after years of waiting for Ken to come home in the evenings - she most richly deserves.