

## BOOK REVIEW

### *An Oxford Family Remembers*

And what a lot there is to remember – a real slice of history! After writing nine books and approaching the age of 90, **Dr Robin Mowat**, known to most of our readers, might have been expected to have reached his limit. But we were in for another surprise when his latest book, this time about his own family, was published in 2002. Covering nearly two centuries, it gives marvellous pictures of life during those years, much of it through personal accounts and letters. As with similar families in the 19th and 20th centuries their outreach was diverse and distinguished.

Oxford has a large role in the book, including the early years of Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group, as Robin committed his life to being involved in the war of ideas. This was a major change of direction for him and resulted in affecting first his time in the Army during the Second World War and later his academic career. It is an absorbing read and one learns a lot from the many fascinating stories. Above all, the impact of faith and direction for life are present throughout.

**DS Young**

*An Oxford Family Remembers* by **RC Mowat**, published by New Cherwell Press  
ISBN 1 900312 60 3. Price £10.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR WORK

We are planning to have a work time at Mountain House, Caux, from **April 3-10**. This is to prepare for the conferences in July and August. Please contact Brian Thirlaway for more details.  
Tel: 01978 364499 or 077 1964 3831.  
Email: brianthirlaway@uk.iofc.org

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### THE GREENCOAT FORUMS

6.30 for 7.15 pm on Tuesday evenings.  
To book your place please telephone 0207 798 6000.

#### **March 18: A Purpose for life?**

Paul Craig, Managing Director of Agrisystems Ltd, a small international management consultancy dedicated to 'challenging the causes of poverty'.

#### **April 8: Roddy & Ann Edwards**

Roddy is the Chairman of Walkerswood Partners, a co-operative in Jamaica which aims to build partnerships for sustainable development based on trust.

### DIALOGUE ON WALES' ROLE – 7

#### **April 25 & 26**

#### **One Wales – building trust between communities**

Keynote address by Clive Wolsendale, Asst Chief Constable, North Wales Police.

Chaired by the Bishop of Bangor.

At the National Language Centre, Nant Gwrtheyrn, Llithfaen, near Nefyn on the Llyn Peninsula.

Further information from Paul Williams,  
tel:01248 352 188, email: PaulandElizabeth@williamsbangor.freeseerve.co.uk

### SKELETONS SEARCH

If anyone has a spare copy of the play *Skeletons* by Hugh Steadman Williams, please send it to him at 6 Acton Place, Vicarage Road, Yalding, Kent ME18 6DN. It is now out of print and Hugh is unable to respond to requests coming in.

This issue was edited by Mary Jones and Janet Paine, with lay-out by Blair Cummock. Please send material for the next issue by March 24 to Ann Carpenter, Bourne Cottage, Mill Lane, Mere, Warminster, Wilts BA12 6DA, email: russell.ann@tiscali.co.uk



Initiatives of Change

# NEWSLETTERuk

Issue No 182 March 2003

24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD Tel: 020 7798 6000

## WHAT WAS I MADE FOR?

**Bishop Michael Marshall** speaks at the *February Greencoat Forum* on 'The post-consumer society: an all consuming hunger'

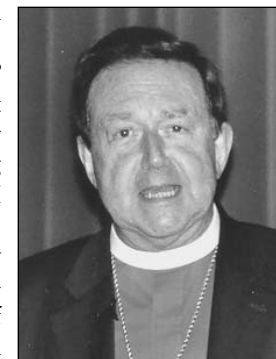
'They had everything to live with, and nothing to live for.' Bishop Michael Marshall, Assistant Bishop of London and Bishop-in-Residence at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street, opened the Greencoat Forum on February 11 with that suggestion of an epitaph for modern society.

What have we missed? How is it that no amount of wealth can answer – or supersede – the enduring question, 'What was I made for?' Materialism, science and technology may appear to have dispensed with the need of any spiritual dimension in defining what it is to be human; yet there is an increasing disillusionment with the global divide between rich and poor, and a spiritual hunger and searching expressed in varied ways.

Bishop Marshall described some of the dehumanising forces of a technological society: artificial intelligence; the availability of information at the expense of communication; the breakdown of community and family life, denying the crucial interrelationship of communication, community

and communion. The resulting spiritual hunger and cultural poverty have created a society of addictions and of disposable relationships.

The later part of Bishop Marshall's address looked ahead to a possible 'materialistic spirituality', where materialism might be redeemed and brought to a new significance. We are not called to reject the tyrants of money, sex and power, but to the more difficult task of turning them to a larger purpose than themselves and ourselves.



**Bishop Michael Marshall**

Our hunger for freedom finds its proper expression not in glorifying choice and self, but rather in relationship, commitment and, ultimately, worship. It is worship that we were created for, and the essential question is which are the gods worthy of our worship: the false gods which return us to servility and bondage, or the true God who restores our freedom?

So in the end, Bishop Marshall concluded, when we have seen through everything there are only

two alternatives: cynicism or contemplation. This is not an escapist contemplation, but rather a contemplation which sees God in everything. Initiatives of Change, he challenged us, is well placed to respond by being 'the right people in the right place at the right time, doing and saying the right things', for this has always been what makes a difference: 'the many are influenced by the few as the few are influenced by the One.'

**Chris Lancaster**

## GLOBALISATION

On my eighth visit to India, it was heartening to take part in the conference on globalisation *Embracing opportunity, creating synergy* at Asia Plateau, January 9-12. The 175 participants from 16 countries included politicians, senior civil servants, business and union leaders, and journalists.

It was organised by the Asia, Pacific and Africa Regional Group of *Caux Initiatives for Business*. 'We have no open or hidden interests, agendas, lobbies and demands,' said Sarosh Ghandy, conference chairman, 'except a desire to foster an understanding that will enable India and other developing countries to deal with globalisation, maximising the opportunities it offers and minimising the threats it poses.'

### Opportunity or threat

The economic issues spelt out, with typical Indian frankness, were stark. Was globalisation benefiting all the people or only the educated élite, leading to widening disparities? What



**Asia Plateau Conference Centre, India**

of the special role of IC/MRA in the processes of globalisation and development? The need, for instance, to globalise a leadership of integrity and responsibility, as both Sarosh Ghandy, former Tata industrialist, and Cornelio Sommaruga, former President of the International Red Cross, put it; and the need to disarm anger, as historian Rajmohan Gandhi suggested. 'We need to lower barriers in human hearts,' he said. He especially urged a strengthening of the weakest link - that between India and Africa.

Lord Bill Jordan, former General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, underlined the enormous power wielded by multinational corporations. They account for 70% of world trade, yet are not responsible to national sovereignties. He called for basic international labour standards, a tax on international currency trans-

## FAITH IN DIPLOMACY

On January 28, the very day after the first report of the Weapons Inspectors to the UN Security Council, **Archie Mackenzie** spoke to an audience of 70 at Manchester Metropolitan University. Seldom has the theme *Faith in Diplomacy* been more germane to the world situation. As the university promotion underlined, 'Mackenzie is a convinced supporter of the United Nations and a man who firmly believes that faith and morality have a central part to play in the way international politics is conducted.'

Students and lecturers crowded around afterwards to ask questions and to buy his book.

**Miles & Janet Paine**

## A FIRST FOR NANTWICH

It was an adventurous National Forum at the end of January - a new venue, Regents Park College in Nantwich. The place was voted A1. Both building and welcome were warm. Over 80 folk were present, and it was refreshing to have young people leading the meetings and the morning quiet times sympathetically taken by Chris Lancaster.

The stories of change in the lives of two young men was a challenge in many ways. Great thanks to them for their courage in sharing these deep experiences. Stanley Kiaer's experience of one-to-one Bible study was stimulating and many have caught on to this. Two reflections on 'discernment' helped us to look to the future in the light of the present situation.

Overall, we would like to go to Nantwich again for another forum, with a plan to open it to a wider audience.

**Paddy Imeson & Audrey Thirlaway**

## SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

In February, schools in South Wiltshire were the ones to benefit from this enterprise. Six schools responded to the offer, five of which had been visited before. This is one of the most encouraging features, evidence of the value that teachers responsible for sixth form studies place on the wider topics which the visiting team introduces, especially when the curriculum has a dominantly exam-focussed character.

Chris Lancaster (Australia) led the team of Min-Hui Na (South Korea), Lena Felonyuk (Crimea/Ukraine) and Howard Grace (programme co-ordinator). The way they generate a to-and-fro discussion is impressive: on questions of choice between self-centred and unselfish actions, leading on to what kind of changes they want in society and each person's role in life - all in 40 minutes, with anything from 10 to 160 students. There are pauses for thought, but a constant flow of ideas, drawn from the classes and bounced back with some comment. Members of the team grow quickly in their skills of listening and appreciation.

As hosts, we enjoyed the lively company and made new friends. So did our neighbours, who generously put up two of the team.

**Russell Carpenter**

## SIERRA LEONE HOPE

We were invited to Sierra Leone in November by **Mrs Emma Kamara**, a former university teacher, whom we met at Caux three years ago. She has set up an organisation – Children’s Learning Services-Sierra Leone (CLS-SL) – providing essential remedial support in numeracy, literacy and peace building to children aged 4-12.

No child has escaped the trauma caused by the war. Emma and a team of volunteers are being invited to present their faith-building lessons in schools and orphanages.

### Rebuilding homes

Her husband, Pastor **John Kamara**, similarly serves a community in Waterloo, 18 miles from Freetown. The whole area was devastated during the war. People are now returning to rebuild their homes. Pastor John is Headmaster of the Bread of Life Mission School for 200 children.

The British Government’s Department for International Development in Freetown (DFID) has asked Emma to draw up detailed proposals for the renovation of this school. With transport provided by the Sierra Leone Police, she also plans to travel to key areas in Northern Province to draw up a needs assessment report for DFID. People like her are demonstrating that grassroots initiatives can bear fruit.

### Postwar progress

Under the committed leadership of **John Bangura**, the IC programme in

postwar Sierra Leone is making significant progress. John has set up an NGO called *Hope – Sierra Leone*. There is a national co-ordinator and regional co-ordinators in the Northern, Eastern and South Provinces.

At a recent workshop on non-violent communication, an impressive group of about 20 people met from all over the country. A huge effort is being made to bring together people from the previously warring factions and those who suffered from the brutality. John and his colleagues recently addressed a meeting of 400 and some people are responding to the call for honesty, openness and clean government.

### Ten-year civil war

The ten-year civil war has left an enormous amount of suffering. In the Eastern Province, near Kenema, *Hope – Sierra Leone* has started a pilot rice-growing project to help the local people who are desperately short of food and a means of livelihood. There is an urgent need to get children back into school (it is said that only 50% attend school at present).

In the next months more meetings will be organised by *Hope – Sierra Leone* and plans will be worked out for a *Clean Sierra Leone* campaign as part of the much broader *Clean Africa* campaign.

**Keith & Ruth Neal**

*More information available from us at:  
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Cheshire WA15 8RH.  
Tel: 0161 980 3343*

actions to fund development programmes, an end to exploitative child labour and massive investment in education.

### Change requires leadership

‘Change requires leadership,’ he concluded, ‘with vision enough to excite the young and to motivate the weary and the cynical. I have listened to people here in Panchgani enough to know they have the vision to lead and the courage with others to move the most ingrained obstacles that block the path to India’s prosperity. It is better to light one candle of leadership than to curse the darkness of globalisation.’

Andrea Cooper, a graduate training manager with Procter & Gamble from London, spoke about P&G’s commitment to social responsibility in India.

One outcome of the conference was a suggestion to set up five city-based groups of CIB in India to carry forward dialogues of trust.

After the conference, six of us were received by Cardinal Ivan Dias, Archbishop of Mumbai, in his residence. Bill Jordan was guest of honour at a reception held by the All India Association of Industries in Mumbai.

**Michael Smith**

### LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMED

*Margaret Cosens writes:*

A month ago I arrived back from my first visit to India for 19 years.

It was inspiring to see the way the team I had known 20 years ago in Jamshedpur – a recently qualified

doctor, students, a socialist firebrand, a senior manager whose interest in MRA apparently stopped at its helpful influence on his company, and others – had worked together to effect a high-impact conference (reported opposite).

Dick and I had considered ourselves almost part of the MRA team’s furniture in the industrial city of Jamshedpur in the early ‘80s. Following the conference I returned for a short visit.

So much had happened. Three snapshots:

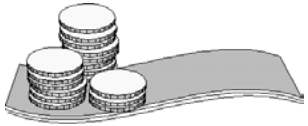
The small and rather basic Timplite Hospital is now providing a full service to employees of the Timplite company and others in that area. Superintendent Dr Amit Mukherjee has initiated the expansion and evolved a close teamwork with the President of the Timplite Workers’ Union in addressing day-to-day problems.

Senior Training Manager at Telco, Chandreshwar Khan, holds his commitment to IC at the core of the training he gives his staff and the programmes he formulates. Every Tuesday evening he and his wife Chand have people to their home for an IC team meeting.

To go to Dorkasai village, 15 miles from Jamshedpur, was to experience how people’s change can help transform a landscape. Shailendra Mahato had worked for Telco, but told his MRA team 20 years ago that he had decided to take the unheard-of step of returning to his village to be a farmer.

His action had the support of Sarosh Ghandy, then General Manager, and

*continued on page 5*



## ENCOURAGING NEWS ABOUT MONEY

In November you will have received a letter from Chris and others. One of the things they wrote about was the need for Initiatives of Change (IC) in this country to raise £9,000 each week to avoid ending 2003 in deficit. Having written about the problems, we would like to keep you abreast of the good developments as well.

There were some very thoughtful replies to the November letter. The figures are large, and such expenditure needs careful thought. Several asked for more details which we were happy to send.

In fact, the first reply came by return from a couple who sent their pensioners' Christmas bonus of £50. A lawyer who heard about the need asked for details, and put them before a trust he was advising. They decided to contribute £7,000. Such gifts and others like them not only help to keep IC's work moving, they are also a huge encouragement to believe that God will go on providing.

### With the future in mind

Late in December Tirley Garth was sold. The Trustees of the Tirley Garth Trust have been considering how best to use the proceeds. They feel these should be used with the future in mind, 'to encourage the green shoots' of fresh developments in IC's work and fellowship. It is worth noting that even if the proceeds from the sale were treated simply as cash to balance our UK IC books at the present rate of need, the money would run out by the end of the decade. After that a future generation would have to manage without. So the funds will be invested to provide long term income. The Trustees are also clear that they need to be as mindful of the needs in the rest of the world as they are of those in the UK. For 62 years the fruit of the work of Tirley Garth has gone out to the world, and this will continue.

Meantime before investing the money, the Trustees made several grants, including one of £100,000 towards the needs of IC in Britain. This, with other income, has reduced our 'prayer target' from £9,000 to £6,000 per week - still quite a sum, but a great improvement.

In addition, we are moved by the fact that as much legacy income has been received in January as was expected in the whole year. This is mainly because of a very generous bequest left by Derrick Dunkley of Sheffield. At this moment we are no longer in deficit.

So, thank you for your prayers, and please keep praying.

### 10% campaign

Applications to several Foundations are being prepared. Meanwhile those responsible for the campaigns, centres and operations where most of IC's funds are spent are launching a '10% campaign'. Without slowing down or curtailing IC's work, we could find imaginative ways to spend 10% less or raise 10% more. For example, those of us who enjoy the dining and accommodation facilities in Greencoat Place might review how much we contribute towards them; and the timing of some meetings could be changed so that more people can benefit from cheaper fares. If you have other suggestions of how 10% might be saved or raised, we would like to hear.

**Chris Evans & Tom Jones**

### SUDANESE BRIDGE-BUILDING

A national award - 'Community Champions 2003' - from the Department of Education was received by **Mrs Khadija Hussein** at a ceremony in Liverpool. This was for her inter-faith reconciliation work between the North and South Sudan

communities in Britain at this time of continuing civil war in her own country.

Her acceptance speech referred to 'the help of MRA/IC and her experience of the spirit of Caux' in facilitating her initiative, entitled *Mothers for Peace*.

**Jim Baynard-Smith**

### Landscape cont from p3

a fish pond was dug on his land, helping to provide income. That was the first step.

Last month I stood on the bank of Shailendra's well-stocked pond, looking through the trees that had grown tall around it. In the distance other groups of trees signified the many other ponds that have since been dug - with water pumps all along the 15-mile drive. Dr Mukherjee, with Rotary and clubs in Jamshedpur, had worked to fund large numbers of pumps in surrounding villages. And with all this change had also come a road! Twenty years ago access was by

four-wheeled drive (or foot or bike!). Shailendra is now Head Man of his village, seeking to apply his IC commitment to farming, village politics and people issues.

I can think of these friends and know that each day, with different twists, we all have issues involving people and situations that we must face, to decide how we respond and what we can initiate that has the best chance, God willing, of shaping the world for the better. It felt, for real, that this is what these friends are doing, and I found it an inspiration and challenge for my return to my daily life.