

"A SCOTSMAN ABROAD"

"Despite being retired and 86 years old, Archie Mackenzie still works in track-two diplomacy, on hand to smooth negotiations in troubled parts of the world. In the aftermath of September 11, he firmly believes that more than ever diplomats have a vital role to play."

Under this heading in the April edition of *Scottish Field*, Bridget McGrouther introduces a 4-page article, plentifully illustrated, about Archie Mackenzie's book *Faith in Diplomacy*. The book will be officially launched at the Roxburghe Hotel in Edinburgh on April 11, presided over by Mr R D Kernohan.

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Breaking the Chain of Hate

In the week before the launching of his book at Portico's Bookstore in London, Michael Henderson was interviewed live on BBC Scotland and BBC London and recorded for BBC Yorkshire and Saga Radio.

He was also interviewed by Reuters and *The Scotsman* and had a feature article on the editorial page of *The Scottish Catholic Observer* headed, "Why we must continue to keep building bridges". As we go to press he is scheduled to be interviewed on BBC Radio 5 and the BBC World Service.

This issue was edited by Ann Carpenter and Dron Hore-Ruthven, with lay-out by Blair Cummock. Please send material for the next issue by April 22 to Janet Paine, 7 Lindow Road, Old Trafford, Manchester, M16 0DP, Tel: 0161 8816674. Email<mjpgaine@compuserve.com>

Rousing performance in Sheffield

Return Trip, by Hugh Williams is a powerful play about the effects of drug addiction on a family. A new cast performed it in The Library Theatre in Sheffield on March 1/2.

The Afro-Caribbean community wanted to make their contribution to the life of the city and chose to put on this play. Their programme notes read: "Our drama group came into being to perform *Return Trip*. This is therefore our first performance. We hope it will be one of many." At the final curtain there were whoops, shouts and cheers from the audience.

Barbara Priestley

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

London

April 16: Greencoat Forum
6.30 for 7.15 pm.

Lord Plumb will speak on "Where should our food come from?"

April 19-25: Visit of group from Lebanon.

May 30: Lunchtime occasion at Greencoat Place to meet Archie Mackenzie.

Tirley Garth

May 24: In the series "Reasons for Hope", Archie Mackenzie – "*Faith in Diplomacy*". Details from Tirley, Tel: 01829 732301.

UK **news** LETTER

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THE OTHER 3 Rs IN UGANDA

Ann Rignall and Joy Weeks, both former teachers and authors of the teaching course – The Other 3 Rs (Responsibility, Relationships and Respect for Life) have just spent two weeks in Uganda.

We have just returned from our first visit to Africa, at the invitation of Andrew Mukhwana, a teacher in Kampala. His sister, Dorothy Tingu, was a most generous hostess. They and several of their *IC (Initiatives of Change)* colleagues accompanied us on our visits to nine schools and a teacher training college. This year the government has launched a programme of Universal Primary Education. This has increased the numbers of children in primary

schools from 2.5 million to 6 million. There is a shortage of classrooms and teachers, as well as basic equipment. In spite of this, we met dedication and determination and not one grumble.

We led interactive sessions, based on material from *The Other Three Rs*, with classes of about 100 pupils, which was a challenge for us but one faced daily by Ugandan colleagues. However, the pupils eagerly took part in lively discussions. We



Ann Rignall and Joy weeks with the Headmistress of Namirimbe Infant School where Andrew Mukhwana teaches

were constantly aware of the toll which the civil war has taken and now the scourge of HIV/AIDS. In one school we visited, 400 of the 600 pupils were orphans. In another class there were two amputees. There was a very strong message that living by God's laws was the way ahead for their country. With Dorothy Tingu we frequently met people with whom she prays regularly in government offices including that of the First Lady. One young MP, whom we met on our first evening, spoke most appreciatively of the prayerful support of Dorothy and her friends, which has given him the strength to maintain his stand for honest politics.

Enthusiastic encouragement

We met the Minister for Primary Education, who immediately responded to the material in *The Other Three Rs* and is keen for the students in the teacher training colleges to learn to use it. We likewise received enthusiastic encouragement from the person responsible for the First Lady's youth programme. We were also interviewed on Radio Uganda by Peter Onebe.

We felt very privileged to be taken by Dorothy to her home village outside Mbale. We met her mother and many members of her family and stayed there for two days. It was an unforgettable experience.

Visit to Southern Africa

We have just returned from three weeks visiting friends and colleagues. Coolmoreen is the IC/MRA training centre in Gweru, Zimbabwe, where they are currently running a programme for school prefects from all over the province.

Accompanied by their teachers about 40 come each time to be trained in moral leadership. We were invited to help with this.

In Cape Town, South Africa, we joined in the early preparations for an *International Communications Forum (ICF)* event. This will take place in November. The president of the *ICF*, Bernard Margueritte, came with another French director for five days.

Finlay and Kath Moir

UHURU – Freedom

For some time we have been hoping to use the Swahili version of the film *Freedom* in video form. Its story and spirit is so topical in the light of this year's general election in Kenya.

Thanks to urgent work in London by *FLT Films* and the *Friends of Africa Fund* the video has just been completed.

This enables us to use copies in the ongoing *Clean Election Campaign*.

Joseph Karanja



NATIONAL FORUM "LOCAL HOHO" Tirley Garth, March 22-25

Eighty people gathered for two and a half days of discussion, reflection, silence and prayer. It was good to have some friends from overseas with us; Amina Dikedi (Nigeria), Andrew, Margaret and Chris Lancaster; Tim Gibbs, Cathie Jean Weeks (Australia), Marianne Knudsen (Norway), Kristen Cibelli (USA), Eve Wojciechowska (Canada) and Vitalie Cracan (Moldova).

The formal programme on Saturday and Sunday began with a reflection and ended with half an hour of shared silence and prayer. Kristen Cibelli gave a moving account of her spiritual journey since she came to work with MRA/IC, culminating in a 'moment of grace', at dawn on the plateau at Panchgani. When, 'as the sun came out, my heart was filled, and I was able to forgive myself'. She spoke of difficult relationships as the grains of sand in the oyster, which, once acknowledged, can become pearls.

Amina Dikedi spoke of the complementary roles of the different generations in African culture. Older people had a responsibility to guide the young, but also to know when to step back and hand over. She described their precious contribution in blessing younger people. This led to animated discussion between the generations, as we broke up into pairs to share our responses. The range of ages was one of the richest

features of the weekend.

The main focus on the first day was 'So busy changing the world – no time for people?' We had an honest conversation on life-changing – looking at what was good and what was not and how we could become better agents in the transformation of people's lives. Divine inspiration is the key, and accepting that continuing change is necessary for all of us.

We were all assigned to a group of 6-8 people which met three times to 'share our stories'. Each person was given space to share the significant experiences of their own lives with others in the group. This was a rich time of appreciation of each other's journeys.

The weekend confirmed the value and role of the named programmes of MRA/IC whilst recognising that we need to be addressing the needs of the individual more often and more deeply.

Time was also given to share current and developing visions, some of which had been discussed at the Global Hoho. By the conclusion of the weekend there was a sense of unity and common purpose. It was not without areas of disagreement but one which appeared to affirm a fellowship spread across many divides, seeking together to express our common values. We were glad to see where and how these were relevant for the UK.

Report compiled from the contributions of several people.

BRITISH MUSLIM & JEWISH COMMUNITIES – Prospects and Challenges Ahead

Extracts from The Rabbi Rosenblum Memorial Lecture, given by Imam Abduljalil Sajid JP, in the Brighton & Hove New Synagogue, March 3.

“Killing is an evil act, and must be condemned. As a Muslim I feel guilt, and want to defuse the situation,” said Dr Sajid. He went on to say that Jews and Muslims have a common root in the belief in one God and in their fatherhood in Abraham. Their holy books and places, while shared in principle, are not always easy to share in practice but Dr Sajid did not flinch from facing this squarely.

He acknowledged that Jews had been in Britain long before Muslims. Both had suffered hostility and hatred. The 1905 Aliens Act was passed to keep out European Jews, and the 1971 Immigration Act to stop Asians from Pakistan and India.

Imam Sajid apologised unconditionally to those who have suffered owing to the senseless actions of so-called Muslims. Suicide is forbidden in Islam, he said. However, the root causes of terrorism must be found. Extremism is common to many religions and he spoke also of Israel's use of violence and tit-for-tat killings. He admired those Jews, including Rabbis, who have protested against these acts and suffered for doing so.

Quoting Professor Hans Kung, he



Imam Abduljalil Sajid

said, ‘No peace among nations without peace among the religions, and no peace among the religions without dialogue.’ “I would add there is no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness.”

Visited places of unrest

In reply to questions about unrest in Oldham and Bradford, he said he had visited these places and that a common feature among Muslims, particularly the younger generation, was a feeling of exclusion – no jobs or housing. He instanced his own daughter, Fatima, who, after graduating had sent out 150 job applications in one week alone, with no result. But when she wrote as ‘Sheila Martin’ she was given interviews straightaway – but not the job, when they saw her colour. Now this highly qualified girl works in Singapore, whereas she had really wanted to use her talents in Britain, her home.

Expressing his appreciation, Rabbi David Meyer wrote later, “It is an important task for religious leaders, like you and me, to try to bridge the gaps, even

FAITH AND POLITICS

The Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe, MP, spoke at the *Greencoat Forum* on March 19. Hugh Williams, who was in the Chair, reminded the audience that she had been a Government and Shadow Minister for over 10 years, her last appointment as Shadow Home Secretary until announcing her retirement from Front Bench involvement in Parliament in July 2001.

For this occasion she had decided to pay particular attention to issues on which she was most frequently questioned relating to her faith. Some of these are summarised below.

Is there an inherent contradiction between a strong faith and political convictions?

No. God works through individual politicians who have different approaches. Progress is made in stages, often through readiness to



‘Faith should influence everything we do.’ – Ann Widdecombe

make compromises where absolute principles are not at stake and where your cause is clearly advanced, not retarded. Wilberforce did this during his 30 years’ war against slavery, not giving up, and finally achieving victory. **Why can’t Christians in all parties agree?**

People can bring different interpretations to bear in politics arising out of the same Bible text and its injunctions. God can work effectively towards answers through such differences of emphasis and despite them. **Can there, should there be, a specifically Christian party?**

An attempt to create this a few years ago through the Movement for Christian Democracy failed. No one person or party can claim a monopoly of Christian virtue.

How do you resolve conflicts between personal views and the demands of the Party Whips?

There will always be conflicts in this area. Ministers need to take an overview, other MPs may have more in mind their constituency interests. On all major issues, for example capital punishment, there is a free vote. Individuals should make reasoned, free choices. If the pressure to toe the line on a particular issue is too great, one can opt to resign. This should not be done lightly but with a sense of proportion, conscious that resignation could lead to a vacuum of influence in decision making.

What role does the factor of faith play in a secular society?

Ann Widdecombe made no apology for her belief that Britain is a Christian country and should be publicly known as such. Those of other faiths 'think we were mad' to celebrate the Millennium in secular fashion, building a Dome devoid of Christian relevance whilst the Russians constructed a cathedral. Though a Catholic herself, she "would die in the ditch" to retain the established Anglican Church. Faith should influence everything we do, but not through bullying or out of a sense of superiority.

Questions from the floor

Questions from the floor covered wide-ranging subjects from the selection of the next Archbishop of Canterbury to the treatment of asylum seekers; the role of the Queen; tolerance with regard to different faith communities and the clear desirability of more such representation in Parliament, including at Cabinet level; the Neighbourly Society; today's version of Wilberforce's 'holy cause'; the operation of the prison system; the drugs issue; women in public life; the massive breakdown in family structures and refinding a sense of purpose.

"I've always wanted to be a politician," declared Ann. Ambition fulfilled – with a deep Christian faith having played a vital part.

John Rainbow

FAITH IN THE FUTURE, an historian's view

"Despite world wars, holocausts and nuclear destruction, there have been real increments of progress with each millennium of recorded history, primarily in better ways of living together," declared Dr Robin Mowat, former head of Humanities at Oxford Brookes University. He was speaking at one of the regular Dialogues organised by the Brighton & Hove Interfaith Contact Group, held at Sussex University on March 6.

Breaking the chain of hate

During the questions that followed, someone asked whether the Middle East situation, in particular the treatment of Palestinians, was in reality the issue underlying the present rise of terrorism in the world. After a pause for thought, Dr Mowat said, "You can say that the Palestinian uprisings against Israel stem from the way they have been treated. But then it can also be said that the Israeli's actions stem in some measure from the way the Jews were treated in Germany; and the German action stemmed somewhat from happenings after the First World War. How far back can you go? Ultimately someone has to break the chain of hate. This is a challenge for each one of us."

David Young

SOME ASPECTS OF CHANGE

A reflection by Patricia Ducé

Climb-down, ignominious retreat, face-saving measure ... harsh words often used to describe U-turns in policy-making – particularly in the political arena.

Is a U-turn a sign of weakness? Not necessarily. It can be a sign of grace, as opposed to stubborn obstinacy. It can mean coming to terms with reality, heeding criticism instead of doggedly pursuing a doubtful course. It can be an inspired mix of wisdom and integrity of motive.

Antarctic Rescue

I think of my uncle, the Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton. There's been quite a lot on TV recently about the remarkable rescue of all the men from his 1914/16 'Endurance' expedition. Perhaps not quite so well known is the dramatic U-turn he made when in 1909 he was just 97 miles from the South Pole, the closest anyone had ever reached by that time. After a pony carrying essential food supplies fell down a crevasse, he turned back from pursuing the fame of becoming the first man ever to reach the Pole, rather than risk lives. He described it afterwards as the hardest decision of his life.

I would salute anyone who makes a U-turn from the right motive – especially if at the expense of pride, reputation or ambition. Or turns about from an unforgiving attitude, prejudice against a race or an individual. Or bitterness or hurt held for

many years and used as excuse for not opening one's mind and heart.

Alarm bells should ring

At the same time, alarm bells should ring when someone justifies changing their ground by glibly saying, "We have to move with the times". Do we? Not if it means condoning lower standards of behaviour, or some let-off or let-down from something we have a gut feeling is still right. We're meant to change our times, not just move with them.

That U-turn

The most striking, dramatic and necessary U-turn of all is surely the one God asks each one of us to make: a complete turn-about from our human, inadequate ways, to accept His calling to live the changed life day by day. It's easily discernible when someone has made that U-turn. They look different, behave differently, have different aims and values. Simple, but not easy. But if that doesn't happen on a big enough scale, how can anyone expect the world to be re-made?

Nineteenth century Père Gratry put it without frills when he said, "The world that you want to transform ... will not be transformed, because you yourselves are not transformed. And as long as you refuse to change yourselves, the world will not change. But the world can change if you change."