



The Four Corners

The quarterly Alumni Association newsletter

Issue 32: June 2015

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EDITORIAL



Message from the chairman

Welcome to the Summer edition of *The Four Corners*. I hope you find the mix of international development news, reports on alumni activities and personal stories interesting and relevant. I particularly hope you like the new column about where people are now. Please give us your news to include in future editions. It is sad to note that this edition has an unusually full section on members who have passed away.

As I reported on the discussion at the AGM in June, the Association continues to welcome new members and to organise a range of events and social functions. Please check your diaries against the new programme up to October and let us know which events you can attend. We are working on further ideas and will let you know the details when we can. As discussed at the AGM, your Committee is also working on new ideas for raising additional funds for the Alumni Association. We will come back to you with more ideas soon.

Thanks to Marc for putting this edition together. Please pass your comments and suggestions to him for future editions. I hope you enjoy a restful summer break.

Simon Ray

NEWS IN BRIEF

International Development Ministers

Following the General Election in May, Justine Greening MP was re-appointed Secretary of State for International Development. Desmond Swayne MP was re-appointed Minister of State.

Grant Shapps MP was appointed Minister of State. Baroness Verma replaced Baroness Northover as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development in the House of Lords.

Parliamentary Select Committees

In June, [Stephen Twigg](#), MP for Liverpool West Derby, was elected chair of the House of Commons' International Development Select Committee. Crispin Blunt MP was elected chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

DIARY

We hope you can come to these events:

- Tuesday 14 July. **Visit to Brompton Cemetery.**
- Tuesday 15 September 2015. **Seminar on 'Seventy years of agricultural policy in Kenya'.**
- Thursday 1 October. **St James' Place event including tour of HMS Belfast.**
- In December. **Introduction to Myles Wickstead's new book**
- Christmas Party: date to be confirmed.

Yemen

The UK announced £40 million UK humanitarian support. Millions of people are at risk of starving to death by the end of the year if ongoing conflict creates a food crisis in Yemen, International Development Secretary Justine Greening warned on 19 June, as she announced the UK assistance.

The UK's new £40 million support will provide Yemenis affected by the crisis, including those forced to flee their homes, with emergency shelter, healthcare, water and food assistance, as well as supporting UN work to co-ordinate the humanitarian response. The package of emergency humanitarian aid came as the UN launched its revised humanitarian appeal for Yemen. The UN appeal aims to raise \$1.6 billion to meet the needs of nearly 12 million Yemenis in 2015.

According to the UN, nearly a quarter of the population of Yemen – some six million people – face severe food shortages, more than nine million people have lost access to water and one million people have been displaced. The number of acutely malnourished children stands at one million and rising. The healthcare system is on the verge of collapse and the World Health Organisation has confirmed an outbreak of dengue fever.

International Development Secretary Justine Greening said, "Thousands of Yemenis have already lost their lives in this latest wave of violence - but millions more are at risk of starving by the end of the year. This new aid from the UK will provide desperately needed food and clean water, emergency healthcare and protection for those caught up in the chaos.

While this will save lives in the short term, only by ensuring essential supplies can get into Yemen can we avert longer term catastrophe. That means a meaningful pause in the fighting to enable help to reach those in need, wherever they are. It also means getting food and especially fuel into the country and delivered to where it is desperately needed in order to mill wheat, transport food, pump water and power hospitals."

For more on the background to this announcement, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/justine-greening-food-crisis-in-yemen-could-kill-millions>.

Announcements from DFID in April to June 2015

April

- DFID made [seven announcements](#) about disaster relief following the earthquakes in Nepal.

May

- UK aid provided shelter for 65,000 in Nepal
- New Ministerial team.
- UK support for rebuilding Nepal
- Desmond Swayne visited Afghanistan

June

- Desmond Swayne visited Afghanistan
- Grant Shapps visited Tanzania.
- UK and US collaboration on natural disaster warning
- £20m UK humanitarian aid for displaced Iraqis.
- UK and US support for girls' education
- £40m UK humanitarian aid for Yemen
- Further UK aid for reconstruction in Nepal



HMS Belfast, 1 October

Have you visited HMS Belfast? The next St James's Place financial seminar will be held on this famous warship on 1 October. Explore all nine decks of HMS Belfast and discover its stories from the Second World War and beyond. Weave your way up and down this warship to find out what life was like at war and at sea.

Experience the Battle of North Cape in the Gun Turret Experience and test your skills in the interactive Operations Room. Learn about HMS Belfast's various campaigns in the War and Peace exhibition and hear first-hand accounts from veterans in the Life at Sea exhibition.
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast>

UK support for Nepal's reconstruction and recovery

New funding will provide immediate relief to hard-to-reach communities and focus on rebuilding vital infrastructure. The British response to the recent devastating earthquakes now stands at £70 million, following further commitments made at the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction on 25 June 2015.

The UK remains committed to the long-term reconstruction of Nepal and is taking a leading role in the response to meet the Nepalese people's emergency needs and to boost the country's recovery effort. As well as continuing to provide immediate relief to hard-to-reach communities, this new support will focus on rebuilding vital infrastructure, including hospitals and supporting women and vulnerable groups to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

UK International Development Secretary Justine Greening said,

"Thousands of people remain homeless or cut-off in mountainous areas following the recent earthquakes in Nepal. Hospitals and schools have been destroyed, and people's livelihoods torn apart. Now the monsoon season threatens to make the situation even worse. When I visited Nepal recently, I was struck by the determination of the Nepalese people I met to get their lives back on track and Britain will continue to help them do this. That means redoubling our efforts to help Nepal and its people rebuild hospitals, reclaim livelihoods and protect the most vulnerable, including women and girls."

Britain's pre-positioned shelter kits meant that within a few hours of the earthquake, British aid was reaching hard-hit communities and providing temporary homes to thousands of people across Nepal. DFID will continue to fund this work to ensure people are prepared for future disasters.

The UK will continue to work with the government of Nepal to help the country recover from this devastating crisis. Ahead of the monsoon season, the government needs to

prioritise humanitarian support and ensure relief supplies are quickly deployed to reach the most vulnerable in the most remote areas.

The UK is one of Nepal's largest bilateral development partners. Over the last 2 years DFID has provided more than £170 million of development assistance to help reduce poverty and promote economic development in Nepal. Of the £70 million, £33 million is already helping Nepal in the wake of the earthquake. This includes:

- £10 million to rebuild vital health services in the worst affected districts
- £5.3 million for UN agencies in Nepal to coordinate the international relief effort and provide clean water and shelter for affected families
- £3 million released under the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) to 6 charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) already working on the ground: Save the Children, Mercy Corps Scotland, Care International UK, ActionAid, Oxfam and Handicap International
- £2 million for the British Red Cross
- £5 million to match public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee's appeal, which will support NGOs on the ground
- a £5 million package to provide a further team of 30 trauma medics, logistical support and equipment to ease congestion at Kathmandu Airport and humanitarian experts in water, health and sanitation. DFID also deployed a team of more than 60 UK International Search and Rescue (UKISAR) responders and specialist rescue dogs
- £2.5 million for the UN Humanitarian Air Service to enable organisations already on the ground to deliver aid to isolated areas and
- more than £300,000 for Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) to provide 2 Airbus 350 helicopters to get help to more remote regions.

[*More news from DFID on The Back Pages*](#)

Peter Balacs

Peter Balacs passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on Sunday 3 May. He had been involved in a motor accident and was recovering at home. His widow Kesorn can be contacted on Peter's e-mail address: peterbalacs@yahoo.co.uk. He was cremated at Wat Ladsanoon in Bangkok on 7 May.



After retiring from DFID Peter lived and worked in Bangkok. He will be missed both as a friend and as a respected colleague. Typical of Peter's lively mind was the critique of DFID's present approach to the recruitment of economists which he contributed to The Four Corners issue 25 (September 2013).

The following tributes are selected from messages Alumni sent John Stuppel on learning of Peter's death.

Peter and I overlapped in the 1970s during our respective brief sojourns at the Home Office. We were

Nepal: your story

The Autumn edition of The Four Corners will spotlight members' involvement in the earthquakes in Nepal, disaster relief and the reconstruction effort.

Please send your contributions to Marc Taylor, by 27 September if possible at c.marc.taylor@gmail.com. (NB that Marc **no longer has access** to the DFID email account marc-taylor@dfid.gov.uk.)

members of a small group (quite by chance mostly of a left-wing political persuasion) headed by a clever, charismatic man, originally a political appointee, who was, unfortunately, impossible to work with. One by one we moved on: two became Labour MPs; one ran a left of centre think tank and was married to a distinguished economic adviser to the Labour Party; another was the daughter of a Labour peer.

When Peter joined we planned to take him to lunch and were concerned about his political views. It must have been winter because our leader, having observed Peter, said "It's okay, he's a leftie; only lefties wear knitted gloves." I have no idea of Peter's political views but remember him as courteous, rather old-fashioned and with a very good, dry sense of humour.

Janet Beattie

I was very sorry to hear of Peter's untimely passing. He was a stalwart of the Economic group in ODA/DFID over many years and made a very valuable contribution to the group and the organisation in general. He had a great fondness for Thailand in particular and it is a shame he did not have more years to enjoy it.

Paul Ackroyd

I am sorry to hear of Peter's untimely passing. He was a good boss to work with in London in the 90's in AESD with John Roberts. Cheerful, intellectually curious, with a gentle way of passing this on to younger members of the Department, bringing in books and articles to broaden our horizons. A welcome member of outings to celebrate and build team camaraderie.

Catherine Cameron

DFIDSEA girls were so sorry to hear this sad news. Peter was good UKB staff, treated us well and with respect, had sense of humour, with special characteristic of rolling NEW A4 paper sheets into tubes while talking to you, walking upstairs from his mezzanine office, giving advice, etc. These he left behind everywhere. We always knew where he had been.

Marisa, Monrudee and her husband and I attended the funeral rites. Khun Atiporn and others attended the cremation service.

Peter was a wise presence in DFID South East Asia. He was a serious and principled economist ready to challenge sloppy thinking or opinions not backed up by evidence. I remember a frank exchange of views with Clare Short on Indonesia's success at reducing poverty during Suharto's reign.

After retiring from DFID South East Asia, Peter went on to work for the EU in Jordan, before becoming an independent consultant.

Nana Upatikul and Bob Leverington

This was such sad news. Peter was a splendid colleague. I believe he was one of the "basement boffins" when I was in the Bangkok office. Peter Owen will remember!

As others have said, he was intellectually curious, gentle, thoughtful with a great sense of humour. He will be missed but I count myself as lucky to have been able to work with him during my time with ODA/DFID.

Simon Bland

As part of SEADD in the early 80's, Peter guided me through the early part of my career as a TCO in Nepal. He was always willing to give advice and was always constructive. We had recently connected again and were hoping to meet in Bangkok. Sadly that will now not happen.

Geoff Crooks, Asian Development Bank

I would like to add my condolences. Although I worked most of my career on Africa I always found a conversation with Peter would stimulate interest in Asia and his fascination with the emergence of the region was all too apparent. He was ahead of his time in recognising the trends of rising Asia and bringing

new perspectives into ODA at the time. Most of all a kind respectful and generous man. So sad to hear of his unfortunate accident and untimely death.

Jeremy Clarke

I should like to pay my respects to Peter since I have many good memories of him. In particular, I recall those ODA days when he frequently ate lunch with a group of other economists and occasionally joined us for a Friday evening drink. He often prompted a lively, thoughtful and cheering debate on a wide range of topics. I remember him as analytical and sensitive - a great mix. It is good to hear from others about him and the contribution he's made to ODA/DFID's work over the years.

Joanne Alston

I also have very happy memories of times spent in Peter's company. We were both in SEADD in the early 80's and he tried hard and with great patience to educate an NR adviser in the mysteries of economics as we travelled throughout the region.

When we both returned to London he resisted the growing trend towards 'sandwich and e-mail' lunches and would frequently suggest creating an opportunity for some 'slow food' and conversation - which were always a pleasure. He will be missed. May he rest in peace.

Andrew Bennett

I join others in regretting Peter's untimely death. The main time I spent with him was in Brussels when he was seconded to the Commission. He brought his usual mix of knowledge, good advice, common sense and humour there and was much valued by those working in development in what was then DGVIII.

Pam Hilton

Whilst I have already sent my personal condolences to Kesorn, I just wanted to add a message to the many sent to date. In my ODM/ODA/DFID time, whilst I knew of Peter, I did not actually know him in a work context. But within the Alumni, we came across each other about a year ago when we, and other like-minded folk, engaged in an excellent debate.

Peter really cared about development issues, but more so I discovered something which some of you have already mentioned:- a wonderful and engaging sense of humour. Peter was indeed one of the good guys and will be sorely missed. RIP.

Isobel Doig

James “Benny” Warren

Benny Warren died of cancer on 15 June. He was a Natural Resources Adviser. He worked for many years in Uganda and served in DFID's London office and in the East Africa and Caribbean and Pacific Development Divisions before retiring in the 1990s. His funeral was on 30 June.

The following tributes are from friends and colleagues who posted messages on dgroups.org

That is terribly sad news. I worked with Benny from 1978 to 1981 when I was running our aid programme in Tanzania and he was the senior NR adviser in the Development Division in Nairobi. I can still vividly remember Benny's humour, his wisdom and his kindness, combined with outstanding technical knowledge and his sensitivity to issues of political economy. He was always my favourite Adviser!

Robert Stone

I also remember Benny with great fondness from his time in the Caribbean. His knowledge was tremendous and he was always the gentleman. I went with him once on a "banana tour" in St Lucia. From the fields, to the packing house and right on to the Geest boat to see the boxes on their way to the UK. Have never forgotten that learning experience. He and Dot also entertained everyone in the office, especially when he acted as Head of Office for a while. Generous, supportive, professional and kind.

Jane Armstrong

My wife and I counted Benny and Dot as good friends since we met in the Nairobi office and found that we had similar prior East African experiences. I always looked forward to his company and many qualities. After our retirements I managed to persuade him to join David Crapper and me as part of the team to carry

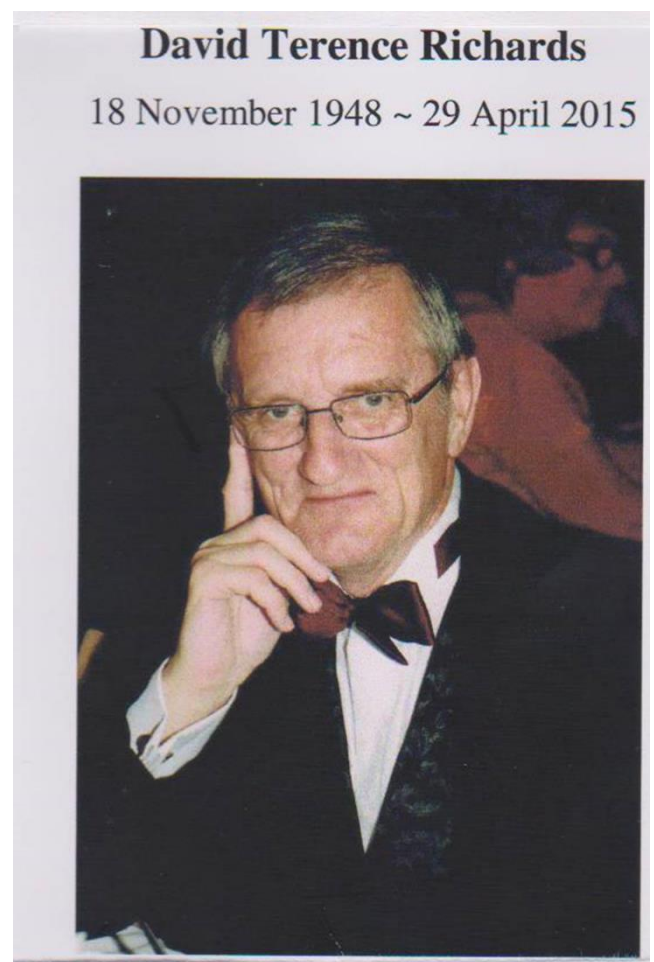
out the first feasibility study of possibility of resettlement of the Chagos Islands and he carried out his work on the coconut groves there with his usual skill, thoroughness and enthusiasm.

Brian Little

Dave Richards

Dave Richards was born and raised in Wigan. A very able student, he was offered entry to the Civil Service in 1966 as an Executive Officer (B2), subject to A-level results. Once he had the confirmation, it was a case of “Mum, Dad, I’m packing my bags for London”.

He joined the two-year-old Ministry of Overseas Development, attracted, as so many still are, by the prospect of helping with the development of poorer countries. His first posting was, not to put too fine a point on it, not at the coalface of development. He was posted to the department dealing with colonial pensions. Most people regarded it as an anachronism, an irrelevance, a



place to be avoided, Dave simply got down to work on tasks that ranged from difficult interpretation of ancient rules and laws to their often tedious repetition.

His ability to resolve the difficult cases while keeping the more routine queries under control was noted by the seniors in the Department and his reputation grew sufficiently that when in 1971 the Caribbean Development Division was being “refreshed” with younger officers, he was one of those chosen. His performance during the original two-year tour ensured he remained for two more years.

His willingness to do jobs that many scorned, and his ability to find points of interest in such work would be a strong feature throughout his career. After the Caribbean, he took up a higher level post in Pensions, and after serving in Pacific Development Division in its first few years he returned to become Chief Registrar, then the purse holder for Office Administrative Costs, next the Deputy Head of Corporate Services at NRI and finally the policy guru in Personnel and Head of Personnel Policy immediately before retirement.

Not for him the prima donna reaction to such work and a continuous moan about the lack of interest. To underline the point, he embarked on the initial mechanisation of records, conducting workshops for the rest of Whitehall. Later he would devise a computer model for the office’s Admin Budget, after the Head of Information Tech waived the usual, understandable requirement for ITD to lead such projects “because Dave’s doing it”.

I met Dave via the Society of Civil Servants (the then union) committee, and would get to know him even better when by a twist of fate I found myself in the pensions bit of Oversea Services Department(!) and assigned to visit Caribbean countries paying colonial service pensions, which HMG was now offering to administer and pay.

Dave and Carol were generous hosts and a great source of information on the way to operate (particularly whom to avoid!) in the other Caribbean States. It was at this time that I

discovered that he was not just a top-class administrator, but an accomplished photographer and a burgeoning guitarist. 40 years later at his funeral, I would learn from Carol that he had written two one-act plays for a Civil Service drama festival, one of them earning a commendation.

One thing he hadn’t learned by 1975 was Bridge, but that was corrected by a four-hour delay to a BA flight and my wife’s polite insistence on making good use of the time. That was a very basic intro, and Dave settled for ‘kitchen Bridge’ for some years but then set about studying his subject – see below, It was exactly the same approach as he had taken in every job, eg gaining an Institute of Personnel Development qualification which proved invaluable not just to himself but to colleagues in Chatham, London, and East Kilbride in avoiding the pitfalls of employment law and ensuring fairness for employees.

Bridge featured strongly in his post-retirement years, attending Andrew Robson’s Bridge club each week and e-mailing the scoresheets even to non-players. By this time he was charging me with starting his ‘addiction’ to the game. His was a well-known face in jazz clubs and pubs in East Sussex and many recordings were made in his little conservatory, once he had devised an arrangement and written up the score for the players. Of course!

He still paid keen attention to developments in DfID policy and more generally to employment law and would regularly write what he termed the ‘Green Ink’ letters to Government Departments. Three or four of these resulted in publication in “The Times”.

During recent years he had caught the cruising bug so severely that the first question in an e-mail to him would be to identify the ocean he was at that point traversing. We joked that he deserved the Freedom of Madeira so many were his visits there. What proved to be his final trip was in March this year to view the Northern Lights.

Kind words are rightly recorded about many of our colleagues who pass on, but one detects an extra warmth in personal tributes such as, "...amazing, intelligent, kindest person" and "...lovely person, good and decent friend and a great man to work for".

Dave Richards, polymath and marvellous friend of 44 years.

Geoff Williams

Willie Scullion

William Scullion sadly passed away at The Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice, on 7th May, 2015, son of Sarah and Patrick Scullion, brother of Patricia and Moira and brother-in-law to Ed. Reception and vigil at St Helen's R.C. Church (Langside), 165 Camphill Avenue, Glasgow G41 3DR, on Thursday, 14 May. Funeral Mass on 15 May at 10am, followed by committal at Philipshill Cemetery, East Kilbride.

Steve Hughes

So very sad to hear of the death of Steve Hughes. RIP. I first met Steve when I worked for the Crown Agents Pensions Department, then housed in the 'ODA' building, prior to (after a very long 6 month strike) the work being subsumed into ODA.

During that time Steve was given to hanging out of the window offering his support to 'the strikers' as well as stopping to chat at the picket line every day. I think it was Steve who coined the phrase 'the Crunchies' to refer to the Crown Agents staff of the day.

He was a well-known presence in the bar of a Friday afternoon as Monty Python films played on the TV and he took a full part in the many charity / disco nights also held at the office. He was a true gentleman, a unique individual and one of life's precious gifts. Requiescat in pace

Christine Rooney

If you were to make up a parcel of (loveable) rogues then Stevie would be first team pick.

He and Harry Boyle (RIP) played for Baillieston in Civil Service league away back in the 70s and in a way were the backbone of what made DFID such an enjoyable place to work from the early eighties when Serendipity joined the recruiting process to make up the said parcel.

There is a group memory in the EKODA footballing fraternity of Stevie in goal shouting "AWAAAY" as the ball metaphorically nestled in the top corner of the net, possibly at Glasgow Green pitches, which shared the same metaphor as the nets, there being no sign of twine nor a blade of green in sight.

Stevie was a character all right and Harry will already have him in goal in his celestial five a side team. Sorry I won't be around until June and will miss any rogues gathering as they celebrate (it has to be a celebration if Stevie is involved) Stevie's passing.

He was a character and a half.

Pat McVey

What are they doing now?

This will be a regular column. It is to help Alumni keep up with the ever-changing roles, interests and achievements of fellow members. **Please send your news for the next edition of The Four Corners.**

- **Andrea Bennett**, who was a Deputy Programme Manager at DFID 2001 - 2006 and worked in both Eastern Europe and Central Asia Dept (EECAD) and the Overseas Territories Department (OTD) has put her experiences of Russia to good use in her debut novel, published this year by new Harper Collins imprint Borough Press. "Galina Petrovna's Three-Legged Dog Story" is a humorous and poignant tale of some very

spirited septuagenarians as they overcome innumerable obstacles to save the eponymous heroine's dog from the local exterminator, in a land where bureaucracy reigns above all else, but freedom can be bought if the price is right. Andrea used her memories of some DFID projects - most notably a prison twinning project when she visited an infamous remand prison in Moscow, to inform some of her writing in the book. "I wanted to make it funny," she said, "but also to highlight some of the really difficult social issues that Russia faced in the 1990s, and still faces today." The Times said of the book "[...] *what unfolds is a shaggy dog story that is a window on Russian history. A terrific and original debut.*" The Daily Mail said "[...] *A bonkers title and a bonkers storyline -- but, oddly enough, this book delivers[...] It takes a very clever writer to make you both laugh and cry.*" Andrea will be appearing at the Edinburgh International Book Festival on 25th August this year to discuss the book, and it is also up for the Edinburgh First Book Award, which will be decided by public vote in October 2015.

- **Yvan Biot** joined Farm Africa as interim Director of Programmes in January to provide maternity cover for also ex-DFID Michelle Winthrop. On Michelle's return in July, Yvan will start as Director of Research and Development. This new role will aim to scale up Farm Africa's research output and find new areas of business for its expanding smallholder agriculture and natural resource management portfolio. *Yvan Biot, 10 Charleville Circus, London SE26 6NR*
- **Sudipto Mukerjee** has been UNDP Country Director in Sierra Leone since August 2013.
- **Roger Nellist** (former deputy head of the Growth and Resilience Department and Investment Climate Team leader) undertakes occasional advisory work on investment, competition and the extractives sector - but

Since retiring from DFID in 2010, **Hilary Sunman** (economist) has taken up various hobbies (sailing, furniture restorations).

She has also written a book, '**A Very Different Land – Memories of Empire from the Farmlands of Kenya**', about the lives and contributions of the advisers in the colonial agricultural service

The book is a fascinating account of how a naive young man - her father - an officer in the Kenya Agricultural Service from the late 1920s until 1950 set off to run a chunk of the empire towards the end of Britain's colonial stewardship of Kenya.

It is an invaluable reminder that - far from the excesses of Mau Mau and White Mischief - hundreds of men like Owen quietly set out from these shores each year to try to do the decent thing in the far flung patches of the map coloured red.

The book analyses his experiences both professional as well as social, and compares it with the current experience and ideas of international consultants and donors.

Available from www.ibtauris.com/very-different-land, for offer price of £19.25, enter discount code AN2 when prompted.

spends the bulk of his time organising and running up to three classical music concerts a week in Ealing (www.st-marys-perivale.org.uk), undertaking some (private) publishing and international travel. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Britain Tanzania Society and the lead contributor on Energy & Minerals in the Society's bulletin "Tanzanian Affairs"; he is also a Member of the International Advisory Board of the Consumer Unity & Trust Society of India (CUTS). rogernellist@hotmail.com

- **Marc Taylor** was a member of a working group on children and clinical research. The Nuffield Council on Bioethics published its report in May 2015 (<http://nuffieldbioethics.org/project/children-research/>).
- **Chris West** stood down in February 2015 after 15 years as Director of Shell Foundation. Now with Sumerian Partners who provide advice to families and foundations on the effective use of philanthropic capital: www.sumerianpartners.com.
- **Penny Williams** (nee McMillin) left DFID in 2003 to do a stint in UK Executive Director's Office (UKDEL) at the World Bank and stayed. Now in World Bank's Social Protection Practice, she is working in Europe and Central Asia region but moving to Africa region in late summer.
- From April 2014 to April 2015 **Jim Winpenny** acted as Coordinator and Rapporteur for the High-Level Panel on Financing Infrastructure for a Water-Secure World, jointly sponsored by the World Water Council and the OECD and chaired by Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD. The work entailed travel for regional consultations in Mexico City, Washington DC, Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Manila, Beijing, Paris and Marseilles. The Report "Water- Fit to Finance?" was presented at the 7th World Water Forum in Daegu, Korea and can be downloaded from the website www.worldwatercouncil.org. He is also Consultant to the Asian Development Bank on its future operations in the water sector.

Seminar on 70 years of agricultural policy in Kenya

DFID, 15th September 2015

to discuss aid and agricultural policy, past and present, drawing on Hilary Sunman's book 'A Very different Land – Memories of Empire in the Farmlands of Kenya, in which she examines the role of the colonial agricultural service through the example of her father (officer in Kenya 1928 to 1950) , legacies and parallels with the present.

Chaired by Andrew Bennet, DFID alumnus and President of the Tropical Agriculture Association. Discussion led by the eminent historian Professor Peter Hennessy (Baron Hennessy), with contributions from DFID's current advisers.

More details soon.

Myles Wickstead's book

On Tuesday, 15 December from 14.00-17.00 there will be an Alumni meeting at DFID at which Myles Wickstead will talk about some of the issues raised in his recent book 'Aid and Development: A Brief Introduction', and in his 'Guardian' blog earlier in July - <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/jul/07/aid-has-often-rewarded-the-inept-and-corrupt-but-its-still-vitally-important-myles-wickstead>

Do save the date; further details will be published closer to the time.'

Who are the new International Development Ministers?

Grant Shapps

Grant Shapps MP was appointed Minister of State for International Development in May 2015.

He has been the MP for Welwyn Hatfield since 2005. In the last Parliament he was Minister for Housing and then Minister without Portfolio at the Cabinet Office. He was previously Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party and opposition spokesman on housing.

Before becoming an MP, Mr Shapps was a businessman who founded his own company at the age of 21. He is married with three children.

Baroness Sandip Verma

Baroness Verma was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for International Development in May 2015.

She is a Conservative Peer who joined the House of Lords in 2006. In the last Parliament, she was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Energy and Climate change from 2012 to 2015.

She was previously the Government's spokesperson in the Lords successively for international development, equalities and women's issues, and then business, innovation and skills. From 2010 to 2012 she was a Government Whip.

Baroness Verma is a businesswoman. She was born in Amritsar and moved to Leicester with her parents as a child. She is married with two children.

Ministerial responsibilities

Secretary of State: **Justine Greening MP**

- National Security Council
- Post-2015 and Financing for Development
- Strategic development review
- Women and girls (including VAWG)
- G8 and G20
- World Bank Spring and Annual Meetings
- Overall delivery and management of 0.7%
- Communications.

Minister of State: **Desmond Swayne MP**

- Asia, Overseas Territories and Western Asia (including Eastern Europe)
- Middle East and North Africa
- Conflict, humanitarian, security, governance and anti-corruption
- Economic development (Private Sector, Trade and International Financial Institutions)
- Scotland engagement, and lead Abercrombie House Minister.

Minister of State: **Grant Shapps MP**

- Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, DRC, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Southern Africa)
- Human Development, Climate and Environment
- Research and evidence
- Global funds.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State:

Baroness Verma

- Caribbean
- Civil society
- United Nations and Commonwealth
- Europe
- Corporate performance
- All Departmental business in the Lords.

EVENTS

DFID Alumni Association Summer Party

11 June 2015

This year's party took place in a committee room of the House of Lords, by invitation from Lord Jay, a member of the DFID Alumni.

Lord Jay, the Minister of State Desmond Swayne, and our chair Simon Ray welcomed members to the party.



Some sixty members attended the party and were joined in lively and enjoyable discussion by Lord Judd (Minister for Overseas Development from 1976-7), Hilary Benn (former Secretary of State for International Development) and DFID Permanent Secretary Mark Lowcock.

On behalf of alumni, Simon Ray thanked Mott MacDonald for their sponsorship of the event.





Annual General Meeting

Message to members from Simon Ray, Chair DFID Alumni Association

Thanks to all of you who attended the AGM of the DFID Alumni Association and joined us at the summer party on Thursday 11 June 2015.

The AGM noted the continued healthy growth in membership of the Association and welcomed the range of activities pursued over the last year to meet the different interests of alumni. John Stuppel was elected as Secretary and Kathy Marshall re-elected to the Committee. Marc Taylor will continue to edit Four Corners.

Our aim over the next year will be to continue the current communication arrangements with the website, dgroups and Four Corners (dgroups may be showing its age but we do not at present have the resources for a major overhaul; we will review this next year). We will aim to include more personal stories in Four Corners (contributions to Marc Taylor please).

We need to increase our financial resources. While continuing to seek sponsorship (a good attendance at the event on 1 October on HMS Belfast organised by St James Place is particularly encouraged), we will be proposing to members a voluntary contribution scheme to support our activities.

We will continue the mix of social activities and events focussed on development issues and will seek to promote more activity in regional chapters. For your diaries, to note so far:

- 18 June- meeting on sustainable development goals being organised by the World Bank 1818 Society,
- 14 July- visit to the Brompton Cemetery (We are meeting at 10.30am outside Fulham Broadway station and will be using the entrance gate in Fulham Road. The tour will start at 11am in the chapel where refreshments will be served while our guide gives us an introduction. The cost is £10 per person. Please email janetgrimshaw@onetel.com to reserve a place.)
- 15 September- event on agriculture/land reform/Kenya
- 1 October- tour of HMS Belfast, sponsored by St James Place
- Christmas party- date and venue to be confirmed

We are sorting through a number of new ideas for future events. We will advise on concrete ideas and dates as soon as possible.

As always, your feedback and ideas are welcome to guide our future activities.

Your Committee

The committee members elected at the Annual General Meeting in June 2015 were:

Kathy Marshall (re-elected)

John Stuppel Secretary

The committee members elected in 2014 will continue:

Simon Ray Chairman

John Burton Treasurer

Jackie Creighton

Jim Drummond

Janet Grimshaw

Amisha Patel

Marc Taylor (Secretary to February 2015)

The Public Enquiry Team in DFID handles requests for **speakers at public events** i.e. school talks, university discussions, WI/Lions Club etc. up and down the country. They try and source most of the speakers in-house, but recognise there is a wealth of experience amongst DFID Alumni, and are happy to open up such events to members to speak at if they are available, and they are not able to cover with someone from DFID. In the case of someone being able to deliver a talk, DFID would make it clear that they are from the Alumni Association, and are not necessarily representing the views of DFID.

John Stuppel has agreed with the Public Enquiry Team that if a member is interested in one of the speaking events on offer then they should let him know and he will advise the team. The speaker can then liaise direct with the enquirer to finalise the arrangements. There is a small group on dgroups.org of members who have offered to take on DFID speaking engagements. To join, send a blank email to join.speakers@dgroups.org.

New Members of the Association

Welcome our new members, who joined the DFID Alumni in April to June 2015.

Glenn Bush

Jim Butler

Nick Highton

Karen Idesoh

Sudhanshu Joshi

Mark Mallalieu

Debbie Menezes

Miranda Mortlock

Pallavi Nayek

Munirat Ogunlayi

Chinsia Pascho-George

Bidisha Pillai

David Radcliffe

Jay Shankar

Stephen Sharples

Stanley Schosloff

Manjula Singh

Donald Taylor

Garima Verma

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THE BACK PAGES: DFID REPORTS

Provisional figures for ODA in 2014

Official Development Assistance (ODA) remained high and stable in 2014, with net ODA totalling \$135.2 billion, level with the all-time high recorded in 2013. The UK was the second largest aid donor by volume, after the USA.

These official figures were released by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on 8 April. Each year the DAC publishes details of collective and individual ODA flows for its 29 member countries, including the world's principal development donors. The figures are provisional. The OECD will publish the final figures in December.

Net ODA (as a percentage of Gross National Income) was 0.29% among the DAC collectively in 2014. Net ODA rose in thirteen countries. The largest increases were recorded in

Finland,
Germany,
Sweden and
Switzerland.

ODA fell in fifteen countries. The largest decreases were in Australia, Canada, France, Japan, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

The UK increased its ODA by 1.2%, passing the 0.7% ODA/GNI target for the second time, and reaching 0.71% ODA/GNI (\$19.4 billion). The UK remains one of only five countries (along with Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Luxembourg) to meet the 0.7% target.

There was a significant fall in aid to the poorest countries: 16% in real terms, compared to 2013 (8% if debt relief is excluded). However, a survey of donor countries' spending plans to 2018 indicates that country level aid to the poorest countries should recover over the next few years, after several years of decline.

This is in line with a pledge made by DAC members in December to reverse the fall in aid to the countries most in need. The projections suggest that Ebola-affected countries, small island developing states and populous least-developed countries (such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Burma) will see significant increases.

Further Information

Detailed summary of 2014 ODA:

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/ODA%2014%20Technical%20Note.pdf>

Complete data tables:

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/ODA%202014%20Tables%20and%20Charts.pdf>

Donor spending survey: www.oecd.org/dac/aidoutlook

Dynamic graphics on donors and recipients since 1960:

www.oecd.org/dac/stats/data.htm

Other OECD aid data: www.oecd.org/dac/stats/

Funding for development research

In June, DFID posted information about calls for research on

- Effectiveness, Coherence and Accountability of the Humanitarian System: A Political Economy Analysis
- Ensuring debt sustainability in developing countries through productive expenditure
- Prior Information Notice: Improving Communication of Research and Evidence for Development (ICRED)
- The Agri-Tech Catalyst

A [page on GOV.uk](#) is aimed at organisations and researchers looking for information on funding opportunities in development research. It lists in a selection of current calls with a research, evidence or evaluation theme which are being run by DFID or by its programme partners.

If you are interested in working for DFID, look at their supplier portal:

<https://supplierportal.dfid.gov.uk/selfservice/>

New land and responsible investment programme launched

On 25 June DFID launched a new Land - Enhancing Governance for Economic Development (LEGEND) programme, which will help to secure property rights, strengthen data and evidence, and improve private sector investment.

Property rights, specifically secure land tenure, are an essential building block for sustainable and inclusive economic development, and building open economies and open societies is a critical element of the 'golden thread'. Women and girls are typically those most affected by lack of secure rights to land. LEGEND pays special attention to maximising the benefits for women and girls. Between 2010 and March this year, UK bilateral programmes have helped 5.8 million people secure their tenure rights, with almost half of them women.

LEGEND now has all of its core partners on board:

- A consortium of experts (IIED, ODI, NRI, IDS, University of Western Cape, KPMG, and others) - to help country offices with land-related work and do more on land, to strengthen data, evidence and learning, and to manage a Challenge Fund pioneering good practice on land investments
- Columbia University - to develop a global and publicly available database of land investment contracts and provide legal advice for shared value investments
- FAO - to implement the globally negotiated Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure
- Global Donor Platform - to ensure coordination, coherence and influence around land
- The INGO Landesa - to pilot good investment practice with businesses, civil society and governments
- The Land Portal Foundation - to become an online one-stop-shop for data, information and debate on land

- The Rights and Resources Institute and The Munden Project - to make corporate investment risk assessments land-sensitive
- The World Bank- to assess land governance for investment climate reform.

ICAI report: follow up report on reviews from years one, two and three

In June, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact published their [follow up report](#) on reviews from years one, two and three. This covers 22 of the 35 reports they published during their first three years, including a focus on findings from previous education reports.

ICAI believe DFID has taken action to address the great majority of their recommendations. They acknowledge the positive efforts that DFID teams have made in addressing their recommendations and the work which goes into it.

Recommendations

The report did not assign RAG ratings but made seven specific recommendations:

- **Education:**
intensify support for governments to set targets and timelines which reflect realistically achievable rates of improved educational attainment
- **Education:**
encourage governments to have clear goals aimed at limiting inequities in resource distribution
- **Education:**
intensify support for local government to improve the use of data systems, quality control, analysis and performance review to support locally-determined actions for improving pupil learning
- **Learning:**
ensure that learning improvement initiatives and plans are consistently driven forward, with realistic timescales for change. In particular that staff spend more time engaged more directly

with delivery partners and beneficiaries and that specific incentives are put in place to reward managers for encouraging and using staff feedback

- **Child mortality in Kenya:**
balance the UK's decision to exit malaria work with an appropriate focus on ensuring that alternative funding sources are available to continue the provision of basic health supplies, such as bed nets, and that a commensurate investment in health systems strengthening is made
- **Girl Hub:**
consider in depth whether ongoing funding is merited and either reach a decision to cease funding or consider extending the project for a year to enable the evaluation to be completed. A condition for this should be that the governance issues be resolved and that Nike Foundation provides detailed information on its in-kind contributions
- **Future follow-up:**
engage directly with the ICAI team post publication to ensure that responses address the key issues raised; that there is greater consistency in how the terms 'accept', 'reject' and 'partially accept' are used; and that DFID tracks progress in a more rigorous and structured way.

More information

ICAI's reports are published on their website <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/reports/>.

Dr Alison Evans:

message to DFID staff

from the new Chief Commissioner of the Independent Commission on Aid Impact

I'm delighted to be leading ICAI at this challenging and crucial time for development.

Dr Alison Evans.jpg will be joined by three new commissioners, Francesca Del Mese, Richard Gledhill and Tina Fahm, who bring an extensive range of skills and experience to the team.

At ICAI, we work to ensure UK aid is spent effectively for those who need it most and delivers value for UK tax payers. We do this by advising and reporting to the International Development Committee of the UK Parliament, and through engaging with DFID and other ODA spending departments.

We believe that UK aid, at its best, delivers real and meaningful change for people living in poverty. We recognise that ensuring the best possible performance across a large and complex portfolio of programmes, partners and countries, often in the most difficult circumstances, is a continual challenge. We also note that as a 0.7% donor, the stakes for UK development assistance have never been higher. In this context, we believe that ICAI has a unique and important role to play in providing the IDC with robust analysis of UK aid's claims to effectiveness and in contributing to organisational learning across DFID's development portfolio.

Looking ahead, the way ICAI works will be evolving. We are keen to take a strategic look at how UK aid is responding to global and local development challenges. We will be introducing different styles of review so that our work reflects better the evolving context and ambition for UK development assistance; but we will still look in depth at single programmes and business processes from time to time.

In terms of method we will seek to test DFID's claims to beneficiary impact (by testing theories of change), and assess how far UK aid is investing in and building on evidence of what works.

We will not conduct our own impact evaluations, but rather use and assess the quality of existing evidence, including evaluations funded by UK aid, while drawing on third party evidence where we see fit.

Grant Shapps in Tanzania

The new Minister of State made his first official overseas visit. He spent a packed two days in Tanzania's Lake Zone - getting a taste of our results delivery, aid modalities and partnerships - and confirmed with UNHCR £4.2 million of funding for the influx of refugees from Burundi.

At a health clinic Mr Shapps spoke to women service users about the contraceptive options available. Marie Stopes International staff said the clinic exemplified their public-private partnership model, which supports the government to scale up access to family planning.

The Minister of State saw how primary schoolchildren in rural Simiyu were learning Kiswahili through phonemes, within the context of post-2015 and our shift from quantity to quality. Parents told him that pupil retention, pass rates and the head teacher's management had all vastly improved. Community members even sang about this in a dance to mark the visit.

In an urban slum in Mwanza, Mr Shapps spoke to children out of the formal schooling system but supported by Railway Children UK, a GPAF grantee, and learned more about UK funding flows to civil society, and how DFID's centrally managed programmes function in priority countries.

In Nyegezi, the Minister of State learnt that approximately £4 is the price commanded for a chicken by female poultry farmers trained by BRAC. Later he heard from Gatsby Foundation, Wood Foundation and AgDevCo representatives about large-scale social impact investments in smallholder agriculture.

He was especially enthusiastic about Off Grid Electric, a start-up financed by DFID's REACT programme, which provides solar energy services. Their expansion into hard-to-reach households was supported by a centrally managed programme using results-based financing of low carbon products. DFID briefed the Minister of State on International Climate Fund priorities and the global challenge of energy access.

Numerous regional and district officials commended the Minister of State on DFID's impact in their localities. He saw the reach of financial aid (through the Ministry of Water) when visiting a local water point. Women told him that children were no longer walking 5 kilometres to collect water.

The Minister of State told staff it was a brilliant trip and he had learnt from every part of it.

Desmond Swayne in Afghanistan

Desmond Swayne was in Kabul on Monday 1 and Tuesday 2 June, making him the first minister of the new UK government to visit Afghanistan. He travelled to Kabul to reaffirm the UK's long-term commitment to Afghanistan and see first-hand the positive impact that UK aid is having.

During his visit, the Minister of State met with President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and Finance Minister Eklil Hakimi.

He reiterated the UK's support for Afghanistan (one of the UK's largest bilateral programmes) and urged quick implementation of the Government's much-needed reform plan, which was presented at the London Conference in December.

Reflecting on his visit, the Minister of State said:

"I have been tremendously impressed by the progress that Afghanistan has made since the Taliban were thrown out in 2001. And I am very proud of the role that the UK has played in contributing with the Afghan people to that progress and the UK remains committed to Afghanistan for the long haul.

"I had very successful meetings with President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah and Finance Minister Hakimi. I was hugely reassured by their determination and commitment to the reform-agenda and their determination to see it driven through. I think there will be an important opportunity coming up in September of this year with the Senior Officials Meeting to revisit the progress that Afghanistan has made since the London Conference."

The Minister of State also met a group of Afghan artisans who have been directly helped into employment and supported to develop their businesses by UK aid-funded projects, and said:

"It was a fantastic experience to see how relatively small amounts of money can make a big difference to small enterprises, which then become medium sized enterprises."

He spoke to a widow who previously had few skills and no income to support her nine children. Thanks to UK aid she has gained skills in tailoring and handiwork and is now a successful businesswoman employing 85 other women.

Another business owner he met said:

"UK aid played a big role in expanding our business. It helped us source raw milk from over 1000 new small-scale dairy farmers, invest in new ice cream production technology and add over 500 jobs to our distribution chain. Of course we have challenges, but UK aid support is helping us build a positive future."

Investing in a time of climate change

On 4 June Mercer published a [study](#) which applies climate change scenarios (2°/3°/4°C) and risk factors to asset allocation, and provides investors with a methodology to plan for climate change impacts on long-term portfolios.

Long term investors such as pension funds and insurance companies are increasingly taking an interest in the outcome of the climate negotiations in Paris later this year, which will gain momentum now the Mercer study has been published. DFID funded the study, along with DECC, 16 investors (managing collectively \$1.5 trillion) and the International Finance Corporation (in co-operation with Germany).

Key findings:

- Return impacts from climate change are inevitable irrespective of which scenario becomes reality
- Impacts at the sector level are most meaningful: The average annual returns from

the coal sub-sector could fall by anywhere between 18% and 74% over the next 35 years. Conversely, the renewables sub-sector could see average annual returns increase by between 6% and 54%

- Asset-class return impacts vary widely depending on the climate scenario: While a 2°C scenario could benefit emerging market equities, infrastructure, real estate, timber and agriculture, a 4°C scenario would negatively impact those asset classes
- A 2°C scenario does not have negative return implications for long-term diversified investors at a total portfolio level.

What does this mean?

Climate change will hit the poorest first and hardest, and will undo development investments of the past. The evidence that emerging markets and infrastructure stand to gain in a 2°C scenario aligns interests and brings positive empirical evidence to the negotiations in Paris. Pension schemes have a fiduciary duty to de-risk their portfolios, and the Mercer study recommends actions such as strong corporate engagement, investing in low-carbon sectors, increasing transparency and carbon foot-printing, as well as integrating climate change in risk modelling and environmental, social and governance assessments.

Policy is argued to be the most important indicator of climate change risk for investors. However, shifting even a fraction of the \$68.7 trillion of total assets under management into low-carbon sectors would go a long way to reach DFID's goal of mobilising \$100 billion of public and private finance per year for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries by 2020. The Mercer study may turn more investors from 'future takers' into 'future makers'.

“The end of poverty?”

Mark Lowcock, DFID’s Permanent Secretary, gave this talk at Warwick University on 29 May 2015

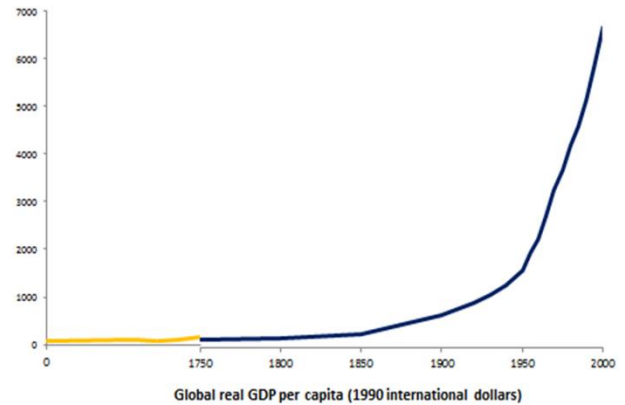
It is very nice to be back at Warwick. I actually had two earlier spells in the business school here: first in 1990-91, and then again from 2004-06. I’m not sure that either of the programmes I did still exist anymore. But I have stopped myself enquiring too far into that for fear of uncovering an unhappy relationship between the experience of teaching me and the subsequent abolition of the course.

The human species has existed for around 150,000 years. For almost all of that period – more than 99.9% of it – the defining life experiences for the great majority of the species have been quite unattractive: hunger, disease, violence and insecurity. It may have been a relief that the whole thing did not last nearly as long as it does now. Thomas Hobbes’ observation, in the middle of the 17th century, that life is nasty, brutish and short was a literal truth for most of humanity.

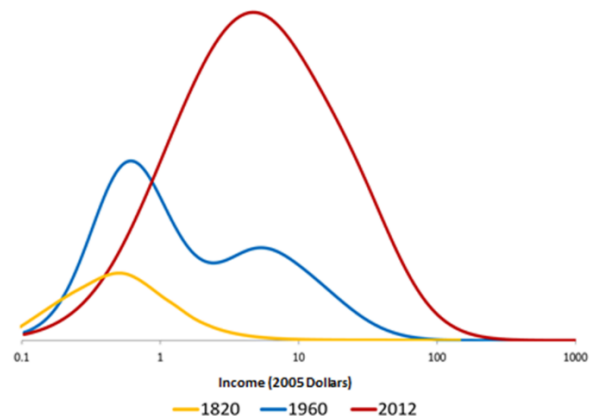
And then, all of a sudden, like a flash of light and warmth across the dark abyss, the standard life experience in the last 50 years – and especially the last 25 years – has been spectacularly transformed. Now it is not the case that most people are hungry, ill and insecure most of the time. Now that is the exception – albeit one that still afflicts far too many people.

My story today is about that dramatic transformation. First, the scale and nature of it. Second, why and how it has happened. And third, what it means for the future. I studied economic history and development at university, and have worked on these issues for 30 years, covering many of the world’s horrors – wars, famines, earthquakes and floods – as well as the things that are getting better. But it remains an enormous source of wonder to me that the world has changed so far so fast. I am really surprised that hardly anyone talks about this. And that in most of the discussions I see or hear about to do with the future, the pessimists always seem to outnumber what seem to me to be the more rational optimists.

So let’s have a look at what has actually happened. Per capita incomes are a good place to start. The big picture is pretty clear. For most of human history,



average per capita incomes were tiny. There have always been very small numbers of people with colossal personal incomes – emperors, kings and other rulers mostly – but as the picture shows, the big story is sky rocketing average incomes especially over the last fifty years.



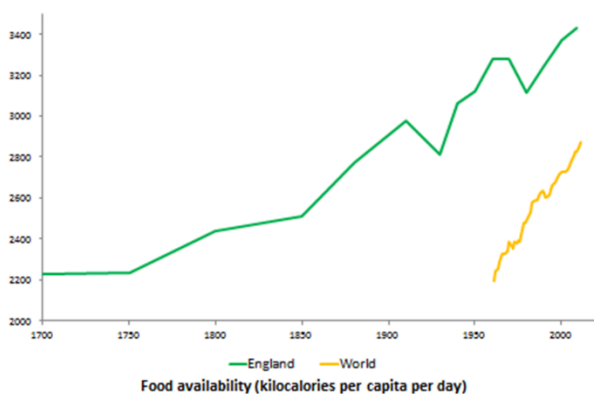
Let’s look at this slightly differently. The data is not brilliant and this is an approximate picture. The x-axis measures daily income, and it is logarithmic, which makes it look as though progress is less dramatic than it really is. The areas under the graphs represent the total number of people. So there were a billion people alive in 1820, 3 billion in 1960 and 7 billion in 2012. As an order of magnitude, median incomes have grown roughly ten-fold over the period. But at the beginning of the period, the vast majority were precariously balanced at barely survival levels of income, struggling to meet rudimentary requirements for food, shelter, heat and clothing. Now that is just the unlucky few.

If you look at what people could buy with their income at different points, you discover that an English farm labourer in the 1790s spent three quarters of his income on food, 10 per cent on

clothing and bedding and pretty much all the rest on housing, heating and lighting. By contrast, a similar individual in 2005 would have spent around 15% of their income on food.

Or to look at the same thing in another way, in the 1800s in England it would take 12 hours for someone on the average wage to earn enough to buy two candles to provide a bit of light in their homes. Today, someone on the average wage here in the UK earns enough to buy a modern smart phone in that time. And that illustrates the important point that most of what many people spend their incomes on now simply didn't exist two hundred years ago, including electricity, motorised transport, most consumer goods and many forms of entertainment. So, however you look at it, there has been great progress, especially at the middle and bottom end of the income distributions.

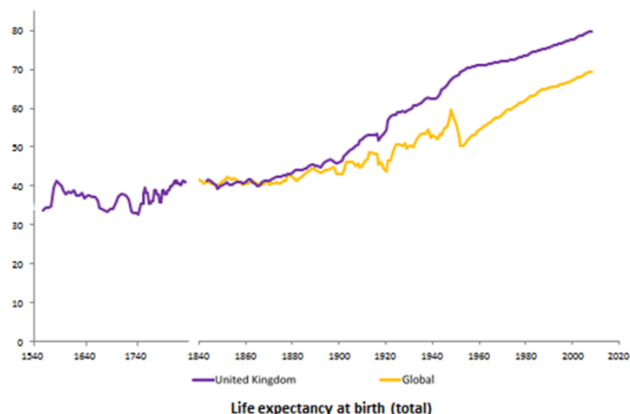
Changes in incomes and purchasing power are one measure of progress, but there are others too. Let's look at food availability. As in other areas, the data has until very recently been much better for the UK than for the world as a whole.



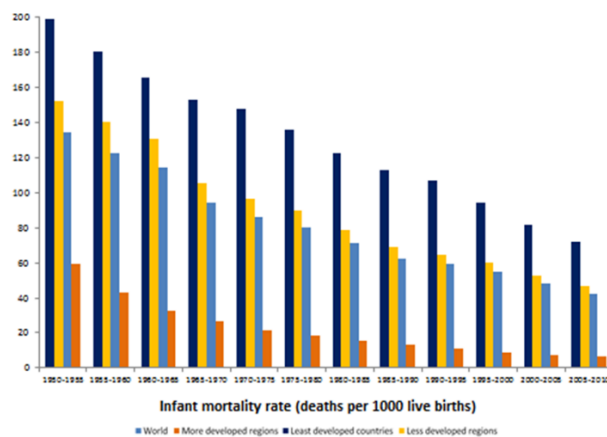
For most of history, remember, a high proportion of people were hungry and malnourished a lot of the time. Famines and starvation were common across the globe, even up to the 19th century. The UK, the most advanced country in the world at the time, saw a million lives lost in the Irish potato famine in the years around 1850.

By the end of the 19th century that risk had largely receded in the advanced countries. But it remained very real across most of the globe. Until in the last third of the 20th century, global cereal production more than doubled, and has kept growing rapidly

since. And, as we see, food availability per person has increased dramatically.



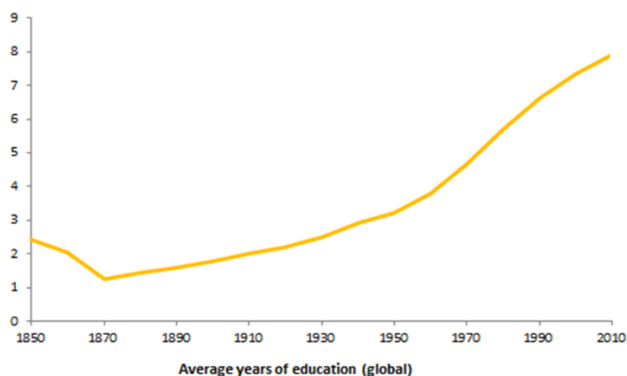
Maybe the most basic measure of progress is that people live longer. We think global life expectancy grew somewhat in the thousand years before 1800. But even as the first economies, led by the UK, modernised it remained very low and, as the picture shows, increased little. It only really started to grow in the advanced countries during the later stages of the 19th century. And for a variety of reasons, including the conflagrations that rocked the world in the first half of the 20th century, that improvement has only accelerated and spread across the whole globe over the last 50, and especially the last 25, years. The biggest factor behind that has been plummeting infant mortality.



As you can see, countries at all levels of development have continued to benefit from that. But the biggest absolute gains, which have driven a lot of the recent improvement in the global aggregates, have been in the poorest countries. No child is born to die. You don't need to know many people who have lost a child in infancy to understand the enormous reduction in grief and suffering arising from better

child survival rates. But the evidence suggests that this is also contributing to slowing the rate of global population growth, with important benefits for sustainability.

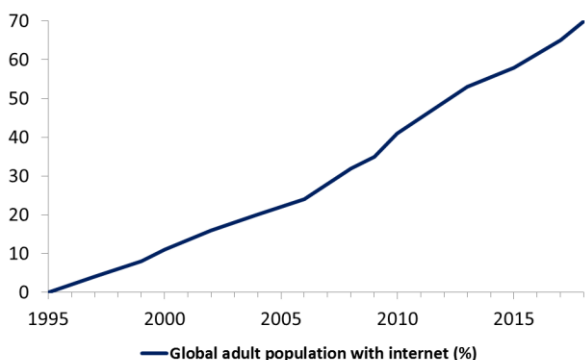
The proportion of people receiving any sort of formal education and reaching even basic standards of literacy or numeracy, with all the vast opportunities that brings for enhancing life experiences, was vanishingly small for most of history.



From the 19th century in the UK, parts of Europe and the US education started to become available to the general population rather than just elites. But it is only over the last 50 years, but more the last 25, that that has been generalised across the world.

Some of the most profound changes are the most recent and fastest spreading. No-one had the internet 25 years ago. Now the majority of the global adult population can access it. And this year we are probably reaching the moment where most adults can use a smart phone, bringing within their reach more information than was available in any library in the world 20 years ago.

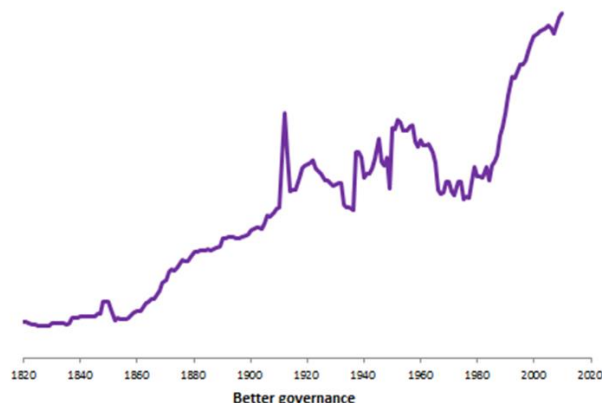
Then there are some broader measures of progress. Amartya Sen takes the view that development is about the accumulation and spread of freedoms – not just from material poverty and hunger, but from



violence, insecurity, injustice and the repression of

free speech and personal choices. That is clearly right: a good and decent life for anyone involves a lot more than food, shelter, clothes and the other basics to ensure survival.

It is difficult to assess progress quantitatively on this. There are efforts to measure, for example, civil and political liberties, democratisation, and state fragility across countries. But they are all quite new, have limited coverage and are heavily contested.



This picture shows the Polity IV index, which tracks the evolution of political systems in a large group of countries, on a measure from autocracy to democracy. The increase over time means that regimes are on average somewhat less autocratic and face more checks and balances on executive authority than 25 years ago. Though the pace of change, while still positive overall for more people in the world than not, appears to have slowed in the last few years.

Let's be clear that despite all this progress, there remain horrific levels of poverty and deprivation, malnutrition, conflict, violence, avoidable early death and many people excluded from the general improvement. One person in six was still living below the UN's extreme poverty line in 2010. There are also places where on some measures things have actually got worse. Life expectancy in Russia and some HIV riven countries in southern Africa is now lower than it was 20 years ago.

But that should not distract us from the truth of the remarkable recent overall progress. No person living in the 19th century, still less the 9th century or a thousand or ten thousand years before that would be remotely able to conceive of the richness and quality of life enjoyed by most people now.

I want in a moment to move on to what seems to me the second most interesting question prompted by all

this progress: why and how it has happened. Before that, though, it is important to remind ourselves that no-one was seriously forecasting either in the early 1960s or around 1990 that the world was on the cusp of this spectacular improvement.

In the early 1960s people worried seriously about nuclear armageddon, and the world seems to have come close to it in the Cuban missile crisis. China was just escaping from Mao's great famine, in which, as historians have now told us, 45 million people – 45 million! – were worked, starved or beaten to death.

Throughout the 1960s, many learned scientists and economists warned of coming catastrophe as a result of resource shortages, and the limits to growth. The Malthusian trap come true. India in the mid-1960s suffered two years right on the verge of mass famine. Drought savaged harvests and people starved in increasing numbers, echoing the Bengal famine of the mid 1940s but a threat on a much larger scale as a result of growing population. Paul Ehrlich published "The Population Bomb" in 1968, predicting apocalyptic over-consumption, resource scarcity and famine across the globe. He didn't hold back on the scale of the risks: "If I were a gambler, I would take even money that England would not exist in the year 2000".

Likewise 25 years ago, as you saw from my pictures, lots of progress had in fact been made. But we were in the midst of the tumultuous years from 1989-91 which saw the end of the cold war, the collapse of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet empire, as well as the first Gulf war, another oil shock, and the onset of famine in Somalia with failed US and UN interventions to tackle it. The pundits warning of dangers and risks ahead seemed to get a lot more air time than those seeing opportunities. This was early in my working career in development, and my recollection of the period is that we all seemed to be oppressed by problems ahead rather than seized of the opportunity that, with hindsight, was opening up.

So, the second most interesting question: how and why did all this happen? The first big factor is the transformative impact of science, technology and knowledge.

Until very recently, scientific knowledge has accumulated quite slowly, with the rate picking up incrementally in the 500 years before the 20th century. From the beginning of the agricultural revolution in 18th century England, which dramatically increased productivity, the acquisition of

new knowledge benefitting large numbers of people gradually accelerated. It gathered pace through the 19th century with the industrial revolution, bringing mass factory production of textiles and over time of other consumer goods, together with mechanised power and transport.

But it is striking that even by quite late in the 19th century, and even in the world's most advanced country (then the UK), medical knowledge and technology were still quite primitive. Killer diseases took their toll on the children of the rich just as those of the poor. Childbirth was dangerous for rich women as well as poor ones. In that pre-immunisation, pre-anaesthetic and pre-antibiotics world, life expectancy was shockingly low and infant mortality appallingly high for everyone, privileged in other ways or not.

By the middle of the twentieth century that had changed dramatically for most people in the small number of more developed countries. But in the countries where most people lived, still stuck at very low levels of development, the benefits had spread only to the tiny minority of the lucky rich.

Fifty years ago, however, something different started to happen. The green revolution, bringing high-yielding varieties of wheat, rice and other cereal grains, the expansion of irrigation infrastructure and the development of modern fertilisers and pesticides finally saw off the Malthusian trap across the developing world. That's what got us out of the world in which most people were hungry most of the time, to the position today where the scourge of malnutrition is now one visited only on the minority. India, on the verge of famine in the 1960s, tripled wheat production by 1974 and became a net exporter.

And over the last 25 years, the same thing has happened in the war on disease and early death. Wholesale vaccination against killer childhood diseases, much more effective malaria and HIV prevention and treatment, expanded access to family planning and clean water, and generalised adoption of healthier sanitation practices are what has driven the dramatic improvements in life expectancy and especially child survival.

The revolution in communications technology over the last 25 years, with the internet and all its applications, has itself been transformational. But, crucially, it has also broadened and accelerated the uptake of lots of other life improving knowledge and

technology. In other words, access for the masses to cheap and big improvements.

The next factor that has fuelled progress has been better economic management. The exploitation of the division of labour and comparative advantage, two of the more useful concepts served up by the economics profession, through the massive expansion of trade and commerce, are what underpinned economic modernisation. The almost universal adoption of the philosophy and institutions of the market economy has unleashed growth and opportunity. Prudent macroeconomic management, letting markets determine the allocation of resources and scaling back the role of the state in economic activity is now the norm almost everywhere.

But it's quite recent. Autarky and national or even local self-sufficiency may be bad ideas but they have had surprisingly long shelf lives. The disaster of communist economic management blighted many countries (even non-communist ones like India) right up to 1990. It is not an accident that their growth rates and average incomes have sky-rocketed since then. Globalisation beats isolation hands down.

Globally, the median level of inflation across all countries has fallen from 15% a year in 1980 to 5% in the current decade. In 1991, one country in ten had inflation over 100% a year. Now, in nine out of ten, it is below 10%. Likewise, debt levels and the fiscal balance have improved significantly over the last 25 years in the great majority of developing countries.

The third factor is reduced conflict. Human progress, self-evidently, ought to be easier during times of relative peace and stability. Stephen Pinker's wonderful book "The Better Angels of Our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and its Causes" points to reducing violence, playing out over millennia, driven by changes in human behaviour and organisation, and even in brain chemistry. Hunter-gatherer societies were incredibly violent, with one estimate suggesting that the war death rate may have been 0.5% of the population per year. A staggering 100 million people were killed in wars during the 20th century. But had the war death rates common in hunter gatherer societies still prevailed, that would have been a mind boggling 2 billion.

Others contest the extent to which violence is really declining, but there is wide recognition that the period after 1945, characterised as "the long peace", and then the so called "new peace" after 1990 saw fewer international and civil wars. Those that

remained were less deadly: the average war in the 1950s killed 10,000 people a year in battle. At the beginning of the new millennium that was down to 1,000. As conflicts ended in East Asia and Africa, development has accelerated. And it is striking that those countries where progress has been slowest are the ones still affected by conflict and fragility.

The fourth factor, and I recognise I am getting into even more contentious territory here, is that the quality of national governance has improved in most countries over the last 50 and especially the last 25 years. When I was first working on Africa, the average head of government was a self-proclaimed President for life, often from a military background, generally a signed up member of the kleptocracy and with no experience, and less desire to acquire it, of the ballot box.

Democracy remains pretty flawed in a lot of countries. It has certainly progressed less than many people hoped after the end of the cold war. But a larger number of governments across the developing world both want to be, and to appear to be, more responsive to their citizens. That is partly because the ballot box does prevail in more places. So governing elites want a story to tell about what they have achieved in office, even if only to improve their chances of retaining it.

It's partly because rulers face a lot more scrutiny than previously: by the media, citizens in their own countries, neighbours and the wider international community. Governments feel a need to respond to that – or at least they generally feel constrained from doing some of the atrocious things they might otherwise do if they didn't think everyone was watching. This does not mean that evil or mad regimes have completely disappeared, but there are fewer of them and they ruin fewer lives than in the past.

And it's partly because in many – though far from all – developing countries governments have strengthened the threadbare capabilities many newly independent countries had at their disposal 50 years ago. For all the continuing problems of corruption and waste, many governments raise more revenue than they used to, and as a result can deliver more and better services to their citizens.

The fifth and final factor has been that, for the first time in history, the nations and leaders of the world have decided they wanted to see more progress on global development, signed themselves up to some

goals and pledged to work together to achieve them. For most of history, rulers and governments simply did not think that was their business.

Elements of a collaborative global approach were set out in the UN Charter and Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War. But this became much more concrete with the agreement of the International Development Targets in the OECD in the mid-1990s. And then with the Millennium Development Goals – including to halve poverty, reduce infant and maternal mortality and provide universal access to basic education - in 2000.

As Charles Kenny has put it, “Spreading the knowledge that governments could provide such services and that governments said they would provide such services may have helped foster the demand that governments should provide those services”. The really surprising thing, possibly, is that many governments actually then did provide the services. And poorer countries were supported by richer ones, who have opened their markets, facilitated investment and provided aid, currently at a record level of \$130 billion a year.

So much for the second most interesting question. Science and technology, better economic management, a reduction in conflict, more responsive government and the adoption of global development goals have together all combined to make the world a significantly better place for most of the people in it. And now the really fascinating question. What will happen next?

No-one, knows, of course, and predictions are hazardous (as the then head of IBM, who in 1958 is alleged to have said there would never be a market for more than around 5 computers, can attest). But here are a few thoughts.

The acquisition of new science and technology for development seems likely to snowball. The number of PhD holders in scientific subjects is growing exponentially. New patent applications have grown from 1 million a year in 1985 to 1.5 million in 2010 and 2.5 million in the last year. Moore’s law, promulgated in 1975, which said that computing power would double every two years or so, still seems to be holding. Advances in medical technology, genetic engineering, biotechnology, materials science, big data and robotics hold unimaginable potential.

Ray Kurzweil, one of the leading experts on technology development and artificial intelligence has

said that within the next 20-25 years we are going “to overcome almost all disease and aging”. Which might sound a big claim, but then he was the person who in 1990 foresaw the ubiquity of the internet and the rise of mobile devices. Bill and Melinda Gates, in their annual letter this year on the work of their Foundation, predict that the lives of people in poor countries will improve faster in the next 15 years than at any other time in history, and more than anyone else’s. They expect more diseases to be eradicated, Africa to feed itself, better software to revolutionise learning and mobile banking to transform the lives of the poor.

One of the reasons I think these predictions are to be taken seriously is that they are based on technology and capabilities we largely already have. Knowledge, once acquired, is forever, especially in a globalised world. It is hard to lose or destroy. And because of the communications revolution, it is hard to restrict the benefits to the few rather than the many.

There seem to me to be three big sources of risk to be navigated for these predictions to be fulfilled. First, the global process of economic development will need to get more efficient in resource use. As the world’s population grows from 7 billion to 9 billion or more, raw materials, energy and water will all need to be used much less wastefully. We have already started to see that happen, with economic growth becoming more energy efficient in the biggest economies over recent years. Economic incentives, especially the price mechanism, will solve a lot of these problems, as is happening now with progressive improvements in solar technology.

Second, governing systems in many countries will need to become more accountable and responsive to sustain the consent of the governed, whose expectations for better lives and greater opportunity will continuously grow. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed more than two hundred years ago, the most dangerous moments for the ruling or privileged classes in any society have tended to be when the wider population starts to enjoy a better life. The starving or chronically ill have limited capacity to organise effectively for a better deal.

In today’s world, where everyone can see on their smart phone what life is like elsewhere, it should be no surprise if people become more demanding. Crucially, everyone everywhere wants a fair chance to improve their own lives and those of their children. We see that in, for example, the enormous risks

Africans are willing to take to flee conflict or despair at home and put their lives in the hands of people smugglers and other criminal groups offering a route out to a better life in Europe. Governments will fail at their peril to accommodate the demand for jobs, social justice, fair treatment for minorities and a better deal for girls and women.

And third, there are risks around the effectiveness of global governance. Many of the problems ahead, including climate change, terrorism, organised international crime, and managing international financial stability are collective action problems, requiring collaborative solutions. For example, one risk to financial stability is the behaviour of the controllers of vast holdings of liquid capital – the so called dark pools in hedge funds and the like - held largely beyond regulatory reach. We saw in 2008 what can happen when financial regulation fails. Or to take another example, the risk of rogue states or extremist groups acquiring and being willing to use weapons of mass destruction remains real. And the fact that this has been held in check for the last 50 years is not a guarantee that it always will be in future.

Clearly, there are plenty of challenges ahead. The forward momentum, though, is also very substantial. Thomas Macaulay, the 19th century English historian, observing a tendency to pessimism among his peers, asked “On what principle is it, that when we see nothing but improvement behind us, we are to expect nothing but deterioration before us?” It’s still a good point.

I was 50 a couple of years ago and was prompted to think about which 50 year period was the best to be alive in. The last one, was my instant conclusion. Before changing my mind: I actually think it’s the next one. Most of which I am hoping to see, even if by the back end of it I’ll be more a spectator than a participant. It should be quite a ride.

Further reading

I am grateful to Oliver De’Ath, my colleague in DFID, who has helped with the graphs. They remain my responsibility, but Ollie can provide information on data sources we consulted. (o-death@dfid.gov.uk).

I recommend:

Charles Kenny, *Getting Better*, Basic Books, 2011

Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, Viking, 2011

Matt Ridley, *The Rational Optimist*, Fourth Estate, 2010

Paul Sabin, *The Bet*, Yale University Press, 2013

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford Paperbacks, 2001

and a daily dose of the Financial Times.