

God's coincidences

"One of the things that the Mackenzies bring is the ability to pick up God's coincidences," said Sarah Roland-Jones, curate at Wrexham parish church, in her vote of thanks to them at an evening reception at Tirley Garth on May 24. Having herself served in the Foreign Office for 15 years, she said that the occasion had brought back many memories of the challenges, but also of the delights of being a Christian in an area where people often don't think that faith has much relevance.

"So thank you for the reminder that God is at work in all aspects of human life. My experience in the diplomatic service can attest to that too."

HENRY DRUMMOND

A luncheon for 25 people was arranged by Elizabeth Coxon-Taylor of Pembury, Kent, on May 4, to hear Dr Philip Boobbyer speak on the life of Henry Drummond, the 19th century evangelist and scientist.

Dr Boobbyer is currently writing a resource pack for home groups. Any who would like a copy, and copies of *The Greatest Thing in the World and other Essays* (Eagle, 1997) edited by him, are asked to contact him at 39 St Michael's Place, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7HQ. (01227 459 604).

There is a special price of £10 for 10 copies. Copies of *The Changed Life*, (Eagle, 2000) also edited by him are available at the same price.

Tony Thomas

Globalisation and Social Commitment – the factor of human motivation

is the title of a new 16-page pamphlet by Mike Smith, published by Caux Initiatives for Business. Mike wrote it at the request of *The School of Business*, Hong Kong Baptist University. They had read his previous booklet, *Beyond the Bottom Line*. His paper was among the presentations to the University's conference on Business Ethics in the Knowledge Economy, April 2-4. Copies of the pamphlet, at £2 each, from Mike Smith, 24 Greencoat Place.

Cheques payable to *The Industrial Pioneer*.

The Scottish Catholic Observer

recently published a letter from 92-year-old Tom Gillespie who now lives in Australia. He described himself as an 'old Greenockian'. He thanked the paper for faith-giving stories of the opening of a new residential home and he also was inspired by their review of Michael Henderson's *Breaking the Chain of Hate*.

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 June 24 to Janet Paine, 7 Lindow Road, Old Trafford, Manchester, M16 0DP, Tel: 0161 8816674. Email <mjpaime@compuserve.com>

THE BATTLELINE OF CIVILISATION

The following extracts are taken from a Guest Column written for the World Association of Newspapers website by William Porter, Founder President of the International Communications Forum and a newspaper consultant.

Those of us who work in the media did not come from another planet to report on the dying days of the Earth's civilisation and then to return from whence we came. We are part of this society with children, grandchildren and loved ones for whom we would like to see a more secure and fairer world.

The concerned and the indifferent

The Earth's population seems to consist of two groups, the concerned and the indifferent. It is probable that within the ranks of media professionals there is a big percentage of the concerned. Many came into it with a sense of idealism and others developed a high degree of social responsibility as they reacted to the needs and shortcoming of the people whom they were meeting. A few acquired hardened cynicism that tainted their colleagues and corrupted their audiences.....

Unseat this folly

Rajmohan Gandhi, newspaperman and a grandson of the Mahatma, said, "Class hate as an ideology is behind us but ethnic hate is with us and ahead of us. Who will now expose the illogicality of ethnic enmity? Who will disentangle the love of one's own people, which is a great quality, from the dislike of another people? Who will report and interpret reconciliation and forgiveness? Ethnic enmity wins applause and votes and prime ministerships. Many so-called patriots or nationalists say that you cannot love your own people, unless you hate other people. It is an obvious folly. Part of the role of communications is to unseat this folly from the minds and hearts of the millions of the world."

Purpose and excitement

I am thinking here of bringing an element of purpose and excitement into the whole field of news and current

affairs reporting and presentation. Of course there are some areas that will not lend themselves to this type of treatment, and they should be handled in accordance with traditional practice... A big problem with most news treatment today is that it is without any context other than its effect on circulation and audience size. I am not underestimating the importance of that, but, even then, it needs some kind of yardstick against which to make judgements. How is news value estimated today? At its worst by the blood and guts on the floor. At its best by human appeal, and even that, usually on a sentimental basis.

Listen to ordinary people

In the recent prominence given to attacks on refugees in prosperous Western countries there was the cry of appeal from a Glasgow housewife, "I wish the media would listen to the decent people, the ordinary people who so care about the sufferings of others." I think that most of my colleagues in the media will understand what I am getting at, in spite of my struggles to express it. And the concept of a Battleline of Civilisation gives us a reasonable and purposeful basis on which to work.

From 'if it bleeds, it leads' to 'if it answers needs, it leads' may seem a long way off, but I believe it is a road we have to take.

LEGACY OF LEBANESE

The visit of the Lebanese [see May issue of Newsletter] has underlined again the power and effectiveness of a team from one part of the world coming to share their life-changing experiences in another. Added to their profound and moving stories was the strategic relevance of their message, at a time when in the UK and Western Europe we are experiencing xenophobic politics fanned by fear on all sides. What a powerful message it was to open hearts and reach out to the other. Certainly in Liverpool and Bradford it provided a chance to reinforce a broad team of people working for reconciliation, justice and the healing of history

Gerald Henderson

After attending an occasion for the visitors from Lebanon in April,[see May issue of Newsletter] Mr. Clayton Goodwin, director of the website *Caribcommx*, [*Caribbean & Commonwealth News & Sport*] carried news of their visit on the website.

He also invited me to contribute to his monthly religious/philosophical feature.

John Rainbow

FAITH IN DIPLOMACY by Archie Mackenzie continues to create much interest. The international Catholic weekly, The Tablet, May 25, carries a review "From Glasgow to the world" by David Goodall, former British High Commissioner in Delhi. He opens by saying:

"Diplomatists as a class,' observed Lord Macaulay, 'have always been more distinguished by their address, by the art by which they win the confidence of those with whom they have to deal ... than by generous enthusiasm or austere rectitude.' It is an implied criticism which hardly fits the diplomatic author of this gently retrospective autobiography."

After citing many incidents in Archie's long career, he goes on to say: "What distinguishes Mackenzie's account from the general run of diplomatic memoirs, however, is the emphasis on his involvement with MRA, and the evidence he offers of the movement's salutary influence, both on his own personal life and on world affairs. It was viewed with less enthusiasm in the Security Department of the Foreign Office. At a senior level, however, from Sir Alec Douglas-Home downwards, those with whom Mackenzie worked seemed to have recognised that his involvement with the movement

compromised neither his integrity nor his diplomatic effectiveness.

"It also brought him into contact with a wide range of eminent and influential people who, at one time or another, were involved with the movement, including Robert Schuman, Gabriel Marcel, and the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu. He cites a number of international situations in which he believes that MRA was able to play a healing or conciliatory role behind the scenes, including the 1945 San Francisco Conference, the post-war rapprochement between France and Germany and the relations between France and her North African territories.

"Perhaps more persuasive is his conviction that the 'absolute honesty' enjoined by Buchman has reinforced his own Christian faith and his sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of those with whom he had to deal, whether Third World politicians or anxious British businessmen. He is in no doubt that the values instilled by the movement, and above all the habit of regular prayer (in the tradition of Brother Lawrence's Practice of the Presence of God) have given him a sense of direction and purpose, 'freed him from the rat race', and generated a readiness to reach out to others. On the whole, not a bad testimonial."

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SPACE AND LIGHT ARE FREE

Architect Carl Falck spoke recently at the AGM of the Friends of Westminster Productions. Among his many commissions had been the rebuilding of 24 Greencoat Place.

He began his talk with something of his own journey – from studies and practice in his native South Africa to his arrival in Britain knowing no-one.

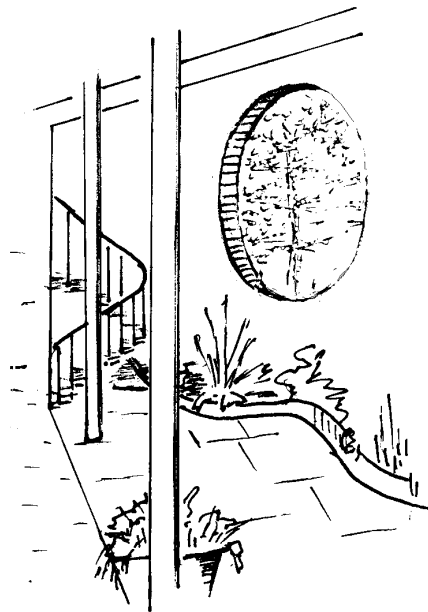
Basic concerns

A few basic concerns have informed all his work. One is the importance of his relationship with the client before ever thinking about the design. What are the client's needs and how can the design of the building help them to fulfil those needs? This applies to private houses as well as to public buildings.

Two other guiding concerns are volume and light. "Space and light are free. They don't cost anything. The challenge then is to enclose the space and let in the light."

Pool of light

The circular hole in the side wall, at the rear of 24 Greencoat Place, will at certain times of year cause an elliptical pool of light to fall at the foot of the spiral staircase in the rear garden. This was inspired by a dome-shaped building he had seen in Rome. It has a hole in the roof, which at the summer solstice will cause light to flood its entrance.



Carl showed slides of several of his projects to illustrate his comments. His favourite was also the cheapest – a wooden structure built on the waste ground at the back of a hospital to serve as a crèche and play area for the children of nurses and other shift workers employed there. Here, listening to the needs of the mothers, carers and children was of vital importance.

His other great interest was in the story of buildings and their different uses over time, which might influence their design today. For example, the Barn theatre and conference room at Greencoat Place had originally been a stable with a cobbled floor in the days of horse-drawn trams.

Taken from 'Friends of Westminster Productions News'

AFTER CHERNOBYL

Visiting Belarus in March was a rich experience. After only three days I came home with many impressions and memories.

I was invited by Alexander and Nathalie Pinchook who live in Mozyr, just 50 miles from Chernobyl, to write for *For A Change* about their NGO's work with the child victims of the nuclear disaster. Alexander had come across *FAC* in the 'new arrivals' section of his college library and immediately identified with the aims of the magazine. He told me, 'we are both working for change.'

He is an avid reader of *FAC* and has a notebook in which he writes down quotes which particularly strike him. [The librarian had told Alexander that he had 'no idea' how the magazine came to be there. In fact it was as a result of a send-out to Russian university libraries.]

Kenneth Noble

ERIC LIDDELL – PURE GOLD

A new biography of Eric Liddell, the athlete and 'star' of the film *Chariots of Fire*, tells for the first time the detailed story of how his contact with the Oxford Group in Scotland in the late 1920s helped him with his personal faith and his sense of calling.

The book is by the American TV

producer and biographer of Oswald Chambers, David McCasland. McCasland came upon a copy of Garth Lean's biography of Frank Buchman, happened to find Liddell's name in the index, got on to the internet and found an article from *For A Change* by Mary Lean.

On the banks of the Tweed

He then spent a day in Melrose and Galashiels, seeing first where Liddell and Loudon Hamilton would have walked and talked on the banks of the Tweed after Liddell's last race before going to China, and then visiting the home of Stuart and Bina Sanderson, where he later came for a further decisive personal talk.

These events are outlined in Garth Lean's biography of Buchman, [*Frank Buchman – A Life*] but McCasland has put flesh on the bones and gives vivid descriptions of these crucial moments in Liddell's life and faith, as well as Liddell's own description of their effect. His friendship and teamwork with Dr Ken McAll in turbulent years in China are also brought to life.

Ailsa Hamilton

The book is published by Discovery House Publishers in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is available in the UK from the Eric Liddell Centre, 15 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 4DP, for £15.

ROYAL SMILES

Graham Turner who has just published *Elizabeth, the Woman and the Queen*, writes as a feature writer for *The Daily Telegraph*. In this light-hearted piece he illustrates some of the Queen's splendid sense of humour.

Who says our Queen does not have a sense of humour? Certainly not the courtiers who have travelled around Britain with her. They tell stories of a monarch who, unlike Queen Victoria, is always ready to be amused, though – wisely – she does not always show it.

Early in her reign, there were occasions when she simply could not keep herself in check. "I can remember a visit to Dover some time in the 1950s," Sir Edward Ford, then her assistant private secretary, told me. "It was a place we hadn't been to for quite a long time. Unusually, we had a few minutes to spare before lunch and the Queen found herself in the Town Hall with the mayor in his robe and chain. To pass the time, she went to a glass display case which contained a magnificent mayoral chain with diamonds set in it.

"That's very lovely," she said. "When do you wear it?" "Only on

very special occasions," replied the mayor. At that, she just put back her head and roared with laughter."

As the years have gone by, the Queen has learnt to contain her amusement, though it has often been a near-run thing. "I remember that we went to a small Welsh town in Silver Jubilee year," recalled one of her ladies-in-waiting, "and they'd brought together youngsters from the local schools to show off their musical talent.

"There was one girl of 15 or 16 who was a very good singer. She came forward – she had the most enormous bosom and she was holding a handkerchief to it, as some singers do. Thinking the pianist was ready, she took a very deep breath and everything went up. She held it for as long as she could, but then noticed that the poor pianist had got all his music muddled, so everything had to come down again. When he finally sorted himself out, she



took another enormous breath and everything went up again. I thought the Queen was going to die. She looked at me and both of us almost cracked up!"

A visit to a Scottish town which had a lady mayor put an even greater strain on the royal control. "Towards the end of the day," a courtier told me, "the Queen was invited to tea on a broad, sweeping lawn which ran down to a river. She sat at a table with the lady mayor and, in due course, the tray was brought out with a silver teapot and all the rest of it.

"Then the lady mayor turned to the Queen and said: 'Now, Your Majesty, would you like to be mother or shall I?' Two of the Royal party burst out laughing, and you could see the Queen

swallow. But she just said, 'No, I think you could pour.'"

Since she feels she cannot let herself go in public, the Queen has to wait until after the event. Then, as a former Master of her Household told me, "she will mimic anyone and anything." Admiral Woodard, who commanded the Royal Yacht *Britannia* and who has seen many of her impressions, is amazed at how accurate they are. "If you shut your eyes," he says, "She's as good as Rory Bremner."

The Queen does celebrated imitations of Neil Kinnock and Boris Yeltsin and is equally good on her own courtiers. Sir Sonny Ramphal, the former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, told me that, when she was with him, she mainly mimicked politicians. Had she, I asked him, ever mimicked Lady Thatcher? "I won't answer that question," Ramphal replied with a grin. Tony and Cherie Blair will certainly be part of the Queen's repertoire by this time; and her John Prescott would be well worth hearing.

Elizabeth, the Woman and the Queen is published by Macmillan, priced £18.99