

Darren McCaffrey, Sky News Politics Reporter blogged this before it was announced that Maria Eagle (who has not to our knowledge ever engaged with defence groups in Parliament) was announced as Shadow Secretary of State for Defence.

The statues of Churchill, Thatcher, Attlee, Lloyd George - Britain's greatest 20th century Prime Ministers - loom large over the members' lobby in the House of Commons.

They can weigh heavy on MPs, entering the chamber at times of crucial debates, and on leaders too as they try to whip their MPs.

And it was here I found myself on Sunday afternoon, sent on the hunt to find the elusive new Labour leader.

Parliament is a big place, miles of corridors, nooks and crannies. And so with colleagues from the BBC and ITN the search began.

It took a while, quite a while, but at the end of a bookshelf-lined corridor, opening up to the members' lobby and behind a door grandly named Her Majesty's Official Opposition Whips' Office, Jeremy Corbyn was holed up.

With him were his adviser Simon Fletcher, shadow chief whip Rosie Winterton and her adviser, and a young woman, who described herself at one point as "the tea girl".

We didn't buy this description. She was clearly more involved, though she was at that moment also carrying lots of tea.

And so it began. Lord Falconer popped in, emerging with a smile but saying nothing.

We heard rumours Andy Burnham had been and gone. That David Lammy had been spotted.

But there were to be no others, this would be a shadow cabinet appointed over the phone.

Jeremy would talk to them. Rosie would talk to them. Simon would get the message out, who was in and who was out.

How do I know this? Well, I could hear it, not all of it, not most of it, but some of it.

There was no glass pressed against a door, simply four journalists in a grand Commons character, loitering, tweeting, trying to see who was coming and going.

Behind a not-very-thick door, we could hear conversations which often spiked in volume and were clearly audible.

"Andy is IN, Hilary is IN, Angela is IN," was the line Rosie would use in an attempt to win people over and get on board with Jezza's shadow cabinet.

But, no announcements came, the conversations continued and then Jeremy emerged, smartly dressed in a black shirt.

"How is everything?" we asked. "Everything is wonderful, just wonderful," he mused.

"Would it be a long night?" we asked. "The night is but young," he responded.

By 8pm it didn't seem that young but it was.

The phone calls continued but defence seemed like it had been settled.

It had been offered to Chris Bryant.

"Jeremy was up for it," Rosie said on the phone, but then it fell apart after Bryant insisted on "a 30-minute conversation about what would happen if we had to invade Russia".

That was a conversation Jeremy clearly wasn't prepared to have. Bryant was out.

"Oh maybe Jack Dromey would be good at defence." But no, Rosie had to get back to her "defence problem".

A laugh ensued it was "the defence of the realm after all".

It was dark now, it was quiet, eerily quiet - just us and them, us on our phones, tweeting, them on their phones, calling.

And again Jeremy emerged, which he seemed to do once every hour, when a toilet break was needed.

We of course kept asking questions, but the responses became more curt. By 9.15pm, it was a mere "hello" from Mr Corbyn.

But defence was still proving difficult.

Rosie was back on the phone, we couldn't tell who with.

"Now, this might be a bit of an outside idea, how do you feel about being shadow defence secretary?"

A pause. "Just, what are your views on Trident?"

A much, much longer pause. "But, are you willing to engage in a debate?"

We don't know who that was, but it was clear they were working through a list, and had reached a point in the list where due diligence hadn't yet reached.

And it went on. Rosie again. "We offered Lucy DECC (Department of Energy and Climate Change) but she said, she wasn't ready, she wanted something to do with childcare."

And on. Security had come round. Doors locked. Lights turned off. But announcements were coming. Burnham was indeed in, as was Benn. And Eagle too, but not as shadow chancellor, that was John McDonnell.

Why all the men? We rushed towards Jeremy as he emerged again. He smile. He walked. But he would no longer engage.

All the shadow cabinet top positions had gone to men, Labour MPs started to complain online, this is surely not what a Corbyn shadow cabinet was meant to look like.

Then a male voice, it sounded like Simon Fletcher.

"We are taking a fair amount of **** out there about women.

"We need to do a Mandelson. Let's make Angela shadow first minister of state. Like Mandelson was. She can cover PMQs. Tom (Watson) knows about this. Do the Angela bit now."

Minutes later a text from a Labour source. Angela Eagle was to be shadow first minister of state. She would deputise at Prime Minister's Question Time.

Was this the plan all along, or a last-minute reaction to outrage on Twitter and private message? We may never know.

It was now very late, Big Ben had struck midnight some time ago. I was tired. We were all tired. And hungry.

And then, there he was again but he had a coat on, yes a coat - it is over?

"Are you tired?" I asked. Managing to smile, just, he quipped: "We never sleep, sleep ended months ago."

He disappeared, answering his phone as he went: "Excellent, that's really good news, thanks."

My assumption at the time that after much speculation Gloria De Piero had agreed to defence, but no announcement came.

Then he was gone, they were all gone. But where? We must get pictures of him leaving (you can't film on the Parliamentary estate).

We bumped into Rosie Winterton on the way out - questions, lots of questions.

"Please go through the press office, thanks," was repeated to them all.