



PASSION FOR CHANGE

After an induction week in Worcester last October, the Crumplebury Group (the name taken from the beautiful farm, kindly provided by Chris and Anne Evans, where we all first met) decided to meet again in Sheffield from November 22 to 28. This group consists of people from different countries volunteering full time with Initiatives of Change in Britain.

The programme was prepared by the Sheffield IofC team. Among those who took part were Laura Trevelyan and Killy Sanchez (Guatemala) from Oxford, Jose Carlos Leon Vargas (Mexico) working with *For A Change* in London, Angela Starovoytova (Ukraine) and Anna Pozhogina (Latvia) with *Foundations for Freedom* in Sheffield, Howard Grace, Nick Foster and Chris Evans. We have had a week of listening, sharing and learning through 'inreach' and 'outreach'.

We had the opportunity to visit some initiatives and organisations running community development projects in different fields. These included:

- *Connected 2*, working with teenagers through music technology and dance in Huddersfield;
- *Black PALM*, running a mentoring project and developing inter-cultural workshops in Sheffield schools;
- *The Darnell Forum*, combatting deprivation in the community of Darnell, Sheffield;
- *Social Entrepreneurship*, an explanation of which was given by Bob



Some of the 'Crumplebury Group' in Sheffield

Bridge, working with Sheffield City Council's Regeneration Programme.

It was important for us to hear the experience others have gained and see the challenges and struggles they go through and also to glimpse their vision for British society.

The common thread in all these meetings was a strong sense of the need for community building and a desire for change. The Crumplebury Group learned that passion for change is a reflection of people's personal journeys. These can be realised in relevant projects that combine inspiration and responsibility.

However, there is a clear need to support those running such projects as many feel alone in their work. Effective partnerships within the social sector have to be more than the fulfilment of EU or governmental demands to access funding. To make the world better, we need to work together.

Besides visits and workshops, we had a wonderful walk in the Peak

District and a tour of Sheffield city. We had times of spiritual reflection led by Bhavesh Patel and Howard Grace on 'community and me' and 'the inner struggle'. We heard inspiring life stories from Judith Curtis and Nick and CJ Foster.

In an atmosphere of friendship and sharing, we are strengthening bonds both internally and with other organisations which also have a passion for change in their communities.

Anna Pozhagina

DISCOVER THE OTHER

Ranmoor Hall, November 26-27

The aim of this national gathering was to give people a sample of *Foundations for Freedom's* Changing Course, as well as having a time of fellowship together. Over 70 people, the majority of whom were already familiar with Initiatives of Change, were cordially hosted by the Sheffield team.

The event started with the IofC powerpoint presentation, which led on to 'vignettes' of various programmes represented within the gathering including *Hope in the Cities*, *Action for Life*, *Foundations for Freedom*, *Learn to Lead*, *The Schools Programme* and *For A Change*. Information was also given about one of the themes for Caux's summer conferences next year, *The Heart and Soul for Europe*.

The rest of the day was run as an F4F-style workshop, using some of the main themes from the Changing Course. Initially the gathering was split into four groups to discuss one of the four absolute standards – honesty,

purity, unselfishness and love. Although for many this was not an unusual topic, the method of sharing insights and examples was surprisingly fruitful. Results were fed back to the wider group.

To counteract a delicious (and filling) lunch, a physical and musical energiser helped participants enter the first topic for the afternoon: Listening Skills. Following the exercise, groups of four people examined various levels of listening to each others' stories, leading to a further level of listening: the inner voice.

Following the afternoon tea/coffee-break, we had a time of 'Research and Development' (Quiet Time) where the groups of four were encouraged to share their insights. Many people who had heard about, yet never experienced, an F4F course found the process enlightening and rewarding. There were many who said that having such a diverse gathering of people led to fascinating private discussions and discoveries – at least one way to Discover the Other.

After the R&D, some that were new to the process suggested that:

* *'(It is) Not usual and often, to come to a group of strangers and feel oneness, so comfortable.'*

* *'I feel safe.'*

David and Judith Curtis, Bob and Teresa Bridge, Barbara Priestley, Nick and CJ Foster and others in the Sheffield team (aided by Brian and Audrey Thirlaway, Elizabeth Locke and the Crumplebury Group) were delighted that the event ran well. Enquiries about the possibility of running similar events around the country will be followed up.

THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE – an ICF conference in France

At the invitation of the Mayor of Le Touquet, who is also its Member of Parliament, and of a committee of senior French journalists, an *International Communications Forum* (ICF) conference took place in the city's Town Hall on October 15/16. It attracted considerable press interest, amounting to six feature articles – more than 200 column inches of material in the local and regional papers.

British journalists led a session on "The BBC and the Hutton Report" chaired by Magnus Linklater, columnist for *The Times* of London and *Scotland on Sunday*. He was supported by Jonathan Baker, World News Editor of BBC Television, and Mike Jempson, Director of *Mediawise*, a British association working for better, ethically based journalism. Their presentation was well received by the largely French audience for its lucidity and honesty.

An important contribution was made by Didier Pillet, Editor-in-Chief of *Ouest France*, France's largest circulation daily and the only one whose readership is increasing. He attributed its success to their ethical policy and their preoccupation with the aspirations and problems of their readers. They do not print pictures showing suffering on people's faces, nor of those in handcuffs or in other embarrassing situations. All material is checked against the standards of

- Say without prejudice
- Show without shocking
- Witness without aggression

- Denounce without condemning

The paper is making a profit.

Bill Porter, founder of the ICF and initiator of the Le Touquet conference, comments, "There must be a lesson here for those owners and editors who think that smut and sensation is the way to attract readers; in fact their circulations are declining."

Other subjects included "The Media and Islam" at which the main speaker was Dr Zaki Badawi, Principal of the Muslim College, London, and recently awarded the KBE. Participants came also from Lebanon, Belgium, Switzerland, Ghana, Portugal and Great Britain.

Finlay Moir

Greencoat Forum 'TOTAL REVOLUTION' NEEDED IN MUSIC MAKING, says concert pianist

Concert pianist Penelope Thwaites made an impassioned plea for excellence in music as being essential for the human spirit, when she spoke at a Greencoat Forum at the Initiatives of Change centre in London on November 9.

"Excellence in music is bound up with how we see ourselves as human beings. We are spiritual beings and we need food for the spirit as much as for the body," said Thwaites. The pianist, who was born in Chester and educated in Melbourne, Australia, is renowned for her recordings of the works of Percy Grainger, her eighth released this year on the Chandos label. She was addressing her theme: *Excellence in music – luxury or necessity?*

After centuries of building up civilisation, "we now seem to be intent on destroying it," she said. She instanced those "cutting edge" works that, for example, end in smashing violins as part of the performance. "This retrograde impulse is going hand in hand with the advance of the greatest religion of our age – materialism." Sundays were no longer for church or quiet contemplation but for visits to shopping malls. Too much music-making had been taken over by money-makers as a product to be sold "by as much crudity and coarseness as the censor will allow".

Thwaites suggested that many of the songs of her children's generation reflect "a bleakness that lies at the heart of the materialistic society". Fragmentation of the family had fractured "that confidence-building sense of respect for your origins".

Favourite music

And with a lack of confidence might often go a lack of humour. Excellence didn't have to take itself too seriously, as she illustrated with an extract of music on CD from Fats Waller (who had made 500 recordings before his death in 1943). "His form of excellence has lasted." Thwaites interspersed her talk with more of her favourite music on CD, ranging from Rachmaninov playing his own third piano concerto to Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*.

She acknowledged that some might see the pursuit of excellence as a threat, if it created exclusive élites. "I do not subscribe to this view. We need élites as we need a vanguard in any field." The alternative was shown



Penelope Thwaites (l) with Anna Wigan, music graduate from Bangor University

in the 'hideous example' of Mao's China where top concert pianists she had met had been deliberately injured.

Excellence in music could even be regarded with suspicion in religious circles, if devotion to religious music supplanted devotion to the religion itself. "Fortunately for us, that issue was not a factor for Johann Sebastian Bach. Despite bad eyesight, huge family commitments, endless wrangles with tiresome local officials, he poured out the most astounding body of musical masterpieces," Thwaites commented.

Role of government

What of the role of government in promoting excellence in music? There was a need for "a total revolution", among all political parties, in acknowledging the importance of real music-making in schools. Thwaites called for "an ongoing think tank of real musical thinkers" who would feed in ideas. Singing needed a colossal boost, let alone the provision of musical instruments. There was a need for "teachers who can go into the roughest schools and are capable of

getting children to sing. They should be hugely paid and backed to the hilt." Valuable educational programmes of outreach from major orchestras into schools deserved proper government support. Currently the provision was hopelessly inadequate.

She also called for a national competition for new hymn tunes – "stirring tunes that a football crowd could sing" – in which top contemporary composers would take part. In the past, Benjamin Britten, Vaughan Williams and others had written highly effectively for children and amateurs as well as professionals. John Rutter was one contemporary composer of religious music who really understood the voice, writing for all types of singers, she said. And from just recycling the past, we should open our minds to new sounds and styles.

An example of this was *Jungle*, an extract from Michael Tippett's cantata *The Mask of Time*, which "gives a taste of what amazing new sounds composers and performers can create."

Young musicians

In 2001 she had organised the Performing Australian Music Competition in Melbourne, where 50 young musicians from 20 countries played music by 46 Australian composers. The young musicians had researched and chosen the programmes and much of the inventive repertoire of music had come from the last 50 years.

"The real greatness in our culture has reflected and sustained our progress as human beings," Thwaites concluded. "Nothing less than an

appreciation of greatness, and a pursuit of the best of which we are capable, is going to carry our progress forward. Above all, let us thank the great Creative Spirit and life force which is always there to inspire us, if we listen and if we dare."

Michael Smith

COVENTRY'S PEACE MONTH

Michael Henderson was the final speaker in a weekly series of talks arranged by Coventry University's Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation as a contribution to Coventry's Peace Month. He spoke in November in Coventry's Herbert Art Gallery on the subject *Stories of Hope: Breaking the Chain of Hate*. The audience included students from Cambodia, China, Kenya, Japan and Sierra Leone.

In the lively question and answer session that followed, a moving contribution was made by **Les Dennison**. He described how forgiveness was a journey of faith in which God revealed new steps along the way. Forty-five years ago the impetus for his giving up his hatred of the Japanese was the sight of a Japanese general bowing low and apologising for what his people had done to him as a prisoner. Les had always resisted the idea of bowing to a Japanese, but did so for the first time at a public event this October – to a survivor of Hiroshima.

Les was revelling in his new motorised buggy, which he received courtesy of his regiment and the Royal British Legion.



The Reconciliation Triangle – On the dockside at Liverpool in late October, a city which gained much wealth from ships that plied the Atlantic Slave Trade, representatives of the three corners of that trade gathered for a further step to help heal the legacy of history. Here the Government Minister from the Republic of Benin, **Luc Gnacadja** (3rd right), and **Rev Tee Turner** of *Hope in the Cities*, representing the City of Richmond, Virginia (2nd right), talk with **Eric Lynch**, Liverpool guide and historian from the Slave History section of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, and **Stephen Broadbent**, Liverpool sculptor (left), who created a Reconciliation Sculpture which was handed over on this occasion to these two representatives by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

The next phase of this initiative will be a sustained programme of exchange visits and other links between educational institutions in the three regions. At the handing over ceremony the Leader of Liverpool City Council, Cllr. Mike Storey, said that the apology by the city for its major role in the slave trade as its final act of the millennium was a step on the road to reconciliation and justice. "The reconciliation triangle initiative is one more step on that journey."

A NEW DIMENSION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A public meeting to heighten people's awareness of *Dolen Cymru*, Wales' unique link with Lesotho, was held on October 29 in Wrexham. This is the first ever twinning between two countries and was initiated some 20 years ago by **Dr Carl Clowes** in association with Initiatives of Change.

Dr Clowes, President of *Dolen Cymru*, had just returned from a fact-finding mission to Lesotho, with two leading AIDS and Public Health specialists. He was able to give the most recent news, facts and figures.

Bishop Edwin Regan, Chairman of *Dolen Cymru's* Churches Committee, spoke of the visit made last year by a group of church leaders. **Ian Lucas**, the MP for Wrexham, gave a vote of thanks. The 50 or so who attended found it most informative and much appreciated the evening.

Brian Thirlaway

GORDON HANNON,

Some Parson! – Some Man

By David Hannon

Gordon Hannon was in the middle of a successful career in the Church of Ireland when, in December 1939, he decided to leave his position and work full time with MRA. He was 48 years old, and apparently destined for high office in the church. Consulting with Archbishop Gregg, the then Primate and Archbishop of Armagh, Hannon asked: "Do you think that if, in the next few years, I could bring *three men* in positions of influence in the country to the place where all

their actions were governed by God, it would be worth giving up the Parish?" Gregg replied: "If you can bring *one man* to that stage, it would be worth it for the country's sake."

Gordon Hannon's decision and its consequences in Irish life is the main focus of this biography. It is a reminder of the fact that many remarkable people abandoned conventional careers to work with MRA. The book is full of inspiration. Hannon would start his quiet times with prayers like this: "Take, O Lord, and receive my liberty, my memory, my understanding and all my will; all that I am and all that I possess are yours. You gave them to me. Now I give them back to you." He once said, "Ireland can become a Reconciler of Nations." Written by one of Hannon's six children, this biography also offers a lively portrait of Hannon's family life.

An important contribution to the history of faith in 20th century Ireland, as well as to MRA/IofC history, this book could be an excellent Christmas present.

Philip Boobbyer

Copies are available at £10.00 post free from Peter Hannon, The Fort House, Dundooan, Coleraine, Country Derry, BT52 2PX, and from 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD

TOAD OF TOAD HALL

In recent weeks I have felt very akin to Toad of Toad Hall. When I feel fine, nothing seems impossible. When I am feeling unfit, dark thoughts invade my mind and the worst seems likely.

In September I was found to have a lymphoma which required chemotherapy. It is a treatable condition. On asking the consultant if at 77 it was necessary to take the course, he replied with a sympathetic smile that if I didn't, I was likely to be in Heaven in a few months.

Such a revelation has a shaking effect on one's mentality. From enjoying the assumption of a reasonably straightforward passage into one's eighties with wife, family and friends, one is confronted with a very uncertain future.

Basil Hume writes in his most wonderful book *Searching for God* that in his view prayer is a Christian's most important spiritual exercise. With the knowledge of so many devoted friends and family, all praying for me, I have come to see this better and have reached the following conclusions so far.

The outcome of my condition is in the hands of the Almighty and the medics. But the effect on my state of mind is noticeable. I am amazed at the buoyancy I feel – able to face fear and anxiety. I have decided that it is idle to try and picture how I will cope with all the possible dire effects that can afflict me, but must simply take a day at a time doing my best to lift everyone's spirits. For what other good reason is there to continue to be around?

I feel blessed, and am blessed. Now into my third course of chemo, I continue to feel well. Long may it last. But as always the matter does not rest with me. It's probably the way Christians are supposed to live anyway.

Hugh Nowell

BE AN AMBASSADOR FOR A CHANGE

May we on *For A Change* magazine ask for the help of UK Newsletter readers? Six times a year, *For A Change* offers evidence that people and situations can change – a reality of which many have lost hope. We receive many comments on how much the magazine means to people, all over the world, and yet we only print 4,000 copies of each issue.

If each reader of the UK Newsletter sold one subscription to a friend, neighbour or work colleague, over the next two to three months, we could increase our subscriptions by at least 750.

These new subscriptions would also help *For A Change* financially, and enable us to send more free copies or subscriptions to people who would not otherwise pay for it. For instance, promotion copies go to over 200 journalists in the UK media. All Ambassadors and High Commissioners in London receive a free copy. University libraries in Africa, Russia and Romania have written to us thanking us for sending them the magazine free, and asking us to continue to do so – as have many individuals in developing countries who cannot afford to pay.

Why not offer your friends and

neighbours the chance to help themselves to some hope?

Mary Lean, Mike Smith, Jessica Fleischer, Jose Carlos Leon Vargas

BOOKS & OTHER LITERATURE

As from December 1, requests for books and other literature should be addressed to Initiatives of Change (Books) at 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD. Grosvenor Books (UK) will cease trading as from that date. Books may also be ordered from the online shop on the international website www.iofc.org

Christmas Gifts?

A String of Pearls by Ethel Roberts – the new 44-page book.

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Pearls is £2.50, *Cork* is £5, both post-free from John Faber, 2 Batworth Park House, Arundel BN18 9PG



*The Editors wish all our readers a very
Happy Christmas*



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