

# INSIDEOUT



The magazine of the FCO Association

Issue 55 • April 2020



**Joan Bakewell**  
Icon and activist

**Post departure**  
The Europe Director's View

**Open-door diplomacy**  
Diversity in the FCO

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## April 2020 Issue 55

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Giles is the FCO's Europe Director. Joining the foreign service in 1995, he served in New York, Prague, Brussels and Ankara. He then spent eight years at EU's European External Action Service (EEAS), where he served as Head of the East Stratcom Task Force. Prior to his current role he was the FCO's Deputy Director, EU Exit.



### **Chris Berthoud**

Chris is Head of Strategic Communications and Digital Campaigns at the FCO. He is also the co-founder of We Coach, You Grow for start-ups. Prior to joining the FCO, Chris worked for 25 years at the BBC, most recently as head of Social Media, Current Affairs.



### **Mark Bertram**

Mark Bertram was Deputy Head, then Head, of the Overseas Estate Department 1983-97 and Adviser on the Overseas Estate 1997-2007. He is also the author of *Room for Diplomacy: The History of Britain's Diplomatic Buildings Overseas*



### **Charles Crawford CMG**

Charles Crawford served as HM Ambassador in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Warsaw before leaving the FCO in 2007. He's won two Cicero Awards for speechwriting and has written a book on public speaking technique, *Speeches for Leaders*.



# Chairman's Message



“

THIS YEAR'S FCOA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE A HAPPIER OCCASION THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS, BECAUSE THE BUDGET IS FINALLY IN SURPLUS

## Fond Farewells

If memory serves, I joined the FCO Association around 1998. Some ten years later, Sir James Hodge asked me to be on the Committee. That was twelve years ago, and I have been Chairman for almost five of them. It's time to move on and let someone else have a go. The wheels have been set in motion for me to leave at the end of the year.

### Some past memories

Meanwhile, it's still my privilege to write this message. One of the burdens of being chairman is that one becomes accustomed to the constant mournful drumbeat of former colleagues passing away. I can't mention all of them, for obvious reasons, so I've singled out two.

Sir Christopher Audland, who died in December, was not a member of the Association, at least not to my knowledge, but he could be forgiven for this, as he left the Diplomatic Service in the 1970s to join the Commission, where he worked with great distinction until he retired. This was, of course, long before our association came into being.

He will be remembered above all for his contribution to post war reconciliation and the reconstruction of Europe. As his obituary in *The Times* put it: "He was one of those rare Britons who, in the early post war years, envisaged Germany's potential at the heart of a peaceful Europe."

He joined the Foreign Office on leaving the army and was posted to Bonn. I first met him in the early 1970s in West Berlin. He was by then back in Bonn for the second time as Head of Chancery, a senior figure at the height of his powers, and had been entrusted with negotiating the Four Power Agreement on Berlin that was signed in 1971. When he came out to Berlin, I had interesting bits of work to do.

He was an impressive figure, with a sharp mind, and I was somewhat in awe of him. The Head of Chancery in Berlin back then was Teddy Jackson (also deceased), who later became our Ambassador to Belgium. It was fascinating to watch the two of them sparring. When Audland later left the FCO to join the Commission, Jackson asked me what I thought about this, and I said that Audland preferred the intellectual challenge of running a bureaucratic machine to the glamour of heading up a big post, which won me a rare acknowledgement of insightful analysis. Jackson was certainly one for the glamour, but Audland became an important figure in the Commission, one of the Britons who managed to fit in there. Having been involved in our accession negotiations, he was well placed to make a contribution.

The second person I want to mention is Sir Len Appleyard, who died in February. Len actually was a member of the FCOA. I did not know him personally, though I was aware of his formidable record, but my predecessor as Chairman, Sir James Hodge, knew him well. He has contributed the following:

"I knew Len Appleyard only by reputation until I was posted to Beijing as Minister, No 2 to

Len's Ambassador, in 1995. That was not a posting I, a Japanologist rather than a Sinologist, had anticipated, but I enjoyed it enormously, not least because of what I learned from watching Len in action.

"The period just before the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 was not always easy, but Len's quick and agile mind, and deep knowledge of China, was more than up to the task of charting sensible courses of action. And despite all the demands of diplomacy, Len never lost his nice sense of humour, or of the ridiculous. He was a distinguished diplomat and a fine and generous colleague; I was privileged to call him a friend."

### Upping our game

We the living carry on with our mundane tasks, the next of which is to organize this year's annual general meeting. This will be a happier occasion than in previous years, because the budget is finally in surplus. The bad news is that we have eliminated the deficit partly by paying fewer staff, which means those who remained have had to take up the extra burden. Some always thought we were employing too many people, and this was ultimately my responsibility, so I will answer that if we had not extended ourselves on the expenditure side, we would never have set about putting right the real problem, which has been our shrinking revenue due to our past failure to recruit new members to replace those we lose. This has since been remedied in part, though there is plenty more to do. We have also made a start on plugging the hole through which we lose money because members "forget" to pay their subscriptions.

If you can make it to the AGM do come along. It is scheduled for 22 May (unless postponed). As well as our annual review of business, it's also a social occasion.

*David Broucher, Chairman*



I OFFER YOU AN EDITION OF  
THE MAGAZINE WITH A VIEW  
BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE  
KING CHARLES STREET

## Editor's Letter

I am pleased to present you with the 2020 spring edition of *Inside Out*. The magazine continues to evolve in themes and coverage. Many thanks to those who have chosen to advertise in it. We value their commitment.

In this issue I have put the spotlight on the FCO today. Three members of staff help to provide personal insights into the department today.

Josephina Oji, who I interviewed earlier this year, talks about her current job in the FCO/ MOD Counter-Proliferation and Arms Control Centre. Chris Berthoud, Head of Digital in the Communication Directorate, writes about becoming a permanent member of staff. Both Josephina and Chris took part in the FCOA's second jobs seminar last year. And the Director EU and FCOA member, Giles Portman, reflects on Britain's European policy outside the EU. I have included an up to date FCO Ministerial list.

Also in this edition is an interview with Baroness Joan Bakewell – journalist, broadcaster and President of Birkbeck College – with some trenchant remarks about the current hostility towards the BBC.

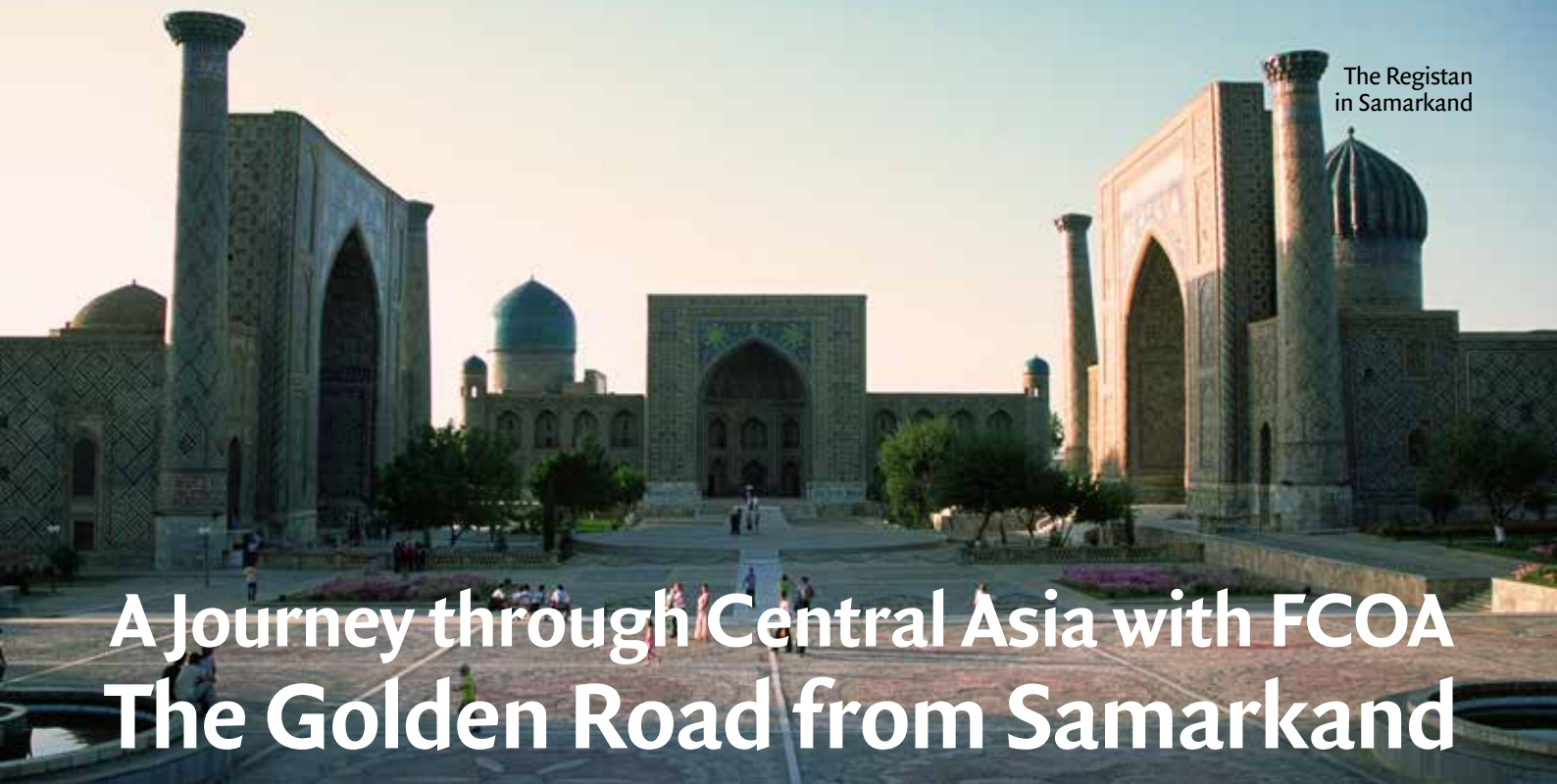
In addition, you can read:

- Charles Crawford on the *Art of Diplomatic Speechwriting*
- Mark Bertram on British Government gifts to territories on independence
- Lucie, our Executive Secretary, reflecting on the essence of Prague
- A summary of the recent talk by Professor David Reynolds on *Brexit and History: Challenges for British Foreign Policy*.

And there are the other usual features, including Pat Ashworth's *Pensions' Speedbrief*, David Snoxell's update on the Chagos Islands and Cynthia Butterworth's report on a visit to St Paul's.

So, I offer you an edition of the magazine with a view both inside and outside King Charles Street. I also take this opportunity to thank you for your continued and much appreciated support of the FCOA.

*Edward Glover, Editor*



The Registan  
in Samarkand

# A Journey through Central Asia with FCOA The Golden Road from Samarkand



**9–23 OCTOBER, 2020**

**ACCOMPANIED BY DR IAIN SHEARER**

## The legendary cities of Central Asia

Few landmarks have tantalised the minds of travellers more than the legendary cities of Central Asia. Originally caravanserais on the Golden Trade route across Central Asia, they developed into thriving centres of commerce and culture. Under the ferocious medieval warriors Genghis Khan and then Tamerlane and their descendants they assumed inimitable power and splendour.

The journey begins in Samarkand, which under Tamerlane was transformed into the most beautiful city in Central Asia. Continue onto 'Divine Bukhara' with its hundreds of mosques, madrasas and minarets where crooked alleys wind irregularly between the walls of clay-built houses. Here are some of the finest monuments in the Islamic world.

From Bukhara, cross the mighty Oxus River to Merv in Eastern Turkmenistan. In medieval times this was the second most important city in Asia Minor after Baghdad. Near to Ashgabat is the ancient city of Nisa, seat of the Parthian Kings at their height in the 3rd century and now a UNESCO World Heritage site. The journey finishes amidst the marvellous city of Khiva in western Uzbekistan, where it is still possible to experience the timelessness of a central Asian Caravan town.

Dr Shearer has lectured and researched extensively on development and conflict archaeology and has conducted on site research in the region. In addition to his scholastic experience and knowledge, Dr Shearer has accompanied many very successful journeys to Central Asia for Distant Horizons.

*'Dr Shearer gave us impassioned overviews of the sites that clearly meant so much to him. The fact that this trip was perhaps life-changing owes much to his capacity to infuse life into the smallest bit of calligraphy as well as the most mesmerising dome.'*

## FCOA and Distant Horizons

At the invitation of the FCOA, the trip has been planned by the ATOL registered tour operator, Distant Horizons, exclusively for members of the FCOA and their friends and family. Distant Horizons has sole responsibility for the running of the trip and the FCOA has no control over or responsibility for the operation of the tour.

The trip price of £3230 per person includes all airline arrangements from London, all hotel accommodations, most meals, all tours etc.

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For a full in-depth itinerary with day to day details of the trip and application details please contact **Distant Horizons** on 0151 625 3425, email: [info@distanthorizons.co.uk](mailto:info@distanthorizons.co.uk)  
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**Trip Price: £3230.**  
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THE NOVELIST PD JAMES  
THOUGHT THE TITLE OF MY  
BOOK – DESCRIBING WHERE  
YOU SLEEP IF THERE IS NO  
ONE ELSE TO SHARE THE  
BED – WAS WONDERFUL



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

# The centre of the bed

Born in an era when most women were expected to marry, have children and stay at home, she was determined to do more than just be a wife and a mother. She became one of the first women journalists on television, a sixties icon and has remained an influential presence on and off the screen ever since.



“

IT'S A FACT THAT WOMEN'S VOICES ARE NOT AS STRONG AS MEN'S IN TERMS OF VOLUME. TO BE HEARD WOMEN HAVE TO BEAR THAT IN MIND WHEN EXPRESSING OPINIONS. SPEAK UP TO BE HEARD

## Baroness Joan Bakewell talks about her life to Dame Audrey Glover over tea and scones in the House of Lords

**Let me ask you first about Birkbeck College where you've been President since 2013.**

The college is in good heart but, like so many other institutions in this unpredictable world, it faces tough challenges. Birkbeck continues not only to make the case for flexible part-time higher education nationwide. It has a consistently high scholarly reputation with many distinguished alumni. Moreover, we're told that employers put job applications from Birkbeck's students top of their in-tray.

The college's long-established format – the provision of degree and postgraduate courses in the evening – is increasingly relevant as the UK job market continues to change with far fewer jobs for life and much greater social mobility. And there is increasing demand too for retraining and flexible 'second chance' learning.

All this Birkbeck does best, including a mentoring programme pairing final year students with a mentor from Birkbeck's alumni community or an employee at one of the college's corporate partners.

But to lead the way in this ongoing evolution, to continue to champion the vital benefits of part-time study the college requires adequate funding. As President, I've been exerting pressure – together with the Master – on government to provide greater support for part-time higher education, to make quality education accessible to more students for whom the daytime route is not an option. There have been some funding improvements but more needs to be done.

Birkbeck's 200th anniversary in 2023 is a major milestone and we intend to use it as a major platform to advance in highly imaginative ways – as people will see – the scope of what the college offers and to emphasise its trendsetting contribution to the UK's economic and social wellbeing. The college in many ways represents the values in society, now under pressure. Watch this space.

**In your fascinating career, what have you enjoyed the most and the least?**

Looking back, I think it has to be my meeting with Nelson Mandela, arranged by an amazing woman producer for the BBC programme *The Heart of the Matter*. It was immediately following his release from prison and at the time of his meeting with his comrade-in-arms Walter Sisulu in Stockholm.

The interview was fixed for 8.00 am and scheduled to last for 30 minutes. He was enormously forthcoming and deeply impressive, describing for instance what he would miss about prison and answering my questions about his new role. At the end he shook everyone's hand and moreover didn't make any cuts to the transcript. He was also sartorially elegant, reflecting the fact that some weeks before his release his wife Winnie had gone into the prison with material for him to choose for suits.

As for the least enjoyable, I've always thrived on being freelance, being able to float free rather than wedded to an institution with the risk of becoming institutionalised. I've been sacked twice in my life. One of those occasions was in the late 1980s at a time when the anti-BBC press was up in arms. I had been the arts correspondent on *Newsnight*, a post I had long insisted should exist given the importance and relevance of the arts in the UK's national life.

In 1987, John Birt was appointed BBC Director-General against the backdrop of continued



PHOTO: BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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**THROWING AWAY THE BBC LICENCE WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO INSTITUTIONAL VANDALISM**

heavy criticism of the BBC. In an early meeting with staff he made clear the broadcasting world had changed and we journalists had to change with it. Amongst his criticisms he said *Newsnight* was not doing a good job – was not giving value for money, too many film stories – and not enough analysis.

Ten days later I was at my desk in the *Newsnight* office when I took an unexpected call from my agent telling me that the BBC had just informed him I'd been sacked. That decision hurt – not just because of the loss of income and status on which I relied but because the BBC had not told me to my face. One of the programme editors told me much later I had long been on his conscience.

**Looking back over your career, have misogynist attitudes changed?**

Erin Pizzey, founder of the charity *Refuge* which provides domestic violence shelters, took the view that if misogyny were to change, we had to change our sons. So, to answer your question, it's partly a generation thing and to that extent there has been significant change. The House of Lords is an example of that change.

There are now strong and articulate women personalities on the government front bench in the House of Lords, many of whom have had experience from careers in local government. The former Scottish Conservative leader, Annabel Goldie and a peer, is a good example of female toughness.

So, yes, I think attitudes have changed and this is evident more widely in society, for example in greater gender equality. But there is still some way to go.

I would make one other point. It's a fact that women's voices are not as strong as men's in terms of volume. To be heard women have to bear that in mind when expressing opinions. Speak up to be heard.

**You wrote your autobiography *The Centre of the Bed* in 2003. Is there anything you would change if you wrote it today?**

I decided that in writing it I would not talk about the end of my second marriage. Divorce can be such an event that it is often a hidden time in a woman's life – it often takes time to feel able to talk about it. If I were to write about my life again, I might touch on it. Instead, I chose in 2003 to concentrate on my experiences as a woman in the male dominated media industry.

However, I did write about my seven-year affair with Harold Pinter which ended in 1969. I told him I was going to do so. After all our affair had been the basis for his play *Betrayal* in 1978. He accepted he couldn't complain and didn't. The novelist PD James thought the title of my book – describing where you sleep if there is no one else to share the bed – was wonderful.

**The BBC is once again in the spotlight – not least its future funding. What's your view?**

If there were no licence arrangement, the BBC would implode. After all, a proportion of the taxes one pays goes towards schools and education even if as a taxpayer you don't have children. I don't think the so-called subscription model would work. It would be yet another charge which older, less well-off people would have to shoulder for something far less comprehensive in coverage and content than currently available.

Besides, the subscription model is yet to prove itself (Netflix is at present losing money). And with the pervasive attraction to younger people of social media with its often questionable news sources, buying a BBC subscription would be low on their list of priorities. Throwing away the BBC licence would be tantamount to institutional vandalism.

The fact is that the BBC, which has long had international acclaim and respect, is fighting for survival in a brutal world. But it's not the first time. It happened in the 1980s as I recount in my book. I disapprove of the present attitude towards the BBC, historically a broadcaster of record, and indeed to journalism more widely.

The criticism is another reflection of the extraordinary world in which we live where everything is questioned and upended. It's a pivotal time to live through. We are all witnesses to unprecedented change. As for those journalists criticised for expressing opinions, I'm pleased to see they are fighting back. After all, criticism – favourable or unfavourable – is the price of democracy.

In short, the BBC licence should survive. As for free licences for the over 75s, that's a social policy which the BBC should have rejected in its negotiation with the government. Its acceptance reflected the absence of robust leadership at the time, a feature which continues.

**What advice would you give to young people, particularly young women, pursuing a career in this turbulent world?**

In short, aim to have it all – job, marriage and children. It's not at all easy but just follow your instincts. And it's important to improvise to get what you want. Don't just rely on the system to deliver what you would like – go out and grab it.

**Would you agree that ageism has become less ageist, not least in London?**

It's becoming easier. People are fitter and motivated to stay fit and to work. So, yes, I agree. ■

“

WHILE DIVERSITY IS OFTEN CATEGORISED AS WHO LOOKS THE SAME AS ME, I THINK MORE WEIGHT SHOULD BE PLACED ON WHO SOUNDS THE SAME AS ME



Josephina looking at home on the doorstep of 10 Downing Street

# Open-door diplomacy

**Josephina Oji, Co-ordinator for The Counter Proliferation and Arms Control Centre (Cross-Whitehall Joint Unit) talks to the Editor about her challenges, ambitions and getting the job done**

## **What drives you in your career?**

Motivated by a strong work ethic developed via a somewhat ruthless start in the private sector and pushing my language skills which currently exist of Korean and Mandarin, I relish mental stimulation – meeting challenges and adapting to change. This helped drive a somewhat aggressive style in my approach to my career and entry into the FCO – no opportunity is beneath you.

I have been lucky in my first Whitehall job to be in a newly created Joint Unit – finding opportunities for cross-government collaboration, balancing different governmental values and aims, as well as helping to drive forward some high profile matters in the international security sphere.

## **Looking at your impressive CV, which jobs have you enjoyed the most?**

I've gone down many paths to test myself, never taking anything for granted. That's been the key. I discovered the extent of my resilience when working under pressure in a public law firm at a time of cuts in legal aid funding. I worked hard to increase funding, knowing that the availability of legal aid was often a matter of life for many.

I learned invaluable skills, the importance of personal brand, as well as the power of effective online communication for a business. For me adapting to change, however unexpected it may be, remains key and I'm keen to explore within the Civil Service, particularly post-Brexit, what more can be done to advance what we have to do.

As for diplomacy, I have thoroughly appreciated that the FCO has presented me with



## PROFILE



**Clockwise from left: Josephina with the Nigerian Delegation at the UK-Africa Summit; with colleagues at the UK Women's Delegation to the Nuclear Disarmament P5 Meeting hosted in London; and at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) headquarters**

many opportunities to be involved with UK policy direction and moreover access to foreign governments (even beyond my day job). For instance, I secured Brunei Foreign Ministerial attendance at the 2019 Global Media Freedom Conference, ensured security and logistics alongside HM Armed Forces at last year's NATO Summit and managed the President of Nigeria's delegation at the first UK-Africa Investment Summit earlier this year. All were stimulating, enabling me to expand my personal skills portfolio.

### **What have been your greatest challenges?**

Navigating my career after cuts to legal aid, I went back to the drawing board, consolidated my strengths and concentrated on the skills necessary to pursue my ambitions. Fortunately, the FCO decided to have me.

### **Have you had role models?**

I take inspiration from everyday people from all walks of life – people whose chosen actions speak to me. For example, the language study friend who stepped away from her comfortable day job to put her entire effort into a business venture distributing skincare products to UK customers. She is my current hero.

### **What would be your dream job and what advice would you give to those following in your footsteps?**

I don't have a specific dream job as such. I just want to be able to continue pushing myself – widening my experience and developing my skills. That's my life journey. If I can continue to do that, then I'm living my dream.

As for advice to others, I would say this – know your unique brand, be aware of what you can give to the world and sell it.

### **How do you relax?**

Perhaps I could relax a bit more. When I do, I like to read historical/political novels, or those that assess the capabilities of human nature, and study languages. I've recently successfully attained intermediate level in Korean and now I'm embarking on Arabic and Mandarin. I'm also curating lists of films by theme and direction style I need to see. East Asian cinema has certainly been my baby for a while. The challenge is to find the time to watch them. And I blog and do Instagram focused on skincare.



“

**THE FCO HAS A STRONG TEAM ETHOS – ONE OF THE STRONGEST I’VE ENCOUNTERED IN MY CAREER. YOU CAN SEE THIS IN STAFF RETENTION**

**The FCO is an imposing 19th century structure within which is an impressive 21st century operation. What can be done to convey that to the public?**

There is some great work being done and it doesn’t get a sufficient spotlight. Last November I joined volunteers in escorting and speed-chatting secondary school children around King Charles Street from different parts of London – where schools would benefit from greater social mobilisation. Through this event, these young people learned about the Civil Service as a possible career pathway and about the realities of life as a diplomat, far removed from the options usually offered to them. I admired the people pushing this initiative. I think much more could be to make young people aware of these networks, but to also highlight current works across the Department.

**Do you think there is still more to do in diversity and equal opportunity?**

I believe the most important work is in social mobility. While diversity is often categorised as who looks the same as me, I think more weight should be placed on who sounds the same as me – the conversations we have with each other which inspire confidence within us to further careers in this space. The FCO should prioritise work ensuring everyone is equally aware of the opportunities available – and in my opinion that includes going into schools and universities across the UK promoting greater diversification.

**Is there scope for greater improvisation, in decision-making?**

It’s important to encourage people to be more open-minded in order to widen their choice. The recent FCOA jobs seminar that I attended was important in this regard. More widely, I believe it’s down to leaders to empower team members of all grades whatever their place in society to express views which may be different. As this practice becomes normal, there will be increased opportunity to explore more diverse and accurate ideas.

**A Director once said diplomacy requires original thinking and a degree of risk taking. Is there scope for that at the FCO?**

Though my experience has so far been limited to a particular area of international security, I think more could be done to champion greater creativity and risk taking. Those more self-assured and expressive are of course in a better position to initiate change. While that’s natural, I would like to see more senior staff across directorates requesting – seeking – the view of all grades in consultation processes. I would add that my director has been excellent in this regard – providing in an approachable style opportunities to talk to all in informal arenas.

**How strong is the team ethos in the FCO?**

The FCO has a strong team ethos – one of the strongest I’ve encountered in my career. You can see this in staff retention, attendance at all-staff meetings and the extent of collegiate pride.

As a relatively recent entrant, I believe that if the FCO continues to champion creative consultation processes in the formation of its policies, the result will be even greater staff retention amongst the younger generation. This is particularly important for sustainability. After all those of my generation want to build on knowledge, develop their abilities and to apply what they learn in practice. And moving people around internally from time to time helps to refresh the culture of a team.

**Do you think more needs to be done in advancing gender equality in the FCO?**

So far – in my career – all my heads of department and directors have been women. Hosted in what appears to be a male-dominant MOD, our FCO-led joint unit stands apart with its female head of department, four female deputy directors and our female director. The FCO also ferociously hosts many talks with women in senior positions championed by FCO Women (an association with a formidable following in the thousands coupled with good communications).

My view is that the current good work must continue. I also think that HR needs to do more for women in particular to assure an open and fair application process for jobs, with perhaps ‘What we look for’ sessions for D6/D7/SMS roles. We should also try to catch and inspire women still in education.

**The UK is embarked on a new and challenging journey. What needs to be done to spur action?**

The UK’s financial well-being is paramount. Regardless of personal opinions, and of the past, we must make a success of it, if we are to thrive. Prosperity, prosperity, prosperity is the only way.

**When you leave the building at the end of a day, what crosses your mind?**

I have a unique experience in that my first Whitehall role has been within a Joint Unit, primarily hosted in the modern shiny MOD. Trips to the FCO are a refreshing contrast. The crucial nature of the work we do is highlighted when I walk past a protest – its focus on something I may have worked on. And I beam with pride when on my way home I see an *Evening Standard* headline or article about an issue on which I may have deliberated for weeks. ■

# European policy outside the EU

Projecting UK influence in Europe from outside EU structures will require flexible formats, nimble bilateral diplomacy and an insider's understanding of how EU institutions *really* work, writes Giles Portman, EU Director at the FCO



PHOTO: © EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE

Britain will have to find new ways to penetrate the imposing European External Action Service

**O**n my living room book shelf sit the four volumes of Horace Rumpold's 1873 *Recollections of a Diplomatist*. A former British Ambassador to Vienna, Rumpold caused something of a stir at the time for his (otherwise unremarkable) memoirs' denunciation of Germany as 'bitterly hostile to Great Britain'.

One hundred years and two world wars later, Britain joined the European Communities in 1973. And then, in 2016, we voted to leave the European Union, and finally did so on 31 January this year.

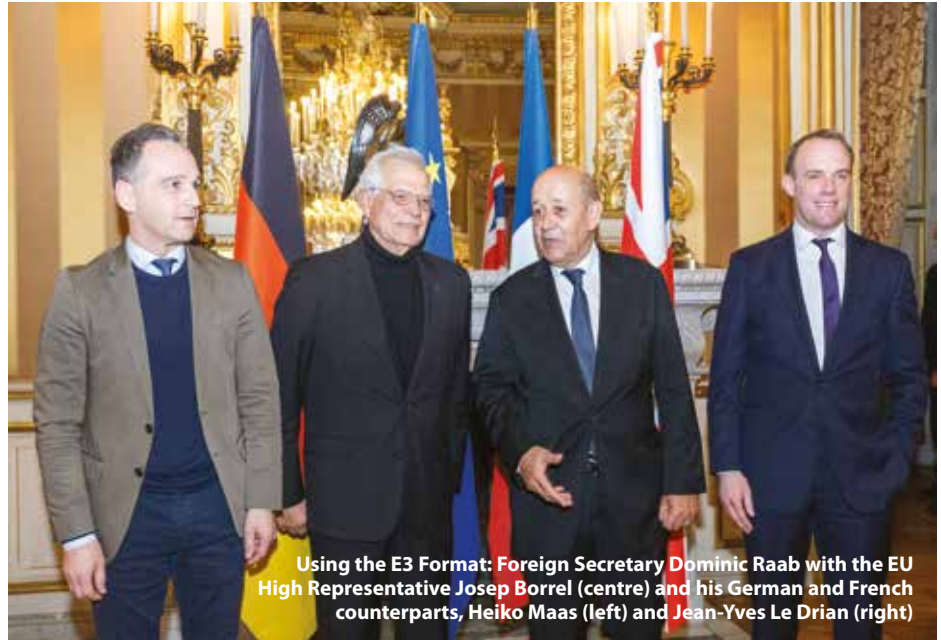
## Reflections on a European theme

It's an abrupt change of direction – for me more than for most. My Foreign Office career has been overwhelmingly Europe-focused – Prague, UKRep (now 'UKMis') Brussels, three spells in the Europe Directorate. And I've recently returned from eight years working in the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels. How to make sense of that career choice now?

It's worth recalling how different it all looked in 2011. The UK had not been in favour of setting



THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE NEVER SAW ITSELF AS A ‘SERVICE’ TO THE MEMBER STATES, BUT AS A SUBSTITUTE: THE EU’S DIPLOMATIC SERVICE



Using the E3 Format: Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab with the EU High Representative Josep Borrell (centre) and his German and French counterparts, Heiko Maas (left) and Jean-Yves Le Drian (right)

PHOTO: © JONATHAN SARAGO / MEAE

up a European foreign policy institution. But having lost that battle, we set about trying to win the war by framing this new organisation as far as possible in our image – by influencing its DNA from the start and by placing our diplomats in key positions. After four years as DHM in Ankara, I was asked to be the Adviser on Turkey to the first (and British) EU High Representative, Cathy Ashton.

But that blueprint to fashion the EEAS in our own image didn’t work out as we had planned. British diplomats never landed enough top jobs in the EEAS to create a critical mass. The EEAS eschewed outside models, duplicating instead the off-the-shelf structures of the Commission. It looked to expand its remit, like every EU institution. In fact, it never saw itself as a “service” to the Member States, but as a substitute: the EU’s diplomatic service.

The EEAS was a brand new organisation in a brand new building when I joined it. Furniture had not arrived in time for our first departmental meeting – we sat on the newly carpeted floor. Among the chaos, there were obvious differences in values and style too. The EU puts more of a premium on academic qualifications than management skills. It values the diversity of its different countries and institutions, and embraces linguistic variety, but gives little further thought to how it can be representative of the citizens it serves. It’s an unashamed elite, with terms and conditions to match.

The EEAS’s very newness and lack of established organisational culture, process and structure also offered significant opportunities to come up with ideas and make them happen. In both my EEAS jobs – I moved on in 2015 to set up and run a communications team identifying, analysing and responding to aggressive Russian disinformation – I enjoyed significant freedom to construct and run my own agenda.

More generally, time away also taught me valuable new skills in how to deliver results in an unfamiliar environment, with no established networks and none of the performance management tools we rely on in Whitehall.

### Adapting to life outside the door

The important thing now, I think, is to bring back this experience and use it in the FCO, at a crucial time in our relations with Europe. Those chances to understand from the inside how EU officials think and act are closed to us now, and our institutional memory is in count down. But we shouldn’t lose the insights we have gained over the years.

That while we are transactional, the EU is consensual. That for many in its institutions, the EU project is akin to a religion which imbues much of what they do with a feeling of holding the moral high ground. That an EU organogram will not tell you who is the real expert and with whom the real power lies in a topsy turvy structure where the head can be a lower grade than their deputy.

As we press forward with economic and political independence, we also need to think through how we adapt our European policy to life outside the EU. What will this new relationship of friendly cooperation between sovereign equals look like? How will we best reinvent our bilateral diplomacy in support of it?

### Fresh opportunities to be innovative

We will need to deploy a range of options to deliver most nimbly and to best effect. Sometimes that may best be done with the larger EU Member States, most notably France and Germany,





WE WILL NEED TO DEPLOY A RANGE OF OPTIONS TO DELIVER MOST NIMBLY AND TO BEST EFFECT

PHOTO: © KILIAN MUNCH/STATSMINISTERENS KONTOR



**Experimental diplomacy: Then Prime Minister Theresa May at the Northern Future Forum**

and by making best use of the E3 format. On other files it may be best to build coalitions with smaller countries, in like-minded groups (for example with the Nordic/Baltics over Russia sanctions). We may consider it worth looking at the recently floated idea of a new European Security Council. And sometimes, despite our having left the EU, it may still make best sense to work with the EU on that multilateral, institutional level, while respecting the fact that we will no longer be under the obligations of membership.

How too will we adapt our long-standing support for EU enlargement to our post-EU era? For years, we were Europe's self-proclaimed "champion of enlargement". The accession track remains probably the best tool to encourage reform in the Western Balkans. But it is harder to shout so loudly for something that you have decided is not right for you. We'll need to present our case of the UK as a force for good in broader terms.

### London calling

Several colleagues have asked me why I came back to the FCO after so long away. Our EU exit apart, I had in any case decided that a permanent EU career was not for me. I thought of some of the most vivid memories of my FCO career – the Queen's State Visit to Turkey; accompanying Margaret Thatcher to join the likes of Bush Sr, Gorbachev, Kohl and Walesa at Vaclav Havel's 10th anniversary celebration of the Velvet Revolution; walking down the red carpet to collect a gold statuette at the Karlovy Vary film festival. National diplomacy still has a lot to offer. And the FCO is still regarded in Brussels as the best at doing it.

2020 will be another extraordinarily challenging year for our Europe policy. But when the dust settles, we'll still be doing diplomacy with Europe, and we'll still need finely honed European skills and experience if we're to make a success of it. ■

Giles Portman is the EU Director in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, tasked with negotiating the UK's future relationship with the EU in the areas for which the FCO holds lead responsibility – external and thematic security, the rights of UK citizens in the EU, and the Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar. He took eight years of special leave from the FCO from 2011 to 2019 to work in the European External Action Service in Brussels.





# The evolution of Brexit



The policy challenges of Brexit should be viewed in the context of the constant flux in Britain's relationship with the Continent, Professor David Reynolds told FCOA members at a recent lecture

At the FCOA's invitation, David Reynolds, Professor of International Relations and Fellow of Christ's College Cambridge, spoke to Association members and FCO staff on Monday 3 February 2020 in King Charles Street about the task facing the UK and the FCO following Britain's departure from the European Union. A video of the event is available on the Association's website. Here is a summary of his remarks.

Professor Reynolds divided his talk into four parts.

## **Brexit as process not event**

The immediate challenges facing the UK were the transition period to December 2020 and the longer business of negotiating new trading relationships with the EU and the US. But the process had spanned a much longer period – from Britain's entry into the EC in 1973 to its EU departure on 31 January this year. The overriding purpose throughout this 47-year time span had been the maintenance of a close and constructive engagement with our nearest neighbours in Europe because it was they who mattered most to our security and prosperity. This relationship had never been static – partly because of the flux of events on the Continent and partly because of the UK's changing interests in a changing world.

Global Britain had always depended on a secure and productive relationship with the other side of the English Channel. The fact was that the period 1973-2020 had been part of a much longer story. From 1066-1453 there had been an Anglo-French monarchy during which



RECENT EVENTS ARE JUST ANOTHER PHASE OF A LONG STORY ABOUT HOW WE TRIED TO LIVE WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS WITHIN A WIDER WORLD

time the Channel had been a bridge not a barrier. Later, Protestant Reformation England had supported Protestant power on the Continent against Counter-Reformation Spain and France. Later England sought – against Louis IV and later Napoleon – to maintain a balance of power in continental Europe with troops and money, its actions later becoming subsumed in wider wars for empire. In coalition wars, England gained North America and India (1756-63); subsequently it lost the American colonies and defeated Napoleon.

In the 20th century, two world wars centred on Germany. In the first, 1914-18, we fought in alliance with France and in 1941-45 especially in alliance with the US and the Soviet Union. The consequence of World War II was the creation of two superpowers, drawn into Europe. After 1945 and in the ensuing nuclear age, the UK became dependent on a western security alliance which became the catalyst for the creation of NATO.

Another consequence of World War II was the beginning of steps towards European integration led by France and West Germany. Though welcoming in 1950 the Schuman Plan to create a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) as a device to reconcile France and Germany, the then British government doubted its economic benefits for the UK. This position was repeated in 1955 when Britain declined the invitation from the six ECSC members to join in discussions about further integration. By failing to participate the UK failed to shape the eventual EC as a free trade project.

Later, Britain tried to join to avoid marginalisation from the US but two French vetoes resulted in entry only being achieved in 1973. By then the EC's rules were firmly fixed and the post-war economic boom ending. The result was that the UK would always be at a disadvantage, though the formation of the Single Market in the 1980s and enlargement in the 2000s were both real UK achievements.

Post-2020 the UK would continue its attempts to work out its relationship with Europe but it wouldn't be easy as the EU of the 27 was a bloc whose unity had been persistently underestimated since 2016.

#### **'Trade cannot flourish without security'**

In 1860 Lord Palmerston directed this remark at Richard Cobden and his supporters who had argued that free trade would produce world peace. For Palmerston there could be no peaceful trade without security, derived from Britain's wealth and sea power. Britain's 19th century empire – which morphed from informal to formal (eg the East India Company into the Government of India and Egypt in the 1880s) – provided the basis for the expansion of the British economy and its global reach. Under the imperialism of free trade, in half a century from 1815 Britain became a top industrial power and global power.

Later the Imperial preference scheme and the Sterling Area reflected a shift in global economic power as the US after World War I began to assert its free trade credentials. In the face of the UK's further economic weakness compared to the 19th century and moreover after World War II, EEC/EU membership offered a framework of security in the negotiation of economic relations with the rest of the world.

Post Brexit, the UK faced the challenge of negotiating trade deals alone. The difficulties of doing so were compounded by the so-called special relationship with the US under strain and NATO under pressure. It was unwise to assume that the Trump presidency (whether it be one presidential term or two) would be a bizarre aberration. There would be no resort to previous business. Besides, the fundamental shift in US interests had already been evident in the Obama presidency. These new trends were likely to prevail.

#### **'Greatness' of Global Britain depended on empire**

To Winston Churchill, the real threat to Britain in the Second World War came from the Battle of the Atlantic, because it exposed the country's reliance on the sea for trade. During the war, there had been two Canadian army divisions on the North Downs and a third of the British Army at El Alamein had come from India, troops not conscripts. The myth uttered by some that Britain gave away its Asian empire was wrong. Britain's credibility as a power had been undermined by Japanese victories in 1941-2, such as the fall of Singapore.

The narrative that the UK had 'lost an empire, but found a new role' implied that a country's history was like a suit of old clothes: empire no longer fits, try Europe; don't like that; try global instead. It simply didn't work like that. Britain had made its empire but the empire had also made the UK. Gradually, we were beginning to address this, for example by examining the role of slavery in Britain's commercial and industrial revolutions. But we had not yet begun to take seriously the projection that by 2050 between 25 and 30 per cent of the UK population would be from ethnic minorities. A quarter or a third was hardly a minority.

In addition and closer to home, the UK – forged by the expansionary appetite of the medieval English monarchy and still shaped by what has been called 'central imperial condescension' – was under severe strain, not least because of the divergent attitudes to Brexit in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

#### **The pervasive 'historical deficit'**

What was clear was our peculiar continuing obsession with the two world wars: 1914-18 viewed



**OUR SELF-ABSORPTION WITH 1940 – DUNKIRK, THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN, THE BLITZ AND ESPECIALLY WINSTON CHURCHILL – HAD ALL BEEN CONSTRUCTED AROUND THE ENDURING IMAGE OF BRITAIN ALONE**

as a tragedy and 1939-45 as a triumph. Unlike our continental neighbours, we had neglected the alternative western European narrative of emancipation from the era of world wars through integration. Our self-absorption with 1940 – Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, the Blitz and especially Winston Churchill – had all been constructed around the enduring image of Britain alone. This had prompted a propensity for soundbite history: Pax Britannica, Splendid Isolation, Finest Hour and Vassalage.

In addition, there had been a preference of media and politicians to indulge in narratives of confrontation, replaying stories of World War II, in which ‘we win’. Examples of this were:

- 1950s war movies re-cycled on TV (cf. Michael Spicer MP on Maastricht – *A Treaty Too Far*, echoing the Battle of Arnhem);
- In 1989, Nicholas Ridley when commenting on handing over sovereignty to the EC, “you might as well give it to Adolf Hitler, frankly”; and
- In May 2016 when *The Daily Telegraph* headlined ‘Boris Johnson: The EU wants a super state, just as Hitler did’.

These prevailing views of history had essentially been ones of melodramatic and heroic moments, devoid of nuance and content.

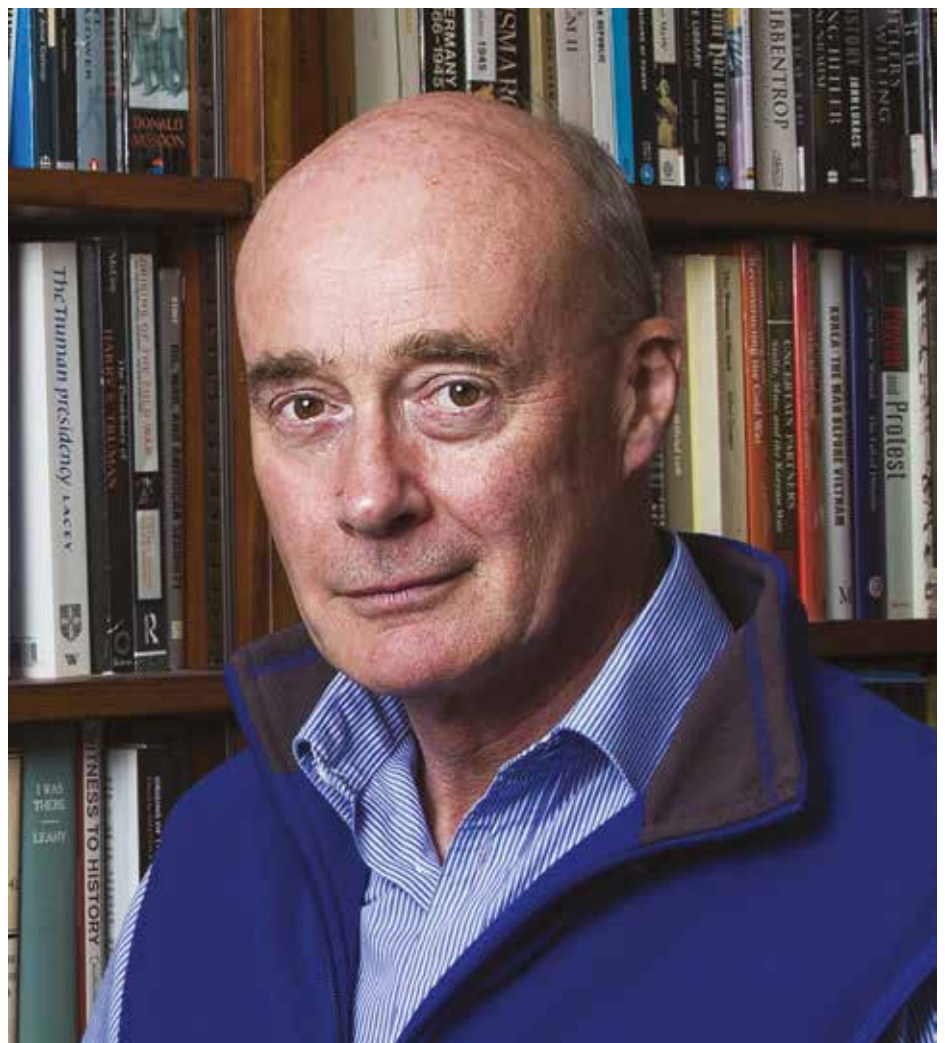
**Conclusion**

To those who said the 31st of January marked an ‘end’ and to those who said it marked a ‘beginning’ he would reply as a historian that recent events were just another phase of a long story about how we tried to live with our European neighbours within a wider world – a world that was now increasingly globalised and in which power and wealth had shifted away from Europe after some 500 years of remarkable dominance.

Brexit was but the latest step in that ever-changing process. That being the case the UK required:

- Diplomats who understood other countries
- Who understood that their own country was in flux as much as others; and
- Whose grasp of history was able to extend beyond slogans and soundbites.

He wished the Foreign Office well in its task. ■



David Reynolds is author of *Island Stories: Britain and its History in the Age of Brexit* published in 2019 by William Collins



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SWAPPING THE PROGRAMME EDITORS OF W1A FOR THE MINISTERIAL MERRY-GO-ROUNDS OF SW1A HAS BEEN RE-ENERGISING



# Coming in from the outside

Joining the FCO as an ‘outsider’ can be challenging. Here’s one person’s story of how he was accepted permanently into the fold

## Reflections on a theme

I would not describe myself as either a misfit, weirdo or maverick (unless working at the BBC for 25 years automatically categorises a person as such): yet I am living proof that “outsiders” can successfully join the Foreign Office – and even become permanent members of staff.

Swapping the microphones, studios and unpredictable programme editors of W1A for the marbled corridors, ink blotters and ministerial merry-go-rounds of SW1A – has been re-energising. It has also given me a huge confidence boost, knowing that my apparently niche media skills could be valued beyond Broadcasting House. What I didn’t expect was that there could be a career – a second career in fact – for me at King Charles Street.

For those readers who have not experienced office life for a while, you might not know that a key route into the FCO is via the highly coveted Fast Stream intake. But the FCO is also staffed by civil servants on loan from other departments, and a fair few temporary hires on Fixed Term Contracts.

My destiny was to join this third group after a successful interview back in 2016. And it is also why, at the tail end of 2019, I found myself once again looking for jobs outside the FCO. My contract was coming to a close, and from what I understood, moving from a temporary to a permanent contract was basically not a ‘thing’.

## Beginnings

To find myself wishing I could stay at the FCO was a feeling I never expected to have.

At the age of 20 I made a very conscious decision to avoid a career in the Office. You can read any amount of Jungian analysis into this, but my father was a career diplomat; and to add to the sense of family dynasty, his father had ended up as HMA in Copenhagen and Warsaw after the Second World War. At my admittedly tender university age, I hated the idea of being compared to anyone else, especially family, so I forged my own path through the sunny uplands – and occasionally thundery valleys – of the media and broadcasting.



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ONE THING I'VE LEARNED FROM MY RIDE THROUGH THE WHITE WATERS OF EMPLOYMENT INSECURITY, IT'S THIS: BE YOUR BEST SELF AND ENJOY THE PRESENT

PHOTO: ©FCO



Story-telling skills of media professionals are also valuable for a modern diplomat

What I didn't realise at the time was that by becoming a journalist, and by understanding story-telling across different platforms – TV, Radio, Online, Social Media – I was building up a skill-set which modern diplomacy needs. The diplomat has always been the consummate communicator – but in 2020 he or she needs to know how to reach influential audiences using all the modern armoury of the web, and to “land” interesting information in an engaging way. And what do you know – that's exactly what I'd been doing in journalism for many years.

And because of the BBC's far-sited decision to embrace digital at a relatively early moment it meant that when I walked past the security guards of Westminster for the first time, I'd already had more than 16 years online experience.

### One foot in the door

So what trickery, fate or siren voice was calling me to the Office from the BBC? Well, it was nothing more glamorous than a job advert. In spite of everything, when I saw an offer to join the FCO, I felt attracted to the idea: perhaps some stirring of childhood familiarity of postings abroad; maybe it was the fabled address itself which I remember putting on letters I sent from school to my parents – somehow, by sending a missive to King Charles Street, SW1A 2AH, the letter would miraculously get to Trinidad, or Sydney, or Helsinki. So I applied.

To cut a long story short, I was offered a contract, took it, and, largely through incredibly supportive colleagues, began to feel comfortable working in the Communications Directorate – and it rapidly became clear that my BBC experience in writing and digital story-telling was a big asset.

So spool forward to pre-Christmas 2019, and I found myself a bag of nerves about my future, sitting in a FCOA workshop hearing advice on writing good CVs, why the private sector likes ex-civil servants, and how to target your next employer. The advice given was superb, and the FCO should be given huge kudos for helping its people move on in a positive way. Yet, I wasn't ready to leave. It felt more like I'd only just arrived. I made it clear to anyone who would listen that my future was in the Office.

### Then the other

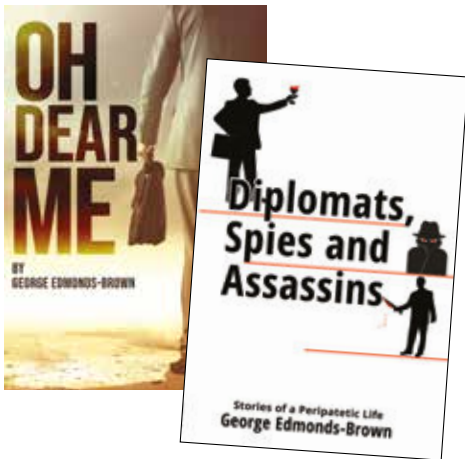
In the end, it was a good old business case that won the day. A combination of a positive FCO record over previous years of service, valuable skills – which are still relatively scarce in the Office – and an excellent Director meant that just before Christmas I was given the official stamp of permanence. My job angst fell away and I am now free to concentrate on the actual work that the FCO needs doing.

### As for the future

Am I still worried about being compared to my forbears? Do I miss being in the media? Will I stay in the FCO for the long-term?

These are all good questions, but if there's one thing I've learned from my ride through the white waters of employment insecurity, it's this: be your best self and enjoy the present. In my case, the FCO came good for me, and for that I am hugely grateful. My father is delighted and I know that if his father was still alive, he would be too. I often walk through the marbled corridors near Durbar Court and think I half hear the ancient, echoing footsteps of the family line. But I also smile and think: “I am my own man.” ■

Chris Berthoud is a Communications Specialist working on Digital campaigns for the FCO. He is also an FCO and Civil Service coach.



## MEMBERS' BOOKS

George Edmonds-Brown retired at 60 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, having served for 38 years as a British diplomat in nine countries. Now at the tender age of 80, he is aiming to develop a career as an author.

In December 2019, his first book *Diplomats, Spies and Assassins* was published. It is a book of 17 short stories following characters operating in a diplomatic milieu, which take us into Africa, Pakistan, Europe, South America and Japan. Much of the action takes place in Ceausescu's dark Romania. Although fictional, the intertwined stories are based on real events.

This February, Edmonds-Brown published his first novel. *Oh Dear Me* tells the story of Peter Parker, a diplomat from Romania to Barbados, but despite his success, his past mistakes and indiscretions catch up with him.

Both books reflect the author's peripatetic life travelling around the world in the British diplomatic service. The books draw on the factual environment of life in British Missions overseas, but also the darker fictional world of espionage, crime and treachery, laced with a dash of humour and romance.

**Both books are published by Michael Terence Publishing and are available in bookshops through their distributors, as well as on Amazon Print and Kindle. The print version retails at £8.99 and the Kindle edition at £4.99.**

## FCO Ministerial Appointments

### **First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs**

The Rt Hon. Dominic Raab MP

### **Minister for Africa**

James Duddridge MP

### **Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa**

The Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP

### **Minister of State for Asia**

Nigel Adams MP

### **Minister for the European Neighbourhood and Americas**

Wendy Morton MP

### **Minister of State for the Pacific and Environment**

The Rt Hon. Lord (Zac) Goldsmith

### **Minister for the Overseas Territories and Sustainable Development**

Baroness Sugg CBE

### **Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth**

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon

*Rehman Chishti MP continues as Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief*

## Calling all social bridge players

Several members of the FCOA have suggested resurrecting the FCO bridge club, which faded away 15 years ago. Before any decision is taken, we need to have an idea of the number of members who would be interested in getting together for a game. If you would like to join us, please contact Jean-Pierre Hantrais ([jphantrais@btopenworld.com](mailto:jphantrais@btopenworld.com))



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THE COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS OFFICE HAD BEEN DEBATING WHETHER BRITAIN, LIKE OTHER NATIONS, SHOULD MAKE AN OFFICIAL GIFT TO THE FLEDGLING NATION IN ADDITION TO INDEPENDENCE ITSELF



The Speaker's Chair gifted to the Gambian Parliament on independence

## Parting gifts

What birthday present does an empire give a nation on its independence? **Mark Bertram** looks back in time at some of the official gifts bestowed by Britain to its former colonies

**T**he British Empire's first mechanism for granting independence to its colonies was a gradual one, involving a period of dominion status. This applied first to Canada in 1867 and last to India and Pakistan in 1947. All later independences, beginning with Ghana in 1957, were granted in one step.

### What to give Ghana?

For some months before Ghana's independence, the Commonwealth Relations Office had been debating whether Britain, like other nations, should make an official gift to the fledgling nation in addition to independence itself. And, if so, what should it be? The Office took inordinate time to strike what it thought would be the right note, including referring the issue to the Prime Minister and liaising with other potential gift-givers, notably Buckingham Palace and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The result was that there should be two official gifts: one from Parliament to the new legislature, and one from the British government to the new government. Both gifts would be symbolic and enduring. A Speaker's chair was readily decided upon for Parliament's gift, the design of which was developed from a proposal put forward by the Ghanaians.

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THE COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS SECRETARY ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT “AS LONG AS [THE SCULPTOR] RESISTED CHAINS FALLING OFF THE PRISONER, WE SHOULD BE SAFE ENOUGH”



**Silverware given by the British government to the newly-independent Guyana**

The debate about the government’s gift, for which a plaque or a sculpture was thought most fitting, dragged on for another year. The Ghanaians took it upon themselves to ask an eminent local sculptor, Kofi Antubam, for a proposal for a sculpture. The Earl of Home, the Commonwealth Relations Secretary, assured the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, that ‘as long as [the sculptor] resisted chains falling off the prisoner, we should be safe enough’. The proposal turned out to be twenty feet high. The British budget could only manage something less than six feet, so British officials were left wondering whether it could be scaled down.

Meanwhile, the Ghanaian Prime Minister, Dr Nkrumah, wanted a new table for his cabinet meetings, and quite liked the shape of the one that he had seen in No. 10 Downing Street. It was arranged that an emissary should measure the table in London so that a replica could be made in Ghana. Suddenly an exit route from the sculpture dilemma occurred to British officials: the government’s gift could instead be a set of furniture for a cabinet room comprising table, chairs, blotters, ashtrays, stationery racks, inkstands and the lot.

The idea met with immediate Ghanaian approval but by the time that the gift was ready in 1960, when Ghana was pre-occupied in becoming a republic, the occasion felt a bit stale. The gift itself was also slightly marred because the sellotape that held together the tissue paper that protected the highly polished tabletop had melted in the heat of the packing case and marked the surface.

### Malaya – lessons learned

Malaya’s independence was only five months after Ghana’s, enough time to have learned a few of the lessons. Parliament’s gift was again a Speaker’s chair, this time designed in London under the auspices of the Ministry of Works, and made by Maples. The government’s gift was a centrepiece for the Prime Minister’s dinner table of a silver and gilt mounted crescent. (In addition, Britain presented Malaya with a fund that would provide for a two-year post-graduate scholarship every two years: this form of official gift was not repeated.)

### Wind of Change

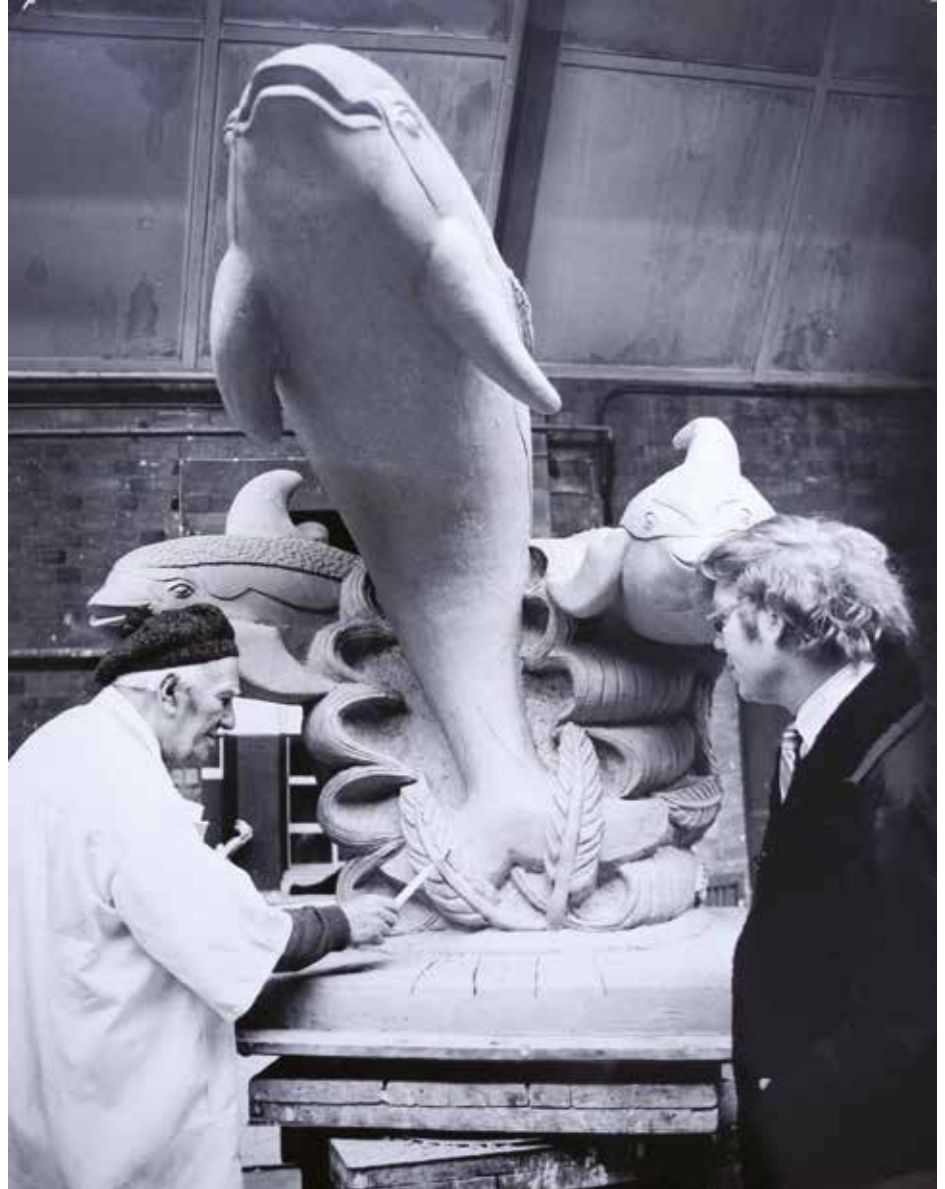
Cyprus and Nigeria were next to become independent in 1960, the year of Macmillan’s ‘Wind of Change’ speech, after which the pace quickened markedly, with 22 more independences by the end of 1970, twelve more in the next decade, and a final four in the 1980s. In all, therefore, official gifts from both Parliament and the government were made to about 40 new countries over a span of about 25 years.

Their design and commissioning were the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Building and Works (and its successors). The costs of gifts were not met from departmental budgets and so always needed to be cleared with the Treasury: for much of the middle part of the programme, the financial limits were about £800 for a Parliamentary gift and £3,000 for a governmental one.





**Above: The Speaker's chair given to Ghana  
Right: Tonga received a heraldic dolphin decorative fountain by James Woodford**



Parliament's gifts were almost always handed over by a small visiting delegation of MPs, the costs of which excursion were initially included in the Treasury approval, while British High Commissioners generally handed over the government's gift.

### Gifting trends

A Speaker's chair became the most usual Parliamentary gift: 15 in all, each differently designed in discussion with the prospective recipient. A table, or a bookcase complete with a set of suitable reference books, another piece of furniture or a clock was given in eleven cases; a Mace, to lie on the Speaker's table, in five cases; and, as later recipients tended to be smaller countries, gavel sets were chosen five times towards the end. (The records are incomplete in a number of cases). All Parliament's gifts carried inscriptions along the lines of *'Presented by the British House of Commons to the Assembly of...'* and the year of Independence.

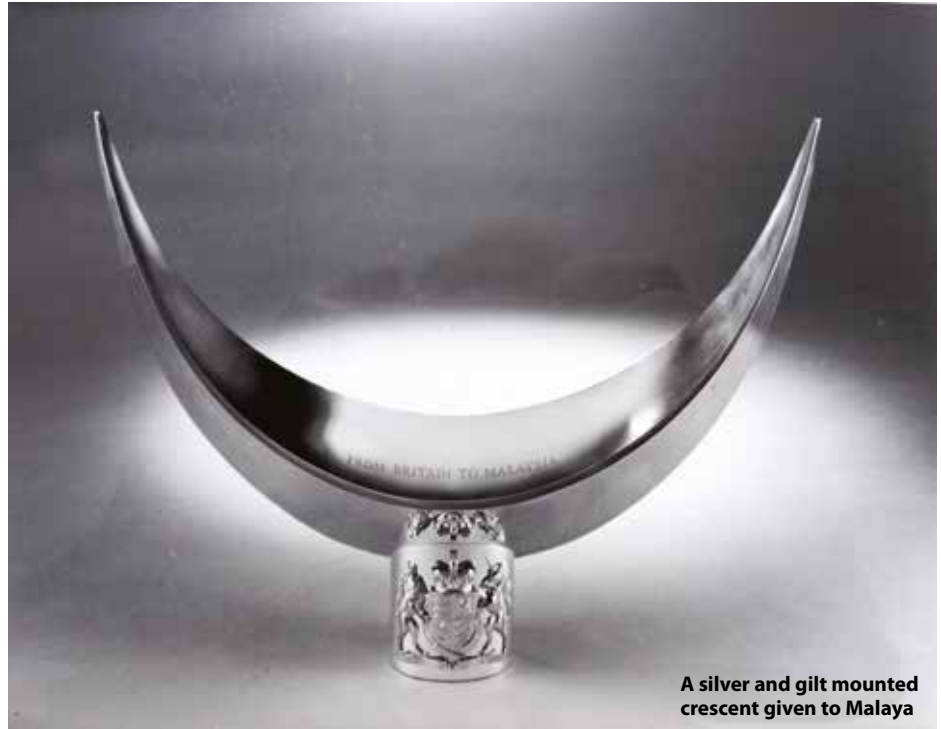
Most government gifts were works of silver, sometimes gilt. They were discussed in advance with the recipients, and then commissioned with advice from The Goldsmiths' Company and from leading UK silversmiths by the Supplies Division of the Ministry of Public Building and Works. Table centrepieces, including large rose bowls, dishes, candelabra and lamps, comprised about half the gifts. Sets of silverware for tea or coffee, and writing sets or inkstands were also commissioned.

All the silver commissions were one-offs except for six dishes commissioned at the same time from Gerald Benney, for the six members of the Associated States of the West Indies, a transitional grouping that preceded their individual independences. The inscriptions on governmental gifts were more prosaic than on Parliament's: generally *'From Britain to ...'*

Government gifts that were not silverware included two sets of cabinet room furniture, the

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THE PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS, ERROL BARROW, WAS HEARD TO CHARACTERISE WHAT HE HAD ASSUMED HAD BEEN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S GIFT AS THE MEANEST EVER DEVISED



A silver and gilt mounted crescent given to Malaya

first extensive one for Ghana and the other, smaller and more modern, for The Gambia; some bronze panels by James Woodford for a pair of ceremonial doors in Swaziland; and a heraldic dolphin decorative fountain, also by James Woodford, for Tonga.

After the first several independences, the official gifts procedure became fairly routine, and later in the programme, some of the choices were more commonplace. The designs were the best that official good taste could select, though some gifts look distinctly dated now, and the gifts were invariably made with superlative craftsmanship.

It was never intended that a gift would be handed over on the day of independence. It was generally only after the announcement of that date that London began to consider what to give. The necessary decisions on design and fabrication were nobody's highest priorities and delays were rife. A specific cause of delay was sometimes waiting for the new state to complete its design for the coat of arms so that it could be incorporated into the gift.

Many of the gifts were put on display in London before being sent to their destinations: Parliamentary gifts in the House of Commons, and the government's silverware gifts in Goldsmiths' Hall. Most gifts were handed over within the first year after independence, but a few considerably later.

### Barbados – better late than never

There was a sorry denouement in Barbados in 1966. Lord Beswick, who led the British delegation to the Independence Day ceremony, presented his hosts with a small silver token of his personal gratitude. Some while later, the Prime Minister of Barbados, Errol Barrow, was heard to characterise what he had assumed had been the British government's gift as the meanest ever devised.

When, some months later, the High Commissioner presented Mr Barrow with the British government's real gift, a solid silver centrepiece, he reported that Barrow was slightly embarrassed but not much impressed by the real thing either (but nor was the High Commissioner).

Most gifts, however, were undoubtedly warmly received, and some of them are doubtless still in use. Others may now be forgotten, even lost. It would be of more than passing interest to learn more about how the gifts have actually fared. ■

Mark Bertram, an architect, was transferred to the FCO when it took over responsibility for the overseas estate in 1983. He was Deputy Head, then Head, of the Overseas Estate Department 1983-97 and Adviser on the Overseas Estate 1997-2007. A second edition of his 2011 book *Room for Diplomacy: The History of Britain's Diplomatic Buildings Overseas 1800-2000* is available through his website [www.roomfordiplomacy.com](http://www.roomfordiplomacy.com)





PHOTO: © PETE SOUZA/OBAMA WHITE HOUSE

# The Dark Art of Diplomatic Speechwriting

Effective oration is one of the trickiest tricks of the diplomatic trade. Former diplomat and speechwriting expert **Charles Crawford** offers some advice

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PERHAPS THE VERY HARDEST  
THING TO GET UNERRINGLY  
RIGHT IS TONE. WHEN  
WE DO GET IT RIGHT,  
WE BRITS ARE  
UNCHALLENGED WORLD-  
LEADERS IN ‘LIGHT TOUCH’

**B**ack in 1984 as a callow First Secretary I was summoned to the FCO’s Personnel Operations Department. Did I want to be the new speechwriter for Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe?

I pointed out that I had never drafted a speech in my life. ‘No problem – just get on with it.’ So I did.

Sir Geoffrey taught me the speechwriter’s craft. He insisted that his speeches had hard intellectual substance, rigorous consistency of argument, and no word wasted.

One of my better efforts was his 1986 speech about the *Global Politics of Food*. Back then the EU’s agricultural policies were creating ‘butter mountains’. He wanted to point up a paradox. Western Europe was spending heavily on defence to counter the Soviet threat, while at the same time selling Moscow subsidised butter!

Poring over the draft speech I found a catchy phrase for this zany situation: *The Diet of Detente*. Sir Geoffrey said it made no sense. He kept deleting the phrase from my drafts. I knew it worked as a rhetorical device, so I kept slipping it back in. Sure enough, that phrase in the final version caught the newspapers’ attention.

I was FCO Speechwriter for two years. Before leaving the job I wrote the first-ever *FCO Guide to Speechwriting*, a pamphlet guiding desk-officers through speechwriting basics with ghastly real-life examples of how not to do it. One key point I made was that speechwriters must



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IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY.  
IT'S WHAT THEY HEAR  
— FRANK LUTZ



not show off their own cleverness. I threw away one draft speech written by a distinguished colleague with its nine (!) clunky classical allusions: St Simon Stylites, Virgil, Avernus, Cassius, the Sabine Women, Oedipus, Cassandra, Horace and, last but not least, the Vestal Virgins.

### Getting the tone right

Diplomats face many and various public speaking occasions. Conferences. Opening an exhibition or senior seminar. After-dinner remarks. Embassy farewells. QBPs. In each case the key thing is to get the speech to fit the occasion.

Perhaps the very hardest thing to get unerringly right is *tone*. When we do get it right, we Brits are unchallenged world-leaders in 'light touch' – a unique sense of unscripted informal formality featuring brevity, wit, gracious courtesy and dabs of insight. Most other countries have never heard of light touch. They enjoy watching us doing it, but they're suspicious of trying it themselves: it's not sufficiently *grand*.

But it's easy not to hit that target. All too often we too drift into being boring or pompous or over-precise. This can be caused by poor preparation. Instead of working up simple speaking notes laid out in big font and short phrases to help the speaker maintain a sense of conversation, the speaker gets trapped in front of a screen and creates a text for reading, not a text for *speaking*. Long, cramped paragraphs draining away all spontaneity.

I once watched aghast as the senior organiser of an exhibition (herself British, and someone who should have known better) introduced a member of the Royal Family who was there to open the exhibition. She rambled on for far too long about the merits of the event before inviting HRH to speak. In an acid voice he said that everything that he had been going to say had already been said, and proclaimed the event open. The fatuous British organiser had lost sight of her key role: to introduce the guest of honor, and not much else.

### Fluffing your lines

The very first speech any Ambassador makes in her/his own right is the formal address to the Head of State in presenting his or her credentials. The new Ambassador from Poland to the Court of Queen Elizabeth I gave us a fine example of messing this up. The Ambassador expressed the unhappiness of the King of Poland at disruption to Poland's trade caused by disputes between Queen Elizabeth and the King of Spain. The Queen responded in angry fluent Latin:

*'I was expecting a diplomatic mission, but you have brought me a quarrel! I marvel, indeed I marvel at so great and such unprecedented impertinence in public.'*

The Ambassador's key mistake here was to miss the point of the occasion and, perhaps, of diplomacy itself. Establish that right tone first. Then start building a positive relationship. Tackle any tricky issues at just the right moment in a less public way.

Then there's Policy. Any Ambassador who publicly criticises a host government can expect

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ANY AMBASSADOR WHO PUBLICLY CRITICISES A HOST GOVERNMENT CAN EXPECT TROUBLE. BUT PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT'S NEEDED



The speeches of former US President Barack Obama were carefully crafted with his speechwriting team

trouble. But perhaps that's what's needed. An impressive example was the 2004 speech in Nairobi by Sir Edward Clay, HM High Commissioner to Kenya. Sir Edward decided to speak out about corruption:

*'The practitioners now in government have the arrogance, greed and perhaps a sense of panic to lead them to eat like gluttons ... But they can hardly expect us not to care when their gluttony causes them to vomit all over our shoes.'*

This speech caught the attention of the then Kenyan government. Yet he was not sent packing.

### Substance and presentation

What about our current diplomats around the world tasked with marketing Brexit? They already have their instructions on Tone: breezy optimism!

But that's not enough. What adjective(s) should they use?

Soft Brexit? Hard Brexit! Slow Brexit? Fast Brexit! Furtive Brexit? Bold Brexit! Introspective Brexit? Global Brexit! Flaccid Brexit? Proud Brexit! Nuanced Brexit? Tough Brexit!

Their rhetorical problem arises from the deeper policy reality. Even though the United Kingdom has left the European Union, it's still not clear what the post-Brexit UK/EU relationship after Brexit will be.

The existential options boil down to these:

- Nothing drastic changes in substance – result presented as nothing drastic changes
- Nothing drastic changes in substance – result presented as a major change
- Serious changes in substance – result presented as nothing much changes
- Serious changes in substance – result presented as serious/dramatic change
- Our diplomats publicly opining in London and around the planet need to think carefully before they rise to speak: are they talking about Substance or about Presentation?

### Afterthought

My 1987 FCO Speechwriting Guide opened with this quote from the Bible:

*'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver' (Proverbs 25:11)*

If I were writing it now, I would start with the astute words of top American speechwriter Frank Luntz:

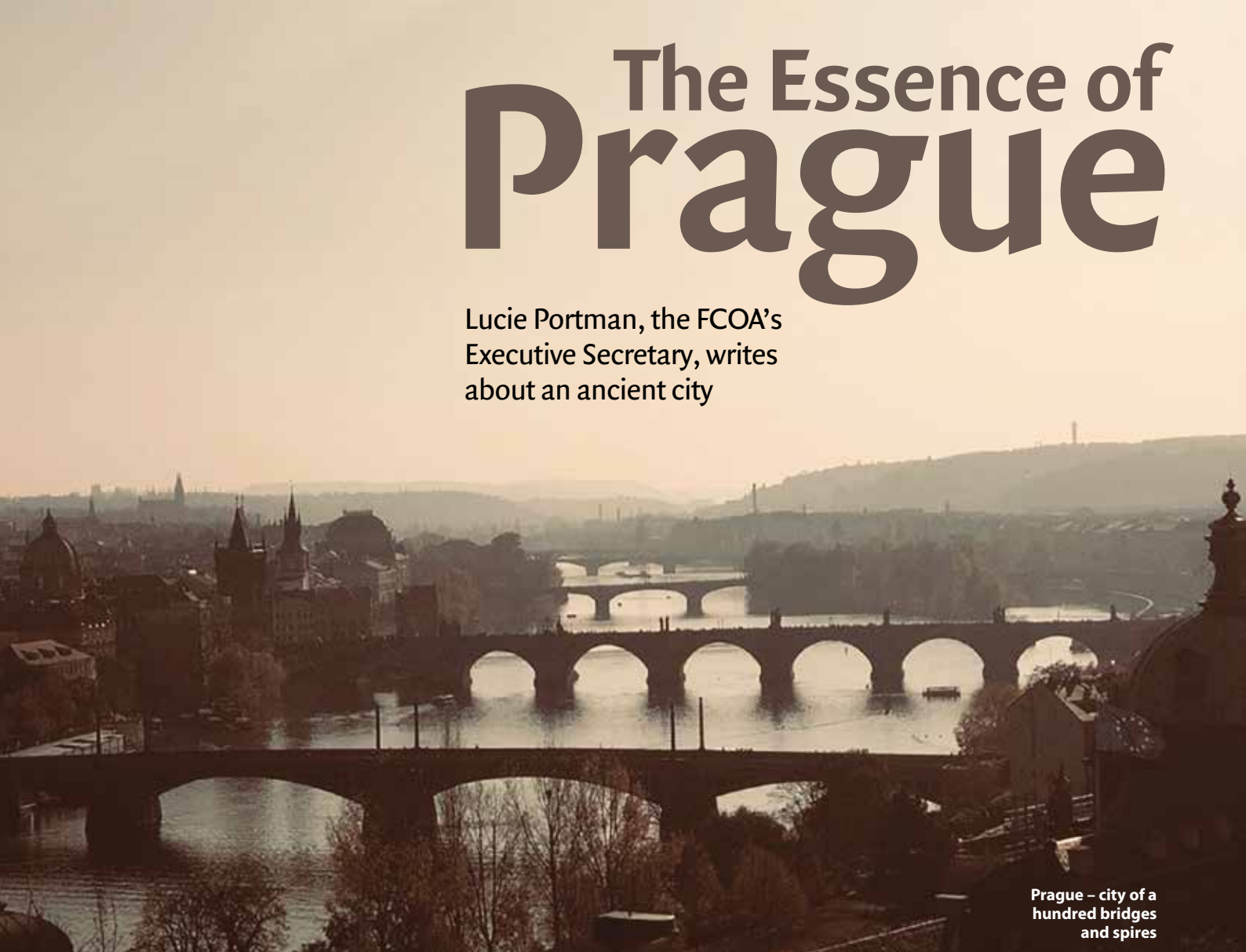
*'It's not what you say. It's what they hear'* ■



Charles Crawford served as HM Ambassador in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Warsaw before leaving the FCO in 2007. He subsequently has won two Cicero Awards for speechwriting and has written a book on public speaking technique, *Speeches for Leaders*.

# The Essence of Prague

Lucie Portman, the FCOA's Executive Secretary, writes about an ancient city



Prague – city of a hundred bridges and spires

I'm still surprised when I meet well-travelled European friends who say they have never been to Prague. It's so conveniently located at the heart of Europe, so well renowned for its beauty, and so easy to cover in a weekend, that I'm almost offended my home city has been passed over.

If you haven't been to Prague, the only question can be "why?". Here, for you, are a few pointers to whet the appetite. And for those who have, some more personal reflections.

## A beguiling city

Prague is magical. Though small and intimate compared to Paris or even Budapest, its twisted cobblestone lanes, historic bridge, steeples and spires spark the imagination as few other cities do. André Breton, the French surrealist, captured the spirit of the city when he wrote:

*"Prague, wrapped in its legendary magic, is truly one of those cities that has been able to fix and retain the poetic idea that is always more or less drifting aimlessly through space."*

You'll quickly be drawn to the Charles Bridge, the medieval thoroughfare connecting the old town and little town, on either side of the River Vltava. It bustles with stalls, street artists and musicians. But visit late at night or early in the morning for a far more atmospheric experience – the colder the better, and best of all when it's snowing.

## Towns within a city

The Little Town (Mala strana) sits beneath Prague castle – the largest in the world – enclosing St Vitus's Cathedral. Nerudova street is the main track, lined with palaces, churches and traditional Czech restaurants. But to escape the tourists, head up to Novy Svet (new world), a few impossibly





Charles Bridge by night

picturesque streets beyond the castle, into the formal Vrtbovsky gardens, hidden off Ujezd street, or up to Petrin Park for the best panoramic view of the city.

The Little Town is also the Embassy district, and here you will find the British Embassy, established in 1919 in the renaissance Thun Palace. The Embassy hides behind an austere gatehouse and is best viewed from across the river. Mozart stayed here and composed the opening to *Don Giovanni* in one of the bedrooms.

### And squares too

Crossing over to the Old Town, you'll follow the tourists to the old town square, unscathed by the Second World War and perfectly framed by the mediaeval Tyn church, neoclassical St Michael's and the old town hall. Tourists gather around the astronomical clock tower, created by Hanus Carolinum, who was then blinded by the Old Town councillors with a hot poker so that he could not reproduce his artistry elsewhere.

From here it's a short walk to Wenceslas square, the site of the peaceful mass demonstrations that began the 1989 Velvet Revolutions and transformation of Vaclav Havel from dissident writer to President. That's as far as most tourists will venture, but if you have time try take the metro a couple of stops further to wander around the 19th Century Zizkov and Vinohrady districts – more authentic and where the locals go out now, to avoid the crowds of the centre.

### That's the tourists' Prague, so what about mine?

I was born into the depths of 1970s Communism. My great grandfather, Dr Karel Engliš, had been one of the leading lights of independent Czechoslovakia founded on the 18th of October 1918, enjoying a glittering career as Finance Minister, President of the National Bank and Rector of Charles University.

He lost everything when the Communists took over and Czechoslovakia became part of the Eastern Bloc with a command economy. He saw out his life in a small Moravian village where the Communists would regularly turn off his electricity. His son – my grandfather – had his property confiscated and emigrated to Canada; his wife, unable to join him, was transformed from Lady of the Manor to local shopkeeper and forced to share her house. Even my father was barred from travelling abroad and from university. He educated himself at night school. One day the Communists compulsorily took half our large suburban garden away and built another house in it.

Now that's ancient history. The next generation of my family – born in Turkey, raised in Brussels and now living in London – play in the same, shortened garden. We keep a small cottage in my grandfather's old village. Our relatives in Canada and California return and buy property in Prague. My great grandfather has had a street named after him and appears on the 20 Crown coin. We'll soon reach a point where most Czechs can't remember Communism and an Iron Curtain – used to enjoying the benefits of living in a rather prosperous, successful and self-indulgent country at the heart of Europe.

### So, what is the essence of Prague?

Europe's most beautiful city. Classic pork knee and Czech beer. An enduring love of ice hockey. But Prague's history is essential to its present too. From violent defenestrations, foreign occupations, the 1990s capitalism of Prime Minister Klaus vs the idealism of President Havel, and now the

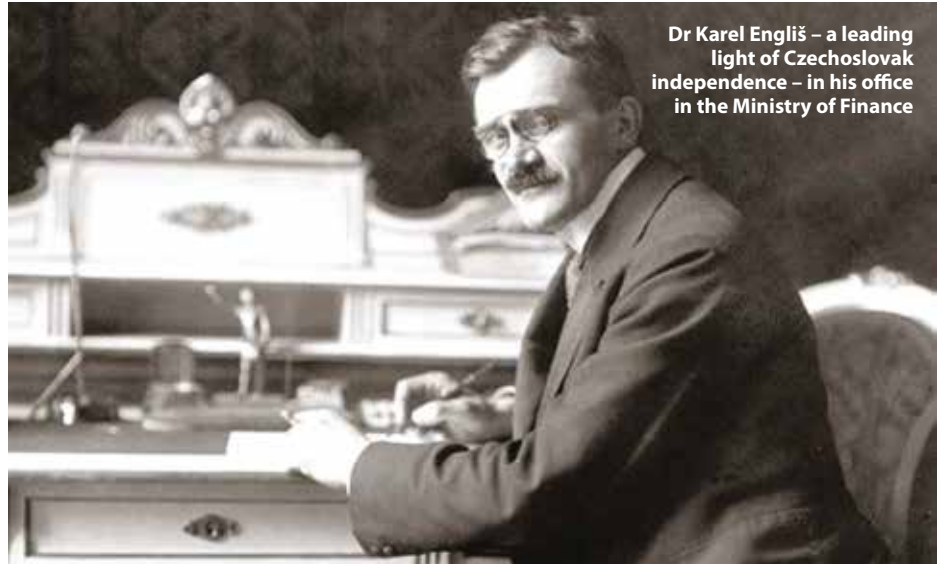
“

VISIT THE CHARLES BRIDGE AT NIGHT OR EARLY IN THE MORNING FOR A FAR MORE ATMOSPHERIC EXPERIENCE – THE COLDER THE BETTER, AND BEST OF ALL WHEN IT'S SNOWING

## ENCOUNTERS

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THE BRITISH EMBASSY HIDES BEHIND AN AUSTERE GATEHOUSE AND IS BEST VIEWED FROM ACROSS THE RIVER. MOZART STAYED HERE AND COMPOSED THE OPENING TO DON GIOVANNI IN ONE OF THE BEDROOMS



Dr Karel Engliš – a leading light of Czechoslovak independence – in his office in the Ministry of Finance

spaghetti of ring roads and tunnels that deface its outskirts to preserve its centre – Prague has always been a city of uncomfortable compromises too, which influence its citizens' psyche to this day.

Prague is worth dwelling a bit longer than the standard weekend to get beneath the veneer to the heart of the matter. I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

Richard Wagner once said:

*"The ancient splendour and beauty of Prague, a city beyond compare, left an impression on my imagination that will never fade".* ■



The British Embassy in Prague, where Mozart once lived

PHOTO: © BRITISH EMBASSY PRAGUE





Main picture: The picturesque fishing village of Riomaggiore

Below: Panoramic views from Montenero

# Take five

FCOA members go hiking in the Cinque Terre of Italy's Ligurian coast

PHOTO: © JASON ROSSI

**A**nd so it was on 2 October that a party of 21 FCOA stalwart walkers departed Gatwick Airport for the delights of the Ligurian coast. The party was led by Charlie Leadbetter and Tony Keech of Ramblers Walking Holidays, both of whom proved to be congenial and effective leaders.

Arriving at Genoa, the party transferred by bus eastwards to the pretty seaside resort of Sestri Levante, and thence to the Hotel Celeste, which provided comfortable rooms, good food and wine, and the additional facility of a private beach (though hardly anyone seemed to use it!).

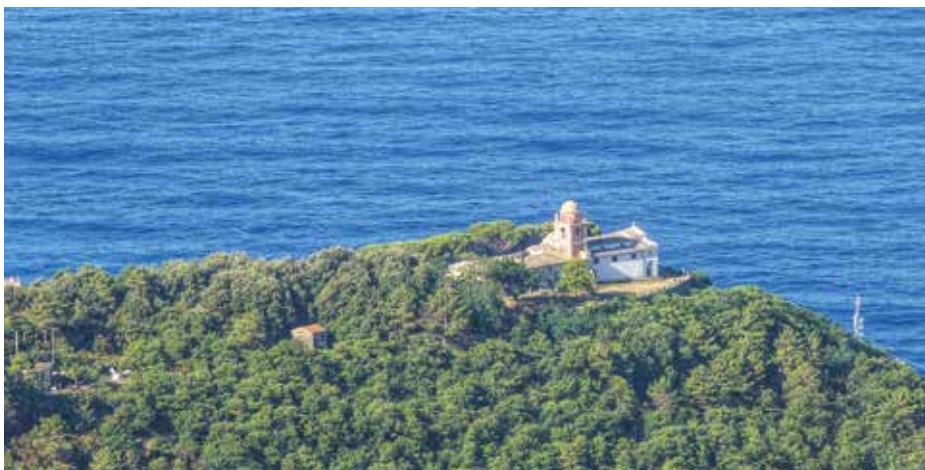
The party divided itself into two, with most people opting for the more sedate walks led by Charlie, while Tony took charge of the smaller group of committed walkers for the more serious hillside trekking. Each day the walks started and finished with train journeys from and to Sestri - a tribute to the efficient (and cheap) coastal railway. The walking itself could be tough in places, as the coastal scenery is hilly and rugged, but everyone managed. Fortunately the weather was kind; plenty of sunshine but not too hot.

The Cinque Terre region is a national park, and is most famous for its beautiful fishing villages nestling at the foot of the cliffs: Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, and Riomaggiore. The party

also visited Portofino, La Spezia, Portovenire and Isola Palmaria, including boat trips along the coast in places. The scenery was magnificent and at times breathtaking. The final day's walking from Riomaggiore took in the hilltop church of Montenero, which provided the most glorious views of all.

The only downside to the holiday was the vast numbers of tourists who flooded the coastal villages and some of the adjacent hiking paths, but this did not detract from what was a most enjoyable week of walking. Everyone returned home tired - but definitely fitter!

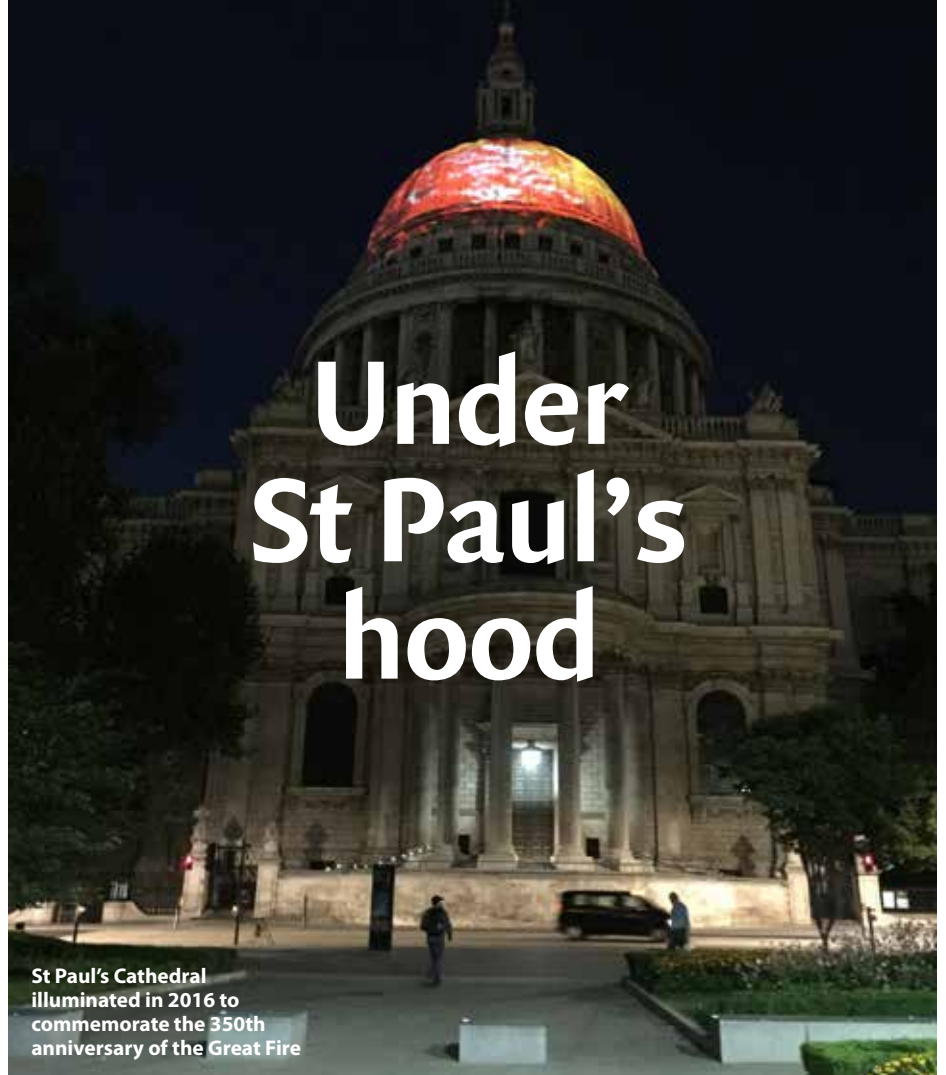
*Martin Bourke* ■





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BY SPECIAL PERMISSION WE CLIMBED THE STEPS TO THE TRIFORIUM ...WE HAD A SPLENDID VIEW DOWN THE NAVE WHICH WAS ALWAYS INTENDED TO BE INCLUSIVE, WITH NO SCREENS



## FCOA members toured the hidden features of Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece

**S**t Paul's is often referred to a Gothic Cathedral in Classical Drag, so our Blue Badge guide, David Thompson (an architecture specialist) started our tour with the plan of the gothic Old St Paul's super-imposed on the current classical St Paul's. We were able to see the similarities and differences in size.

### The old and the new

After the Great Fire of London, money for building the new St Paul's came from a tax on sea coal. Wren had wanted to demolish Old St Paul's by blowing it up but this was thought too traumatic for Londoners. Instead a large type of battering ram was used.

Wren's new church was built over 35 years between 1675 and 1710, under the jurisdiction of five monarchs through to completion, although Queen Anne was the only one to enter the Cathedral. By special permission we climbed the steps to the triforium.

En route we saw the lapidarium which contained many stones from Old St Paul's, including a stone thought to be from the old East window and other carvings. There were also three Viking gravestones (copies) which had been found in the foundations.

We walked past the library (which is being restored and should be opening in April), then on to the balcony to look down at the dizzying spirals of the great mathematical (as opposed to cantilever) staircase.

In a former library we viewed Wren's Great Model which cost him £600 of his own money. This cathedral was not built. Wren's first design was rejected by Charles II as too plain and the second was rejected by the clergy. We were able to see Charles II's Royal Warrant for the final design, which did include a small clause allowing some modifications – notably the spire disappeared and a dome appeared in its place! Old St Paul's had had a spire which got struck by lightning twice.

We saw Wren's measuring stick, his small knife for sharpening his quills and a copy of his death mask with squashed nose (Wren really had a large nose), the original death mask being in the Ashmolean.

In the triforium we were shown two pulpits, one in wood that was used at Wellington's funeral and another huge one from the Bombay Native Infantry Company, which was never used. The original font was also housed there, having been broken into 250 pieces and now put together – some very good invisible mending. We had a splendid view down the nave which was always intended to be inclusive, with no screens.

## OUT & ABOUT



The spirals of the great mathematical staircase

We saw the Royal Trumpets, installed for the Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1977. The first time they struck up the fanfare they startled The Queen. They have been toned down (but apparently she still does not like them).

### A moving Cathedral

Back on ground level, we learned about the building of the dome where a revolving wooden scaffold was used and Wren had to be hoisted up in a basket to see what was going on. The dome is wrapped round by a huge chain encased in lead which is inspected by engineers. The Cathedral's foundations are shallow and built on 4 ft of gravel and clay. The four holding piers which support the dome were found to have moved in the 1920s and a Dangerous Structures Notice was served. This led to the piers being strengthened and there has been little movement since.

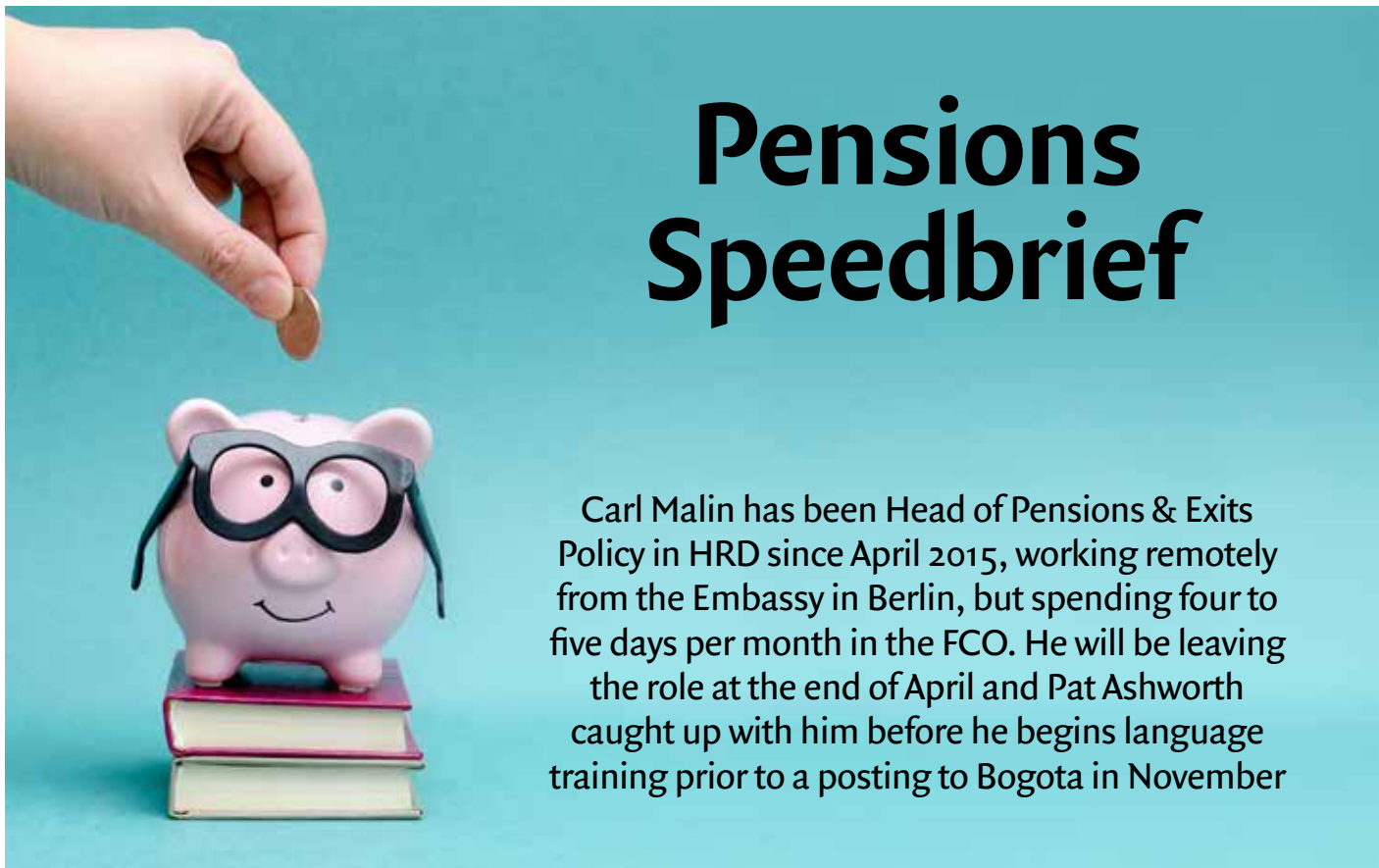
For the interior works, scaled drawings were given to the eight teams of 80 carpenters/masons and, although working on separate sections, all the joins were seamless. The accounts in the Guildhall show that pensions were paid to widows of only six fatalities among the work force. A fair amount of damage inside was caused during the Commonwealth when the Cathedral was used as barracks for Cromwell's troops.

To end our visit we went down into the Crypt to see Wren's gravestone – a very plain slab – but of course to seek his memorial you just have to look around.

*Cynthia Butterworth* ■



The nave of St Paul's as viewed from the triforium



# Pensions Speedbrief

Carl Malin has been Head of Pensions & Exits Policy in HRD since April 2015, working remotely from the Embassy in Berlin, but spending four to five days per month in the FCO. He will be leaving the role at the end of April and Pat Ashworth caught up with him before he begins language training prior to a posting to Bogota in November



**THE CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS BOARD DECIDED TO MOVE TO L&G AS THE SOLE PROVIDER FOR NEW MEMBERS...L&G HAVE PROMISED LOWER FEES AND A BETTER MEMBER EXPERIENCE**

**Many of our members retired when there was just the civil service pension. There have been a number of changes in the last 15-20 years. Where are we now?**

Until 2002 there was only what is now called the Classic pension, which had been in place for as long as any of us can remember – well since 1972! The change at that time introduced the Premium and Classic Plus pensions.

Existing staff could choose to stay on Classic, move to Premium or have a hybrid of both. The changes introduced pensions based on 1/60th of final salary for each year of service as opposed to 1/80th under Classic. You paid a larger contribution and lost the lump sum element.

You could still buy any lump sum at a rate of £1 for each £12 of lump sum taken. 2007 saw the introduction of Nuvos and a new arrangement where the pension was not based on final salary but on 2.3% accrual of your annual earnings in each year of your employment. It also allowed up to 45 years of reckonable service to be accrued instead of the previous 40.

And in 2015 the new Alpha pension was introduced which refined those arrangements. Those younger officers were automatically moved into Alpha, but their pension under the previous three schemes was preserved. Alpha is seen as slightly less generous than the other schemes and with a later pension age. That is now the pension for new entrants.

If members are interested, the guidance for all current pension schemes can be found at <https://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/members/publications/>

**Pensions are administered by MyCSP. A number of people have asked me what exactly MyCSP is.**

Pensions used to be run entirely in-house, but then a Home Office agency run by Capita took over responsibility. In 2012, MyCSP, a mutual, 25% owned by employees, 24% by the Cabinet Office and 51% by services company Equiniti, was given the contract to run pensions until at least 2021. By and large, it runs things well, though it had a rocky start. You can find out more about them at <https://www.mycsp.co.uk/>

**How does L&G come into the picture? Members with AVCs found these were switched to L&G at the start of the year.**

I think that when these schemes began there were four partner companies in which staff starting them could choose to invest. In 2018 the Civil Service Pensions Board decided to move to L&G as the sole provider for new members, though existing members could choose to remain with their existing provider if they wished. L&G have promised lower fees and a better member experience. Feedback so far is that AVC holders are happy with the switch, though, as always,





**DON'T FORGET THAT YOU HAVE TO APPLY FOR YOUR STATE PENSION. IT DOES NOT COME AUTOMATICALLY**

there were teething troubles for some. L&G also offer and run the Civil Service partnership pension scheme.

#### **Are there any typical questions which have arisen about pensions?**

The main and most obvious one is when staff are leaving and want to know how much their pension will be worth. Pensions are now digitalised, accessing information is now much easier and I'm glad to say that MyCSP now have a modeller which you can find at <https://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/members/modeller/>.

This is an excellent tool and a step up from anything we have been able to use in the past. With pensions now being digital, you can see your latest annual benefit statement online and access a prepopulated modeller too.

Of course, the other question we often get is about the state pension. And again, it is possible to access information about your entitlements online at

<https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension>

Don't forget that you have to apply for your state pension. It does not come automatically. Similarly, you can delay your state pension if you wish and get an increased pension when you do. The latest figures show that if you defer for 52 weeks, you would get an extra £9.74 a week – just under 5.8% of £168.50.

#### **Some of our members work on well after 'normal retirement age'. In one case you mentioned that there may be tax implications of working past 75.**

If you have not taken all of your benefits by age 75, a lifetime allowance test will be carried out at this age on all your pensions products. For most of us, the lifetime allowance of £1,055,000 (£1,073m from 6 April) is hardly likely to be reached.

But if you carry on working, defer taking your pension because what seems quite modest now might be getting close to that limit later on. Any excess attracts tax of 25% if it is taken as income (such as an annuity or a drawdown arrangement) or 55% if it is taken as a lump sum. The important thing is to take good independent advice.

#### **What words of wisdom and advice would you give to younger staff about pensions - FCO and wider?**

There are quite a few, but the most important might be:

- Get to know your pension scheme and how it works, after all it is your money!
- Make sure your death benefit nominations are up to date
- When retirement planning, look at not just your final pension, but at how much you might need as a cash lump sum as well as regular pension. Look at the next 25 years, think about mortgages, debts and that all elusive yacht etc.
- Buy added pension as early as possible. Certainly, think about it from the age of 45 or so.
- Seek the advice of an independent financial adviser (IFA). It is worth the cost.

#### **How will you look back at the last five years?**

With some pride. I've had to learn and understand not only pensions' policy, but all the technical intricacies about pensions from a pretty low starting point.

In that time, I've managed to pull quite a bit together and I think I've made pensions more understandable, including helping to influence some of the products and updates from MyCSP.

In addition, some of your readers may remember PROSPER (hello David and Richard!). I took all of their work and integrated it into some of the wider work we do on exits and long service recognition.

#### **Would you say it was a good advertisement for remote working?**

Indeed. This has worked out well for us all. My wife is a German Diplomat, hence my residence in Berlin and my daughter Emily has been able to complete her schooling there. For the FCO, it has proven that with a bit of pragmatism, improved FCO IT and a willingness of my line manager and Post (thank you Colin and BE Berlin) it has made this a feasible arrangement and option for me, and now for quite a few staff more generally.

*Carl has been a good friend to the FCOA and been of great help to the board and to individual members. We wish him well in his new posting and look forward to working with his replacement. ■*

## **Inside Out Deadline**

Please send submissions by Friday 12 June 2020 to Character Publishing, 9 Chartwell Court, 151 Brook Road, NW2 7DW or email [editor@characterpublishing.co.uk](mailto:editor@characterpublishing.co.uk). Kindly limit contributions to 1000 words but these may be shortened due to space constraints.

## Notice regarding Coronavirus and the impact on the FCOA – message from the Chairman

### Dear members,

In light of the Prime Minister's statement of 16 March, in which he requested all workers – and especially those in London – to work from home wherever possible, we have taken the decision to move the FCOA into a 'virtual office' mode. As a result, all FCOA staff will work from home until further notice.

To all intents and purposes, however, our services will remain the same – we will still work the same hours, we will still be on line and the Executive Secretary Lucie Portman will still be available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 08.00-16.00 on our telephone number 020 7008 0967 and email [Lucie.Portman@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Lucie.Portman@fco.gov.uk). We will also continue to monitor our mailbox, [fco.association@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fco.association@fco.gov.uk). The reduction in our service will therefore be that we will not be present in the office to see any visitor in person.

We will of course keep these arrangements under review and let you know when we are in a position to resume our normal service.

In the meantime, best wishes to you all and keep healthy!

David Broucher

## REQUIEM

Miss Margaret Hallas, on 8 March 2020

Lord Wright of Richmond GCMG, Head of DS and PUS 1987/91, on 6 March

Mr Emrys Davies CMG, High Commissioner to Barbados 1991, on 25 February 2020

Sir Sydney Giffard KCMG, a former Ambassador to Japan and Switzerland and DUS, on 21 February 2020

Mr Martin Henry Lamport, on 12 February 2020

Lady (Pascale) Mallaby, on 11 February 2020

Sir Leonard Appleyard KCMG, a former Ambassador to China (94/97), on 7 February

Mr Roderick (Rod) Gemmell OBE, on 28 January 2020

Mr James Easton OBE, on 11 January 2020

Mr James Liddell, on 11 January 2020

Lady (Imelda) Miers, on 6 January 2020

Ms Eileen Fox (nee Gallagher), on 28 December 2019

Mr Eryl Wyn Bouch, on 19 December 2019

Mr Ivan Heywood May MBE, on 15 December 2019

Mr John Fawcett CMG, a former Ambassador to Bulgaria, on 14 December 2019

Mr William (Mike) Rankin, on 12th December 2019

Sir John Graham Bt, GCMG, on 11 December 2019

Lady (Lineke) Thomas, on 9 December 2019

Mr Allan Gray, on 5 December 2019

Miss Trudi Gray, on 5 December 2019

Dr Noel Guckian CVO OBE, in December 2019

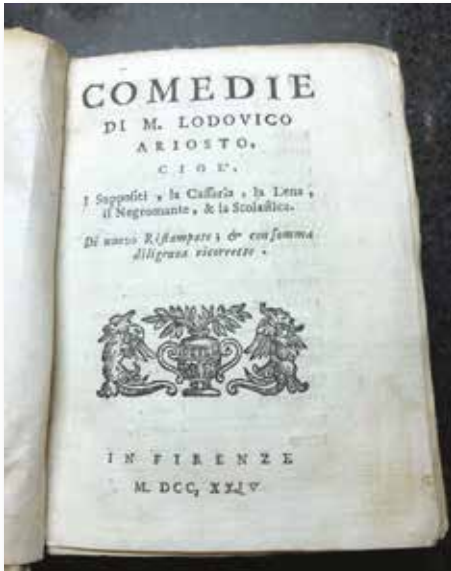
Mr Robin Byatt CMG, a former High Commissioner to New Zealand, on 30 November 2019

Mr David Sprague MVO, on 19 November 2019

## Correction

Last year, the *Requiem* page of the Association website referred to Christopher Seaward CBE who died on 14 April 2019. The page should have referred to Colin Seward CBE. The mistake was unfortunately replicated in the *Requiem* page of the magazine's July 2019 edition.

The then Executive Secretary apologised to Mrs Seaward in August last year for the mistake and accordingly corrected the website. Regrettably the magazine's December 2019 edition did not draw attention to the correction. We now do so and once again apologise.



## POET & DIPLOMAT

*Edward Glover's recent trip down memory lane led to a literary discovery*

Early last autumn my wife, Audrey, and I took our young grandson, Louis, to Berlin for a long weekend. He had not been to the city before and we never miss an opportunity to return.

We showed him the historical, the shameful and the modern – Frederick the Great's summer palace at Sanssouci, the Brandenburg Gate and the remains of the Wall and then, after a coffee at the fashionable Adlon Hotel sidewalk café, on to Potsdamer Platz, re-built on the death strip that once helped to divide Berlin, and finally to the phenomenal Pergamon Panorama.

### Back down memory lane

The day of our return to London, we took Louis to an antiquarian bookseller, *Hollmann*, in the Gendarmenmarkt. It's a book shop we used to visit while posted to Berlin from 1985 to 1989 – my wife as legal adviser to the British Military Government and me as the liaison officer between BMG and the Berlin Senat and Parliament.

One of the regular tasks of British diplomatic staff was to play our part in exercising Allied right of access to East Berlin which the Allies considered not part of the GDR in accordance with post-war agreements with the Russians. When it was Audrey's or my turn to go across the Wall, we often drew the short straw – entering East Berlin by S-Bahn or U-Bahn to Friedrichstrasse station. After repelling each time the *Grenzpolizei's* efforts to force us to go through the immigration process for West Berliners, we would walk along the Unter den Linden, visit *Hollmann's* to see if there was any interesting book to buy before going to a café in the Gendarmenmarkt after which the journey back to the West. One book we bought, published in the East, contained Shakespeare's sonnets – in English on the left-hand side of the page and in German on the right.

This time – early September 2019 – a small book caught my eye, published in Florence in 1724 – the comedies of Ludovico Ariosto.

### Who was he?

An Italian poet and diplomat, he was born on the 8th of September 1474 in Emilia-Romagna in the then Duchy of Modena, the eldest of ten children, and died aged 58 on the 6th of July 1533. A figure of the Renaissance period, he is best known as the author of the epic style *Orlando Furioso* published in 1516.

The book I bought – measuring 15 x 11 cms and thus small enough to fit easily into a pocket – contains five plays: *I suppositi*, *Scolastica*, *La Cassaria*, *La Lena* and *il Negromante*. The third *Cassaria* appeared on the stage in 1508. The following year *I suppositi* was first acted in Ferrara and in the Vatican in 1519. A prose edition was subsequently published in Rome in 1524. The play was later translated into English and performed at Gray's Inn (my wife's Inn of Court) in 1566. Following publication in 1573, Shakespeare allegedly later used it as a source for *The Taming of the Shrew*.

### A shared patron

After five years studying law at his father's insistence, Ariosto was permitted to read classics. Upon the death of his father, he became head of a family in disarray. Despite that distraction, he managed to write some comedies in prose which brought him to the notice of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este who appointed him to his household but with poor financial rewards. During this time Ariosto and Leonardo da Vinci shared a patron in the Cardinal's older sister, the Marchioness Isabella d'Este.

### Diplomacy

Later, the Cardinal's brother, Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara took Ariosto under his patronage, apparently impressed by the fact that he had distinguished himself as a diplomat on the occasion of two visits to Rome as ambassador to Pope Julius II. On the second mission, he was nearly killed by papal order because at the time Julius was in conflict with Ferrara. After the war was over, the Duke appointed him to a provincial governorship where he seems to have satisfied both his patron and those in his care.

### The spirit of the past

Over the past months, I've frequently leafed through this little book bound in a plain jacket – 418 thick pages, wide margins, dense print and rich Italian language with that musty smell redolent of early 18th century scripts. It's a pleasure – in idle moments – to handle a book found in Berlin that emerged from a Florentine printing press 296 years ago and with a literary link to Ferrara 148 km to the north-east (close to Venice) where over 200 years





**WE CANNOT PREACH TO  
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WHAT WE ARE UNWILLING  
TO DO OURSELVES**

before Ludovico Ariosto – writer, poet and diplomat – lived and died. I consider the book a snip for €80.

**Conclusions**

The world of diplomacy stretching back centuries is replete with examples like Ariosto – writer and poet skilful in drafting.

I might add that good drafting is an essential component in the purposes and arts of diplomacy. It’s worth adding that British diplomatic drafting skills over many years have helped to make the UK highly effective in multilateral diplomacy – an internationally acknowledged ability to craft treaty clauses and resolutions that bridge disagreements. As Britain charts a new future outside the EU, that crucial skill remains just as essential as it did in the past.

*Edward Glover*

**COMMENT**

**The Chagos Islands update**

Chagos issues could become a microcosm of the UK’s attitude towards a rules based international order.

The UK has so far ignored both the ICJ Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 – which found that *“the UK is under an obligation to bring an end to its administration of the Chagos Islands as rapidly as possible, thereby enabling Mauritius to complete the decolonisation of its territory in a manner consistent with the rights of peoples to self-determination”* – and the UNGA resolution of 22 May adopted by 116 in favour, 6 against and 56 abstentions.

The latter *“demanded that the UK withdraw its colonial administration from the Chagos Archipelago unconditionally within a period of no more than six months”* (ie by 22 November 2019) and *“urged the UK to cooperate with Mauritius in facilitating the resettlement of Mauritian nationals including those of Chagossian origin and to impose no impediment or obstacle to such resettlement”*. The UN Secretary General is soon to report to the UNGA on the implementation of this resolution.

The UK is isolated in the UN on Chagos. Now that it is on the UNGA agenda it will continue to dog British diplomacy. Litigation, which began in 1999, continues in the Court of Appeal in May. Chagos could again reach the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court (ICC) given that expulsion of a people is akin to a crime against humanity. It must be in the UK national interest to reach a settlement with Mauritius, especially now the UK is in search of a new role in the world, following withdrawal from the EU and the uncertainty of the special relationship with the US.

This humanitarian tragedy undermines our reputation for upholding the rule of law and human rights. We cannot preach to other governments what we are unwilling to do ourselves. And we cannot afford further litigation and international isolation. In her Speech to Parliament on 19 December 2019 the Queen concluded *“My ministers will promote the UK’s interests, including freedom of speech, human rights and the rule of law”*.

*David Snoxell, Coordinator of the Chagos Islands APPG*

**Crossword solution**

**Across**

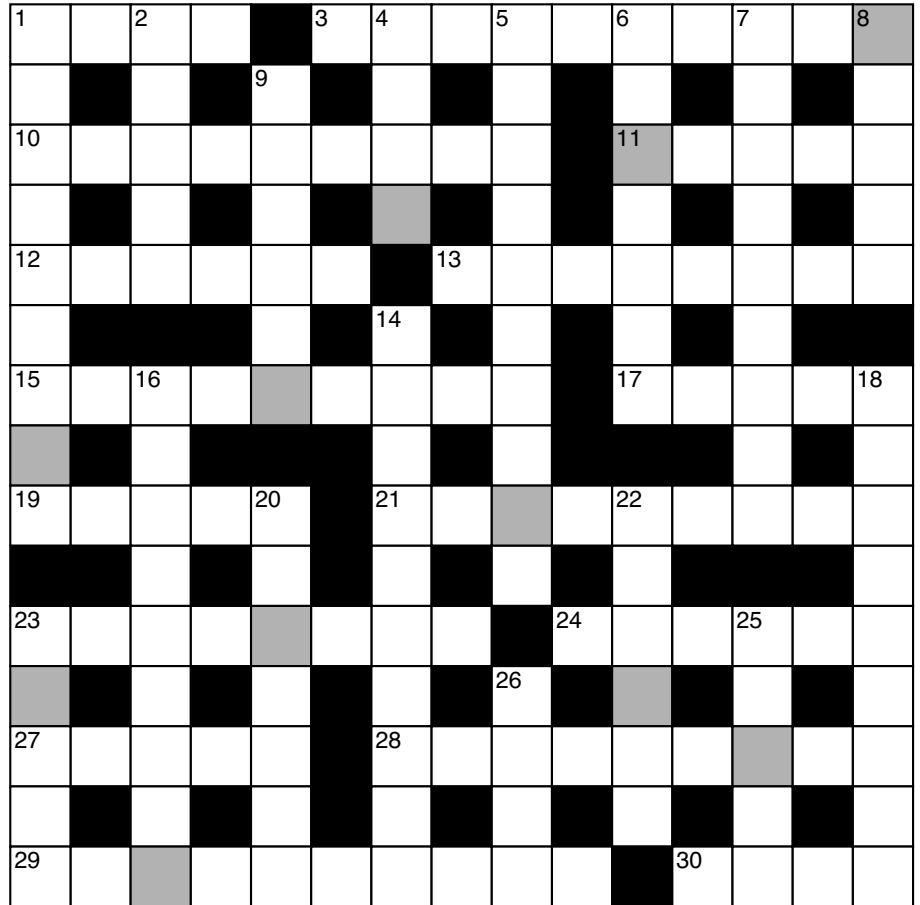
1 Wags, 3 Summarised, 10 Spotted, 11 Nelly, 12 Bang on, 13 Chow mein, 15 Waistcoat, 17 Laird, 19 Slyph, 21 Ticked off, 23 Lethargy, 24 Winner, 27 Means, 28 Pour, 29 Overseeing, 30 Vary.

**Down**

1 Washbowl, 3 Groan, 4 Urge, 5 Matchstick, 6 Renewal, 7 Solferino, 8 Dayan, 9 All-out, 14 Cottage pie, 16 Ill at ease, 18 Deformity, 20 Hearses, 22 Edison, 23 Limbo, 25 Norma, 26 Stun.

**CREDENTIALS**

# Crossword



Solve the clues in the usual way and then rearrange the letters entered into the shaded squares to spell out a word with some diplomatic association. Solution on page 40.

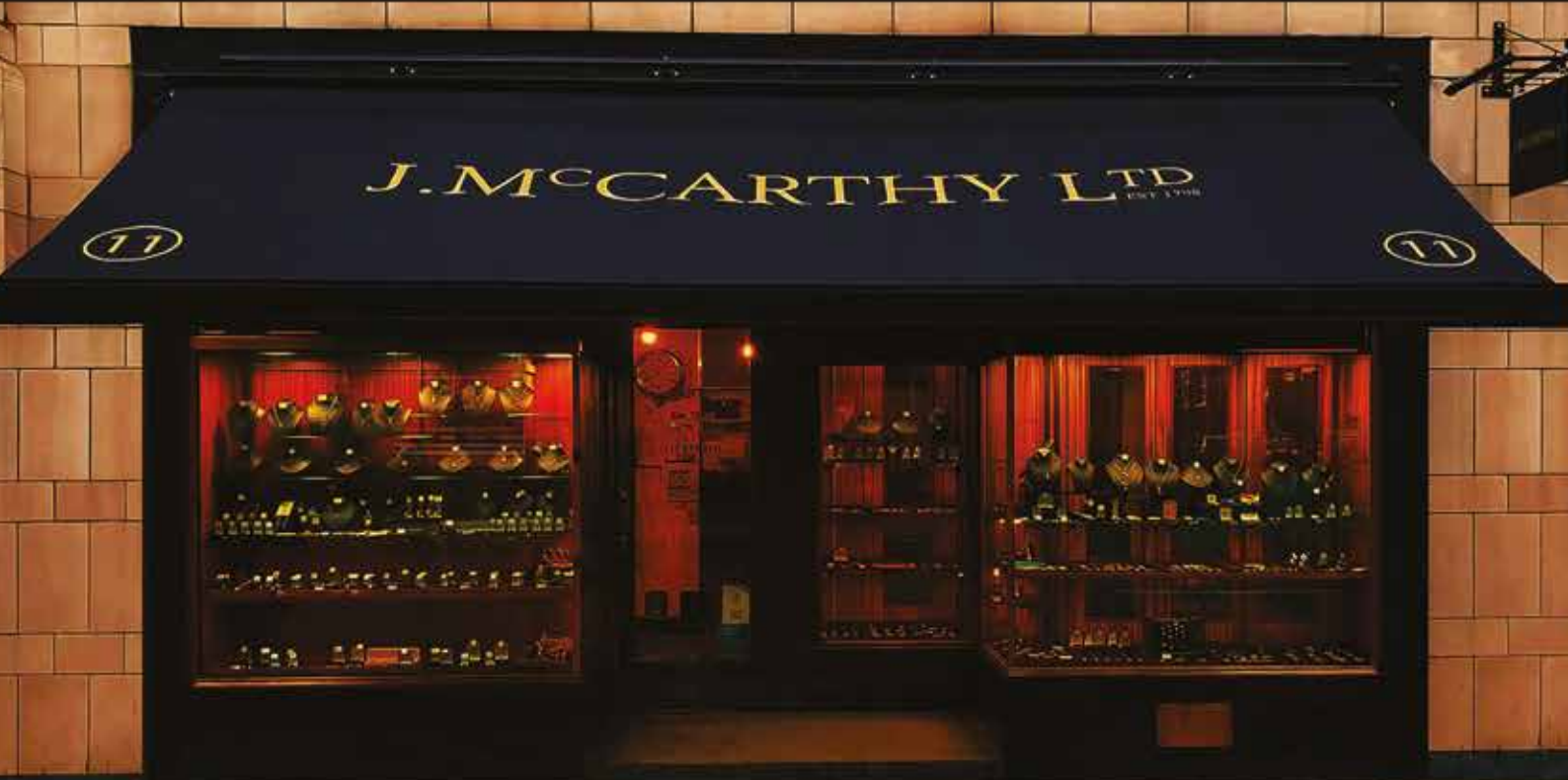
## Across

- 1 Waves of jokers (4)  
 3 Total misread in a way when expressed briefly (10)  
 10 Drug put into rather superficial public scrutiny (9)  
 11 Dean from Bronte novel (5)  
 12 Exactly right to long labour the point (4,2)  
 13 No tips in some inns after serving up dog food from China (4,4)  
 15 Hang round about Ascot perhaps in a bit of a suit (9)  
 17 Estate owner offering refuge for wild animal on little piece of land (7)  
 19 Immaterial air traveller coy about record (5)  
 21 Rebuked? That's marked as read (6,3)  
 23 Not much show of life given introduction to lady with fancy grey hat (8)  
 24 Champion fellow in nervy excerpt (6)  
 27 Heralds in need of wherewithal (5)  
 28 Foul pop trio touring ancient city given something to improve fragrance (9)

- 29 Monitoring a little cricket viewing (10)  
 30 Circumspect fashion's about right (4)

## Down

- 1 Shawls flapping around front of basins in bathroom (9)  
 2 Whine from organ in poor shape (5)  
 4 Dour gent at heart betraying press (4)  
 5 Lucifer equal to criticism (10)  
 6 Restoration earl's written contentiously about novel (7)  
 7 Shape or lines of battle fought in Italy (9)  
 8 No commercial coming up for Israeli military man (5)  
 9 Unrestrained call for complete withdrawal of labour apparently (3-3)  
 14 Swinishly got at piece of dish from humble home (7,3)  
 16 Divine figure holding shape despite disfigurement (9)  
 18 Uncomfortable when sick - a torment you might say (3,2,4)  
 20 Vehicles being the ultimate in transportation (7)  
 22 Remarkably inventive chap showing no side when on the up (6)  
 23 Dance member gets over nothing at all (5)  
 25 Deranged Roman opera heroine (5)  
 26 Knock out first of the tales in tabloid (4)



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