

Political Notebook by George Pascoe-Watson

David Cameron's Tories are firing on all cylinders as General Election 2010 kicks off.

The polls are beginning to show a consistent election-winning position for the Tories - giving them a regular 40% share of the vote.

That's enough for victory and the smart money is now going on a working Conservative majority of at least 20 seats.

Some are predicting an even better result for the Tories come May 7.

Election campaigns are often about stunts which are aimed at destabilizing the opposition and upsetting their well-planned tactics.

And within minutes of Gordon Brown going to see The Queen, the Conservatives showed they are thinking on their feet.

Team Cameron have been dishing out mugs with Mr Cameron posing as Gene Hunt in Ashes to Ashes declaring "Fire Up The Quattro" as the election gets underway.

And earlier the Tory leader hijacked the TV cameras just when Gordon Brown was planning a statesmanlike appearance.

Mr Cameron appeared at London's County Hall to make his own address to the nation at the very moment when the PM was due to walk onto the steps of 10 Downing Street.

It forced Mr Brown to remain inside until Mr Cameron had finished his statement - giving the Conservatives the first advantage of the campaign.

Two dozen Conservative volunteers were dispatched to hold up letters above their heads spelling out Time For Change for the helicopter cameras to catch as Mr Brown drove to Buckingham Palace.

Team Cameron are in Tory HQ at 6am each morning. Their leader addressed the entire Conservative rank-and-file this morning on top of two cardboard boxes (the new political soapbox) and told them: "Generations of Conservatives would give their eye teeth to be at CCHQ at the heart of the battle to kick out a Labour government."

A beaming Sam Cam was at his side before she joined him on the steps of County Hall - then went back to work at Smythson where she is creative director.

There'll be one more PMQs before the election campaign proper - and the nation will be focused on next Thursday's first TV debate.

The PM has been given permission to stand on the left of the stage for each one because he is blind in his left eye.

This will allow him to keep David Cameron and Nick Clegg in his vision at all times.

The Tory and LibDem leaders will draw lots for the middle and stage right positions for each of the three TV clashes.

The Chancellors' debate last Monday night proved how important stage positioning can be for the dynamics and result of each showdown.

Whoever bags the centre stage position can appear to carry more authority than those on either flank.

There is little doubt the TV debates will play a major role in the 2010 campaign with huge numbers of voters still undecided.

These are the swing voters Mr Cameron needs to sweep him into the Commons with a working majority.

Remember: the Tories need to win an extra 117 seats on May 6 to give him a majority of just one.

Britain's bookmakers are braced for a Tory majority of around 12 seats right now and that's before the election battle begins.

The bookies are often a good guide to the true feelings of the nation.

The polls are showing a seven to 10 point lead for the Conservatives as Easter begins.

But it's in the marginals that the real battle is to be won - and in the south of England and parts of the north, the figures are much stronger for Team Cameron.

A key moment to focus on will be the two New of the World polls of marginal seats expected over the next month. The first will come on Sunday.

Their marginal survey stopped Mr Brown from holding a snap election in October 2007.

Here we will discover a far more accurate picture of what's likely to be the outcome of election 2010.

Cabinet ministers I know are already preparing for a return to public transport, saying farewell to their government drivers and Jaguars.

It is a brutal transition to those who have served as ministers of the Crown for the last decade or so - to discover there is no car waiting for them morning, noon and night.

Some are clinging onto the mild hope they might remain the largest party but most are already considering their next moves and filing business cards with a view to taking on extra work in the commercial world.

I will be penning a Portland Political Notebook twice a week - on Tuesdays and Fridays between now and Polling Day.

I will aim to bring readers up to speed with the overall direction of travel - and using my crystal ball to predict who will govern from May 7.