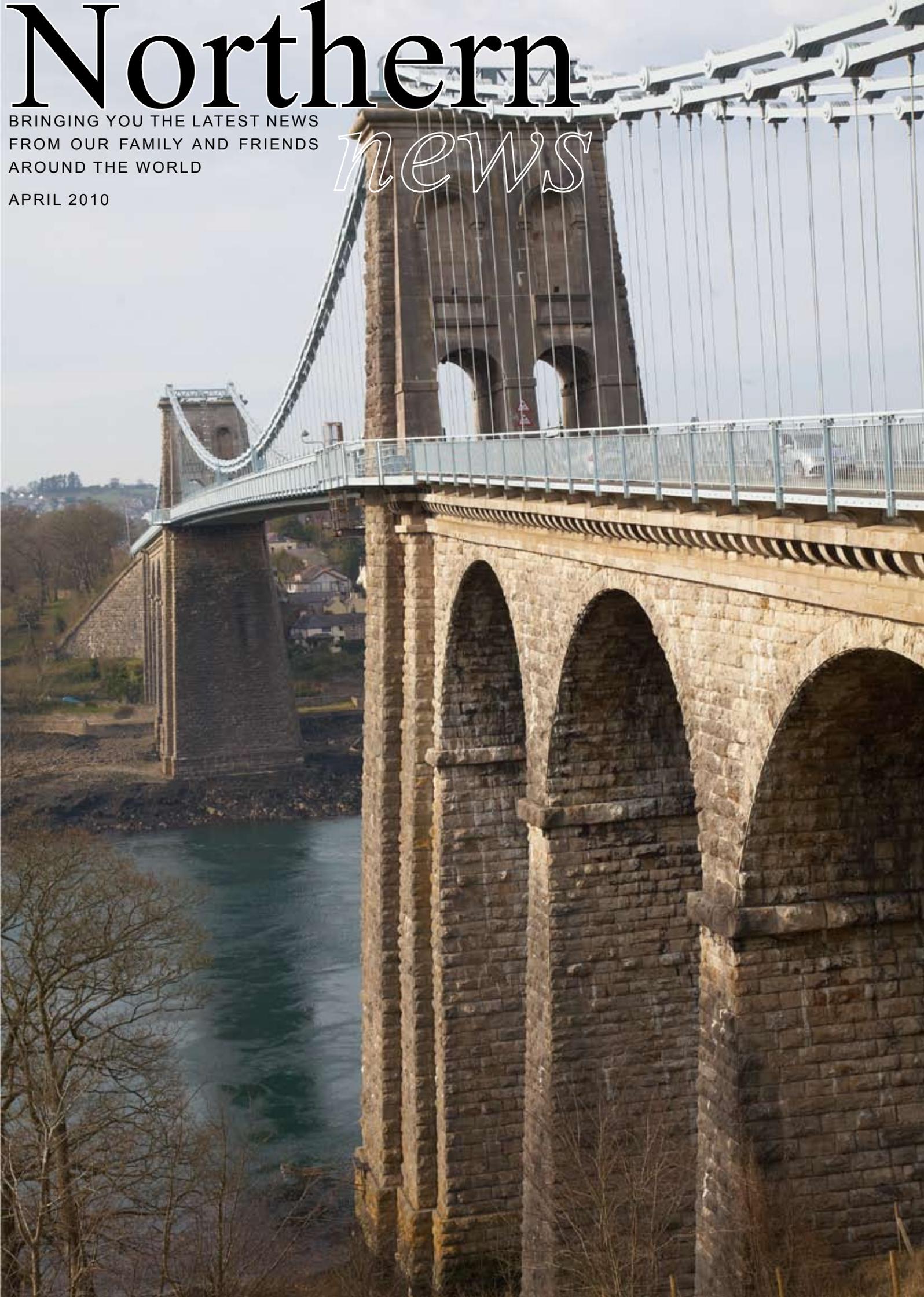


Northern

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS
FROM OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
AROUND THE WORLD

news

APRIL 2010



Editorial Ramblings

We have been very saddened this month by the passing away of my Auntie Hilda. You may remember that we went to see her and the rest of our long-lost family in July last year. The photograph on the next page was taken during our visit. Hilda was always cheerful and was one of my favourites when I was a boy. Grace and I feel so pleased that we were able to see her before she passed away - at the ripe old age of 94. Our love and condolences are, of course, extended to all the family, especially Colin, John and Diane, Hilda's children.

We had a totally unplanned trip to Snowdonia and Anglesey this month. This was something of a trip down memory lane for me as I hadn't been to the area since 1970 - 40 years ago! Isn't that scary? In 1970, My friend and I cycled from Chester, around Snowdonia and North

Wales and back to Chester. One of our adventures was to stay in the Snowdon Ranger Youth Hostel before departing the next morning to climb Mt. Snowdon with our heavily laden bicycles. Road racing bicycles in those days before mountain bikes had been invented. Somehow, we reached the summit and then I rode all the way down the other side to the town of Llanberis. I fell off only once - into a bog when the front wheel dug into the mud and over I went. It took two people to extract me from the mire as my bike and all my things had landed on top of me. My friend nearly died from laughing! Anyway, I continued my ride downwards and arrived safely in Llanberis where we stayed at the hostel overnight. The irony is that we never actually managed to see a view of Mt. Snowdon from a distance as the cloud was too low and, as usual, it was raining. Even in those far away days, I was passionate about photography and even had a tripod strapped to the front forks of my racing bike. For those cyclists amongst us, my bicycle was a Carlton Constellation which had a few modications - 10 gears and the bottom of the handlebars (extended 4.5 inches forward) was 13 inches **below** the top of the saddle! Built for speed! - as I was in those days; I'm 50% heavier now! Terrible! Of course, Grace is to blame as she feeds

me too well! Last month, I mentioned that Adobe CS5 was due out soon. Sure enough, it has been officially announced this month and is to go on sale on 7 May. I can't wait to get my hands on it as there are some super new features. Of course, Adobe products are always vastly expensive, but they are really good. It would be difficult to find a close competitor and there just isn't one that does everything that the Adobe products do, so we're stuck with the high prices - particularly high in the UK compared to the rest of the world because of all the taxes we have to pay to support the millions claiming state welfare benefits.

Alan



Photograph above:
Cover photograph:

The Snowdon Ranger Youth Hostel where I stayed 40 years ago.

Designed by Thomas Telford and completed in 1826, the beautiful Menai suspension bridge from the place where I took a practically identical photograph 40 years ago.



The photograph on the left is of the 'Head' family. Hilda is sitting on the sofa to the right of the lady with the baby (as we look at the photograph). Hilda's husband, Jack is standing immediately behind the lady with the baby.

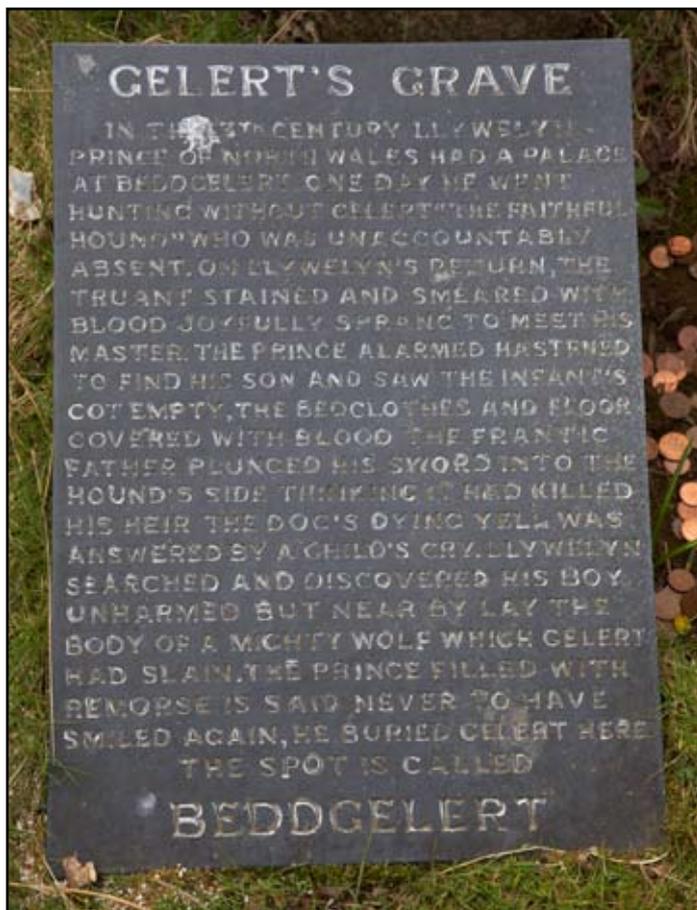




North Wales for the weekend(s)

After the Easter weekend, I returned to work on the Wednesday, found that it wasn't

exactly what I wanted to do and decided to take the next day off too. We went to the nearby Baggeridge Country Park with one of Grace's friends and her little boy. The weather was so good - unusually warm and sunny, that I decided that, as the forecast was good for the rest of the week, I'd enjoy some more of the sun whilst it still shone. I booked a hotel just outside Bangor and on Friday morning, off we went. Our first view of the Snowdonian mountains was the snow on the mountain peaks, as shown in the panorama across the top of this page and the next. There was a cold wind but no rain! In the evening, we enjoyed dinner in *Ristorante Pulcinella* by the Pier Promenade in Bangor - an eating place we can certainly recommend - an Italian restaurant run by a family of Italians - great food at sensible prices.



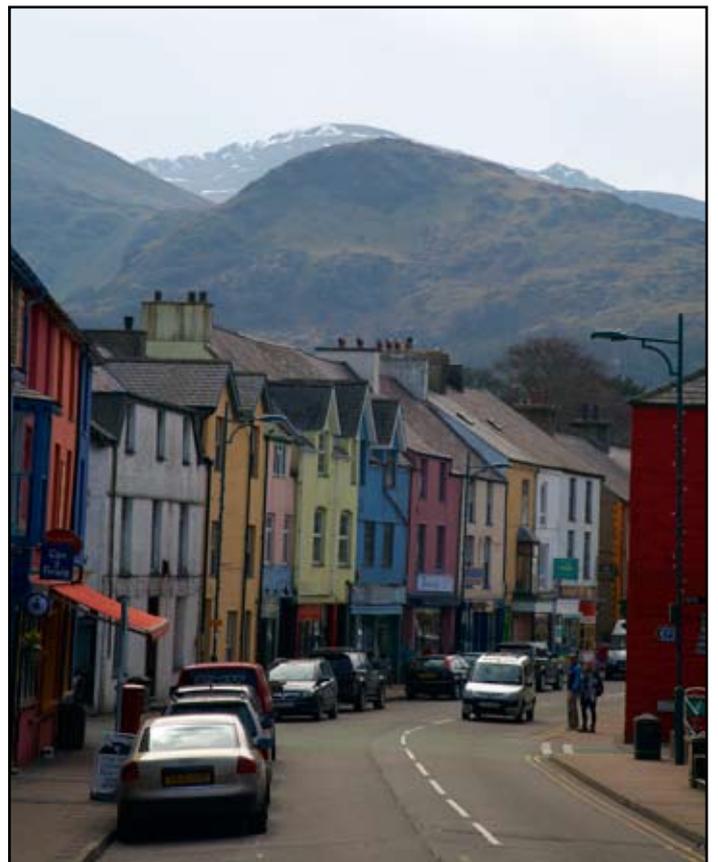
Gelert's Grave

In the 13th Century, Llywelyn, Prince of North Wales, had a palace at Beddgelert. One day he went hunting without Gelert, the faithful hound who was unaccountably absent. On Llywelyn's return, the truant, stained and smeared with blood joyfully sprang to meet his master. The Prince, alarmed, hastened to find his son and saw the infant's cot empty, the bedclothes and floor covered with blood. The frantic father plunged his sword into the hound's side thinking it had killed his heir. The dog's dying yell was answered by a child's cry. Llywelyn searched and discovered his boy unharmed, but nearby lay the body of a mighty wolf which Gelert had slain. The Prince, filled with remorse, is said never to have smiled again. He buried Gelert here. The spot is called Beddgelert.



Photograph, right: High above Llanberis, the snow-capped summit of Snowdon (1,085 metres / 3,560 feet) looks down on the town into which I rode my bicycle (in 1970) after first climbing, then riding all the way down this famous mountain, the highest mountain in Wales. When I was there, a plaque was mounted on the wall of the summit cafe read: “*Grwydryn, aros ennyd; ystyra ryfeddol waith Duw a’th daith fer ar y ddaear hon.*” (“*Wanderer, wait a moment; consider God’s wondrous work and your short journey on this earth.*”). Sadly, this has been replaced (as has the building) by words that are much more mundane.

We returned home on Sunday, late afternoon having had a great time. I was delighted to be able to show these places to Grace and Little Lad. In fact, we’d had such a good time that I only returned to work for two days before taking off for another long weekend, also in Wales. This time we stayed in Porthmadog and travelled the full length of the Llyn Peninsula and back before heading south to Barmouth where we spent much of the day on the beach near Dyffryn Ardudwy. Sad to say, but we didn’t find any good restaurants that we can recommend during this trip - the one we did go to, the Golden Fleece in The Square in Tremadog was not a place we will be returning to or recommending to anyone - despite it being mentioned (we understand) as a good place to eat in the *Lonely Planet* guide.





Photograph, top and overleaf: This panorama shows more than 200° with Mt. Snowdon on the far-right. It was taken from the rock on which Little Lad is standing (*Photograph below*), high above the valley floor. It was quite a climb for such a young chap (and an old one too!), so he was delighted to have made it to the top.





Photograph, below: The Daffodil is the flower often associated with Wales.





The Afon Dwyryd flows through the Vale of Ffestiniog near Maentwrog. The mountain in the distance, to the right of the photograph, is Moelwyn Bach (710 m).



One of the great delights of our way of travelling and enjoying the countryside is that of being largely independent of restaurants in wild places. After being so disappointed by the meal we experienced in the *Golden Fleece* the evening before, Grace got cracking with our gas burner and before long we were enjoying Salmon, with stir-fired fresh vegetables accompanied by rice (of course). This meal was prepared and eaten in a remote place very near the end of the Lleyn Peninsula. The photograph also shows the advantage of having an estate car - which holds everything we need and provides a flat floor for the cooking equipment.



The photograph above shows one of the many beaches along the Lleyn Peninsula.

While we were away, we joined the National Trust and paid a visit to Plas Yn Rhiw, the 16th Century house donated to the Trust by the three Keating sisters, in memory of their parents.

(Photographs below and right). The old house and the beautiful gardens were well worth a visit and depicted an era long since behind us. Also, the stunning views from the house, across Cardigan Bay are well worth the trip.



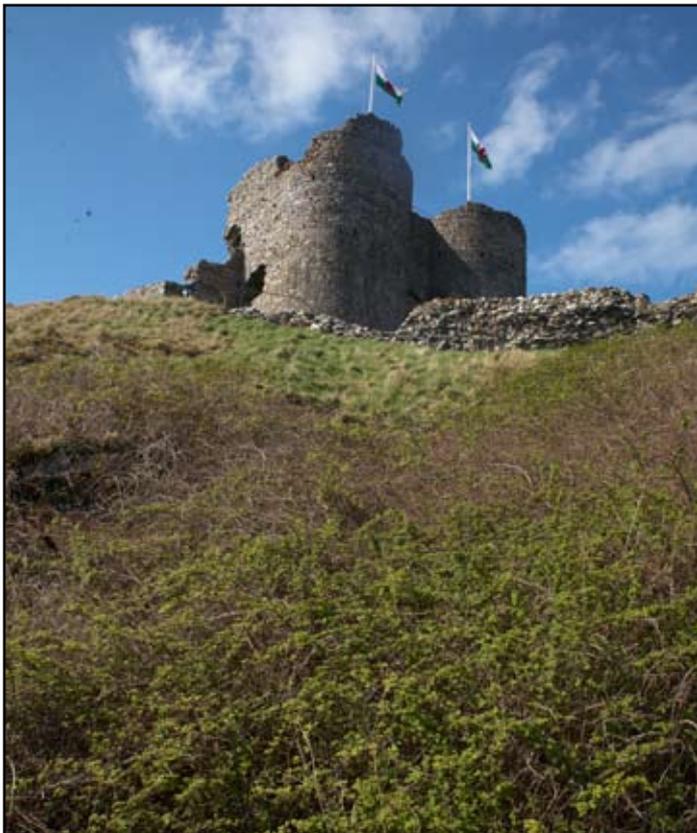


The town and bay of Criccieth on the Lleyn Peninsula - view from the castle.



Criccieth Castle was built for Llywelyn the Great in 1230 - 1260. It is a long triangular enclosure separated into three courtyards by an inner ward. Due to the ruined state of the building and a lack of historical records detailing the construction work carried out at the castle, there is much debate about who built what parts and when. The massive twin towered gatehouse, although unique among Llywelyn's castles, is made up of two typically Welsh D-shaped towers, and is contemporary with similar gatehouses built at Montgomery and Beeston. An outer ward, protected by a new wall and three rectangular towers, was probably added by Llywelyn ap Gruffud (Llywelyn the Last), sometime between 1255-82. In 1283 the castle was captured by Edward I. During his reign and that of his son, money was spent improving the castle. It is this work that is most difficult to identify, but it seems likely that the walls, towers and gatehouse were heightened. In 1294 Madog ap Llywelyn led a Welsh revolt against the English. Crickieth Castle was besieged, but its coastal location meant it could receive supplies by sea and it was able to survive the siege. It was not so successful in 1403-4 when it was besieged during another Welsh uprising led by Owain Glyndwr. This time a French fleet prevented provisions and reinforcements arriving by sea and the garrison were forced to surrender. The castle was destroyed and the ruins were never rebuilt.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.castexplorer.co.uk/wales/criccieth/criccieth.php>



Back Home in Wolverhampton!

These photographs of the Sikh festival, Vaisakhi, (their New Year) were taken outside our home in Wolverhampton. England, my homeland!



Thank God for Lord Carey

by **Melanie Phillips**
Daily Mail, 12 April 2010

The Church and the judiciary are two of the most venerable pillars of the establishment.

But in an explosive development, war has been declared between them over one of the most fundamental aspects of our society — freedom of religious conscience.

In an unprecedented move, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, and other church leaders are calling upon the Master of the Rolls and other senior judges to stand down from future Court of Appeal hearings involving cases of religious discrimination because of the judges' perceived bias against Christianity.

The churchmen believe that because of these judges' past rulings, there is no chance of a 'fair' judgment if they hear the latest such case, which has been scheduled for Thursday

This involves Gary McFarlane, formerly a Christian relationship counsellor for Relate. He is appealing against an employment tribunal ruling that upheld his sacking for refusing to give sex therapy to homosexual couples.

According to newspaper reports, Lord Carey has prepared a witness statement in support of Mr McFarlane in which he will apparently accuse the Court of Appeal of making a series of 'disturbing' judgments and being responsible for some 'dangerous' reasoning which could lead to Christians being banned from the workplace.

In the light of recent events, such fears are scarcely exaggerated. For Christianity is under relentless attack from secular British institutions, as a result of which the freedom of Christians to practise their religion is being lost.

A steady stream of Christians have found themselves out of a job on account of their religious beliefs. When nurse Shirley Chaplin refused to remove her cross, for example, she was prevented by the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust from working with patients.

And when Duke Amachree, a Christian homelessness officer with Wandsworth council, advised a client to put her faith in God, he was promptly suspended, marched off the premises and then sacked.

In a string of other cases, Christians have been prevented from serving on adoption panels or as marriage registrars because their religious beliefs mean they cannot sanction civil partnerships or gay adoption.

Such employment difficulties reflect a wider institutional

animus against Christianity. Teachers bend over backwards to promote other religions at its expense. The BBC and the artistic world miss no opportunity to trash it or hold it up to ridicule, while the political class and intelligentsia take an axe to its moral precepts on issues such as euthanasia, sex outside marriage and abortion.

Among some churchmen, there has been rumbling alarm about this for some time. Only last month, Lord Carey and a group of bishops wrote to the Press to denounce such 'discrimination' against churchgoers as 'unacceptable in a civilised society'.

But this new initiative elevates such protest to a very different level.

To prevent discrimination against Christians being set in stone, Lord Carey wants religious discrimination cases to be heard by a special panel of judges with some knowledge of religious matters.

As an insult to some of the biggest wigs in the land, this could hardly be exaggerated. By throwing down the gauntlet to the judiciary in this way, Lord Carey is mounting a full-frontal challenge to some of those who most influence our society.

The last of several final straws for these clerics was the case of Lilian Ladele, a registrar who was sacked by Islington council after she refused to conduct civil partnership ceremonies because they were against her Christian beliefs.

Led by the Master of the Rolls, Lord Neuberger — the second most important judge in England — the Appeal Court ruled that it was unlawful for her to refuse to do so.

It might be argued that these judges were merely ruling on the basis of anti-discrimination law and that they were right to do so.

But in fact, these judges had discretion to rule in Ms Ladele's favour because the law upholds not one principle relevant to this case, but two — and they compete with each other. For enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights is the right to exercise religious conscience.

Why, then, did the judges in this case set aside the Human Rights Convention, which they normally revere as holy Writ? Because, said Lord Neuberger, it only protected those religious beliefs which were 'worthy of respect in a democratic society and are not incompatible with human dignity'.

So what the Master of the Rolls effectively seemed to be saying was that Christian beliefs are unworthy of respect in a democracy, and incompatible with human dignity — a truly preposterous claim, since Judeo-Christian precepts

invented the concept of human dignity

Indeed, such a ruling comes very close indeed to criminalising Christianity. For if putting Christian belief into practice is outlawed, it won't be long before Christian believers find themselves outlawed.

No wonder Lord Carey and his colleagues have been galvanised into militant action. For under the guise of promoting 'tolerance' and 'liberal' social attitudes, anti-discrimination law is deeply intolerant and illiberal.

That's because it has nothing to do with fairness and everything to do with ideology. It is innately on the side of minorities on the basis that they are by definition vulnerable to the majority. So in the hands of the judiciary, it has turned into a fearsome weapon against Britain's mainstream attitudes and faith.

The result is that Christianity is now in danger of being turned into a despised and marginalised creed practised only by consenting adults in private.

Christians are already being forced into renouncing their religious beliefs if they want to remain in certain jobs. This is simply intolerable in a liberal society where freedom of religious conscience is a bedrock value.

Yet while Christians find themselves under the legal cosh, a double standard is employed towards certain minority faiths. Thus a Christian nurse is told she can't work with patients unless she removes her cross while Muslim NHS staff have been exempted from hygiene rules stipulating that their forearms must remain uncovered.

The relentless message from the top of our society is that Christianity — the foundation-stone of Western liberty, tolerance and democracy — is intolerant, bigoted and objectionable in contrast to other faiths. Their own precepts may be truly inimical to liberty or reason, but to these we must not turn a politically correct hair.

What Lord Carey has rightly grasped is that if the judiciary is not challenged and this process is not stopped, within a short space of time our society will have slid off the edge of a cultural cliff.

But he is having to fight more than the judiciary. For on this great issue — the defence of his religion and the values of this society — his successor, Dr Rowan Williams, is conspicuously silent.

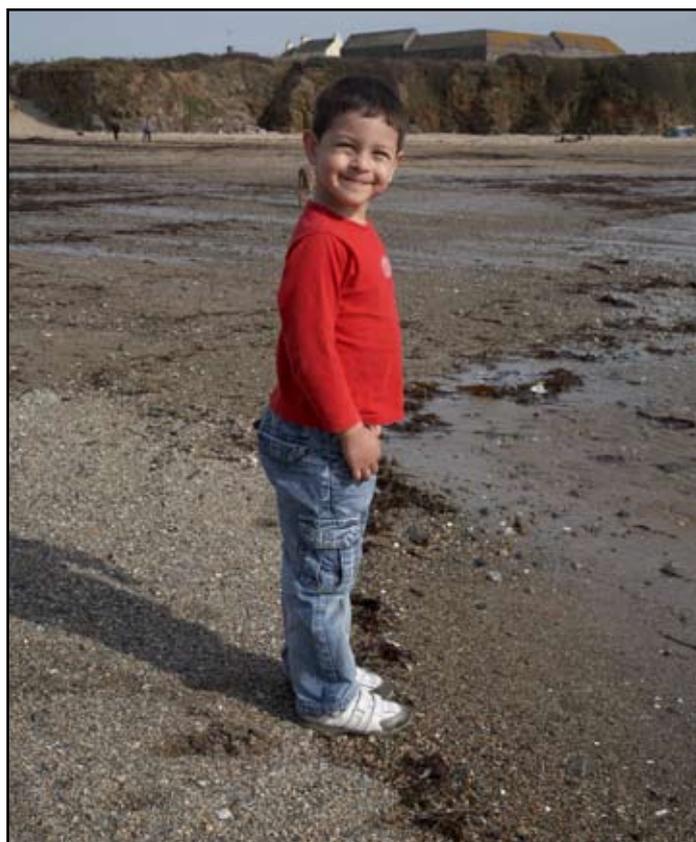
Indeed, more than that he is positively embracing his faith's destruction. For along with Lord Phillips, the former senior Law Lord, Dr Williams has welcomed the advance in Britain of Islamic sharia law — which really is inimical to democracy and equality.

The highest echelons of both the Church and the judiciary

seem incapable of grasping why Christianity is crucial to this country and has to be upheld and defended against attempts to undermine and destroy it, from wherever such attacks may come.

To which all one can say is thank God for Lord Carey — and doubtless He is saying so, too.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=730>



Why WE have to Work! and pay so much tax!

Why work when I can get £42,000 in benefits a year AND drive a Mercedes?

By Paul Sims
Daily Mail - 13th April 2010

The Davey family's £815-a-week state handouts pay for a four-bedroom home, top-of-the-range mod cons and two vehicles including a Mercedes people carrier.

Father-of-seven Peter gave up work because he could make more living on benefits.

Yet he and his wife Claire are still not happy with their lot. With an eighth child on the way, they are demanding a bigger house, courtesy of the taxpayer

'It's really hard,' said Mrs Davey, 29, who is seven months pregnant. 'We can't afford holidays and I don't want my kids living on a council estate and struggling like I have.

'The price of living is going up but benefits are going down. My carer's allowance is only going up by 80p this year and petrol is so expensive now, I'm worried how we'll cope.

'We're still waiting for somewhere bigger.'

Mrs Davey has never had a full-time job while her 35-year-old husband gave up his post in administration nine years ago after realising they would be better off living off the state.

At their semi on the Isle of Anglesey, the family have a 42in flatscreen television in the living room with Sky TV at £50 a month, a Wii games console, three Nintendo DS machines and a computer - not to mention four mobile phones.

With their income of more than £42,000 a year, they run an 11-seater minibus and the seven-seat automatic Mercedes. But according to the Daveys they have nothing to be thankful for.

'It doesn't bother me that taxpayers are paying for me to have a large family,' added Mrs Davey.

'We couldn't afford to care for our children without benefits, but as long as they have everything they need, I don't think I'm selfish.

'Most of the parents at our kids' school are on benefits.'

She added: 'I don't feel bad about being subsidised by people who are working. I'm just working with the system that's there.

'If the government wants to give me money, I'm happy to take it. We get what we're entitled to. I don't put in anything because I don't pay taxes, but if I could work I would.'

The couple met in a pub 13 years ago. A year later, at the age of 17, Mrs Davey gave birth to Jessica, now 12.

The full feature appears in this week's Closer magazine, on sale now.

She was followed by Jade, ten, Jamie-Anne, eight, Harriet, six, Adele, four, the couple's only son Tie, three, and



Mercedes, two.

'It cost too much to carry on working as we were actually better off unemployed,' said Mr Davey.

In addition to income support, housing benefit, child tax credits and a council tax discount, the couple receive carer's allowance and disability living allowance for Tie, who suffers from a severe skin disorder.

Despite filing for bankruptcy 18 months ago after racking up £20,000 of debt on mail order catalogues they still insist on splashing out on four presents per child at birthdays and last Christmas spent £2,000 on gifts alone.

'Santa is always generous in our house,' said Mrs Davey, who once applied to join the police but was turned down.

She insists her husband would do any job 'as long as we could still afford the lifestyle we have now'.

Mrs Davey, who spends £160 a week at Tesco, says she does not intend to stop at eight children. Her target is 14.

And she adds: 'I've always wanted a big family - no one can tell me how many kids I can have whether I'm working or not.'

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1265508/Peter-Davey-gets-42-000-benefits-year-drives-Mercedes.html#ixzz013HN5trV>

Thanks to Tony for sending me this link.

Climate Change Act has the biggest ever bill

Ed Miliband's legislation will cost us hundreds of billions over the next 40 years,

By Christopher Booker - Daily Telegraph - 03 April 2010

One of the best-kept secrets of British politics – although it is there for all to see on a Government website – is the cost of what is by far the most expensive piece of legislation ever put through Parliament. Every year between now and 2050, according to Ed Miliband's Department for Energy and Climate Change (Decc), the Climate Change Act is to cost us all up to £18.3 billion – £760 for every household in the country – as we reduce our carbon emissions by 80 per cent.



Last Thursday – with northern Britain again under piles of global warming – another tranche of regulations came into force, as this measure begins to take effect. New road tax rules mean that to put a larger, more CO₂-emitting car on the road will now cost £950. New “feed-in” subsidies for small-scale “renewables” mean that the installers of solar panels will be paid up to eight times the going rate for their miserable amount of electricity to be fed into the grid, with the overall bill for this scheme estimated eventually to be billions a year.

Not the least bizarre of the Government's strategies, however, is Decc's new Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) scheme, requiring up to 30,000 of our largest energy users, such as ministries, councils, universities, hospitals, supermarket chains (and even “monasteries and nunneries”), to pay to register with the Environment Agency. Some 5,000 of them, using more than “6,000 megawatt hours” of electricity each year (equivalent to the needs of 1,250 homes), will then have to carry out a cumbersome audit of their carbon footprint, using “three different metrics”, in order to pay £12 for each ton of CO₂ they emit – at a total initial cost estimated at £1.4 billion a year. This will eventually be contributed by all of us, either through taxes or, for instance, whenever we visit Tesco.

Even the 25,000 remaining non-participants in the scheme will still have to pay, between them, some £9.75 million to register with the Environment Agency, doubtless so they can be brought into the net at a later date. Meanwhile, as indicated by Decc's 100-page Carbon User's Guide, the “carbon efficiency” performance of the 5,000 participants will place them in an annual league table, with the worst performers having to pay cash penalties, to be given as bonuses to those at the top.

In return for the millions paid to the agency in registration and annual “subsistence” fees, it is hiring an army of officials to carry out audits, to ensure that no one is cheating. Anyone who incorrectly records emissions or fails to submit the stacks of necessary documentation in time will be fined £5,000 plus £500 a day, doubled after 40 days, with unlimited fines or up to two years in jail for more serious offences.

Recent studies show that, even though the first stage of this unbelievably complex scheme came into force on April Fools' Day, more than half the enterprises liable to sign up are not yet aware of what is required of them – so the Government could be looking forward to a huge additional income from those fines.

Once the scheme is established, of course, the idea is that, in future, the total amount of CO₂ emitted will be capped, pushing the cost of each ton of CO₂ even higher. All this and much more, such as the £100 billion the Government wants to see spent on useless wind farms, is designed to reduce Britain's CO₂ emissions within 40 years to where they were in the early 19th century.

Since we contribute less than 2 per cent of global emissions, while China continues to build a new coal-fired power station every week, these empty getures will do nothing to reduce the world's overall “carbon footprint”. Not that this makes any difference to global warming anyway – but at least it will give the Government billions more pounds of our money, while we still have any of it left.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/7550164/Climate-Change-Act-has-the-biggest-ever-bill.html>

Oxburgh's Trick to Hide the Trick

The Oxburgh report ” is a flimsy and embarrassing 5-pages.

They did not interview me (nor, to my knowledge, any other CRU critics or targets). The committee was announced on March 22 and their “report” is dated April 12 – three weeks end to end – less time than even the Parliamentary Committee. They took no evidence. Their list of references is 11 CRU papers, five on tree rings, six on CRUTEM. Notably missing from the “sample” are their 1000-year reconstructions: Jones et al 1998, Mann and Jones 2003, Jones and Mann 2004, etc.)

They did not discuss specifically discuss or report on any of the incidents of arbitrary adjustment (“bodging”), cherry picking and deletion of adverse data, mentioned in my submissions to the Science and Technology Committee and the Muir Russell Committee. I’ll report on these issues later in the day as they’ll take a little time to review. First, let’s observe Oxburgh’s trick to hide the “trick”.

Long before Climategate, Climate Audit readers knew that you had to watch the pea under the thimble whenever you’re dealing with the Team. This is true with Oxburgh of Globe International as well.

Oxburgh of Globe International alludes to the “trick..to hide the decline” in veiled terms as follows:

CRU publications repeatedly emphasize the discrepancy between instrumental and tree-based proxy reconstructions of temperature during the late 20th century, but presentations of this work by the IPCC and others have sometimes neglected to highlight this issue. While we find this regrettable, we could find no such fault with the peer-reviewed papers we examined.

Without specifically mentioning the famous “trick ...to hide the decline”, Oxburgh subsumes the “trick” as “regrettable” “neglect” by “IPCC and others”.

But watch the pea under Oxburgh’s thimble.

The Oxburgh Report regrettably neglected to highlight the fact that CRU scientists Briffa and Jones, together with Michael Mann, were the IPCC authors responsible for this “regrettable neglect” in the Third Assessment Report. They also regrettably neglected to report that CRU scientist Briffa was the IPCC author responsible for the corresponding section in AR4.

Oxburgh pretends that the fault lay with “IPCC and others”, but this pretence is itself a trick. CRU was up to its elbows in the relevant IPCC presentations that “regrettably” “neglected” to show the divergent data in their graphics.

It is also untrue that CRU authors, in their capacity as IPCC authors, “regrettably” “neglected” to show the divergent data in the IPCC graphics. The Climategate emails show

that they did so intentionally – see for example IPCC and the Trick, which show awareness on the part of CRU scientists that showing the decline would “dilute the message” that IPCC wanted to send. The eventual IPCC figure, as reported here on a number of cases, gave a false rhetorical message of the veracity of the proxy reconstructions.

CA readers are also well aware that IPCC and Briffa were categorically asked by one AR4 reviewer (me) to disclose the divergent data. CRU’s Briffa refused, saying only that it would be “inappropriate” to show the data in the graphic. They didn’t “neglect” to show the divergent data from the Briffa reconstruction. This was a considered decision, carried out in AR4 despite pointed criticism.

Yes, the decline had been disclosed in the “peer reviewed literature”. Indeed, that was how I became aware of the trick – long before Climategate and why, as an AR4 peer reviewer, I asked that IPCC not use the trick once again in AR4.

IPCC presentations are how the climate science community speaks to the world. Climate scientists, including CRU scientists, have a far greater obligation of full, true and plain disclosure in IPCC reports than even the specialist literature. Oxburgh pretends that (partial) disclosure of adverse results by CRU in specialist literature is sufficient. It isn’t. There was a continuing obligation to disclose adverse results in IPCC graphics.

CRU scientists acted as IPCC authors. The complaint about the trick arose out of how CRU scientists carried out their duties as IPCC authors.

In this respect, the Oxburgh report is a feeble sleight-of-hand that in effect tries to make the public think that the “trick” was no more than “regrettable” “neglect” by the “IPCC and others” – nothing to do with CRU. In other words, Oxburgh is using a trick to hide the “trick”.

Trick me once, shame on you.

Update. The Daily Telegraph reports:

Professor Hand did say that “inappropriate methods” were used by a separate university to draw up the infamous “hockey stick” graph showing the rise in global temperatures over more than 1,000 years.

Uh, memo to Oxburgh. CRU produced its own hockey stick graphs in Jones et al 1998, Mann and Jones 2003, for example. For some reason, Oxburgh and his associates regrettably neglected to consider these articles.

Courtesy of URL: <http://climateaudit.org/2010/04/14/oxburghs-trick-to-hide-the-trick/>

IPCC and the “Trick”

by Steve McIntyre

Much recent attention has been paid to the email about the “trick” and the effort to “hide the decline”. Climate scientists have complained that this email has been taken “out of context”. In this case, I’m not sure that it’s in their interests that this email be placed in context because the context leads right back to a meeting of IPCC authors in Tanzania, raising serious questions about the role of IPCC itself in “hiding the decline” in the Briffa reconstruction.

Relevant Climategate correspondence in the period (September-October 1999) leading up to the trick email is incomplete, but, in context, is highly revealing. There was a meeting of IPCC lead authors between Sept 1-3, 1999 to consider the “zero-order draft” of the Third Assessment Report. The emails provide clear evidence that IPCC had already decided to include a proxy diagram reconstructing temperature for the past 1000 years and that a version of the proxy diagram was presented at the Tanzania meeting showing the late twentieth century decline. I now have a copy of the proxy diagram presented at this meeting (see below).

The emails show that the late 20th century decline in the Briffa reconstruction was perceived by IPCC as “diluting the message”, that “everyone in the room at IPCC” thought that the Briffa decline was a “problem” and a “potential distraction/detraction”, that this was then the “most important issue” in chapter 2 of the IPCC report and that there was “pressure” on Briffa and other authors to show a “nice tidy story” of “unprecedented warming in a thousand years or more”. [Update Dec 11 - see note at bottom on the chronology. Comments from readers have clarified that the issue at the Arusha meeting was that the Briffa reconstruction “diluted the message” more through its overall inconsistency as opposed to the decline, which was still relatively attenuated in the Arusha version. After the Arusha meeting, Briffa hastily re-calculated his reconstruction sending a new version to Mann on Oct 5, 1999 and it was this hastily re-done version that introduced the very severe decline that was hidden in the First Order Draft and Jones WMO Report]

The chronology in today’s posts show that the version of the Briffa reconstruction shown in the subsequent proxy diagram in the IPCC “First Order Draft” (October 27, 1999), presumably prepared under the direction of IPCC section author Mann, deleted the inconvenient portion (post-1960) of the Briffa reconstruction, together with other modifications that had the effect of not “diluting the message”.

About two weeks later (Nov 16, 1999) came the now infamous Jones email reporting the use of “Mike’s Nature trick” to “hide the decline” in a forthcoming WMO (World Meteorological Organization) report. Jones’ methodology is

different than the IPCC methodology. Jones’ trick has been described in previous posts.

Today, I’ll describe both the context of the IPCC version of the “trick” and progress to date in reverse engineering the IPCC trick.

IPCC Lead Authors’ Meeting, Sept 1999

IPCC Lead Authors met in Arusha, Tanzania from September 1 to 3, 1999 (see Houghton, 929985154.txt and 0938018124.txt), at which the final version of the “zero-order” draft of the Third Assessment Report was presented and discussed. The “First-Order Draft” was sent out to reviewers two months later (end of October 1999).

By this time, IPCC was already structuring the Summary for Policy-makers and a proxy diagram showing temperature history over the past 1000 years was a “clear favourite”.

A proxy diagram of temperature change is a clear favourite for the Policy Makers summary. (Folland, Sep 22, 1999, in 0938031546.txt)

This desire already placed “pressure” on the authors to “present a nice tidy story” about “unprecedented warming in a thousand years”:

I know there is pressure to present a nice tidy story as regards ‘apparent unprecedented warming in a thousand years or more in the proxy data’ ... (Briffa, Sep 22, 1999, 0938031546.txt)

The “zero-order” draft (their Figure 2.3.3a as shown overleaf) showed a version of the Briffa reconstruction with little variation and a noticeable decline in the late 20th century.

(Continued overleaf)

Stephen McIntyre is the editor of Climate Audit, a blog devoted to the analysis and discussion of climate data. He is most prominent as a critic of the temperature record of the past 1000 years and the data quality of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies. McIntyre attended the University of Toronto Schools, a university-preparatory school in Toronto, finishing first in the national high school mathematics competition of 1965. He went on to study mathematics at the University of Toronto and graduated with a bachelor of science degree in 1969. McIntyre then obtained a Commonwealth Scholarship to read philosophy, politics and economics (PPE) at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, graduating in 1971. Although he was offered a graduate scholarship, McIntyre decided not to pursue studies in mathematical economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

McIntyre worked for 30 years in the mineral business, the last part of these in the hard-rock mineral exploration as an officer or director of several public mineral exploration companies. He was a policy analyst for several years for the governments of Ontario and of Canada. He was the president and founder of Northwest Exploration Company Limited and a director of its parent company, Northwest Explorations Inc. When Northwest Explorations Inc. was taken over in 1998 by CGX Resources Inc. to form the oil and gas exploration company CGX Energy Inc., McIntyre ceased being a director. McIntyre was a strategic advisor for CGX in 2000 through 2003. (Courtesy of Wikipedia).

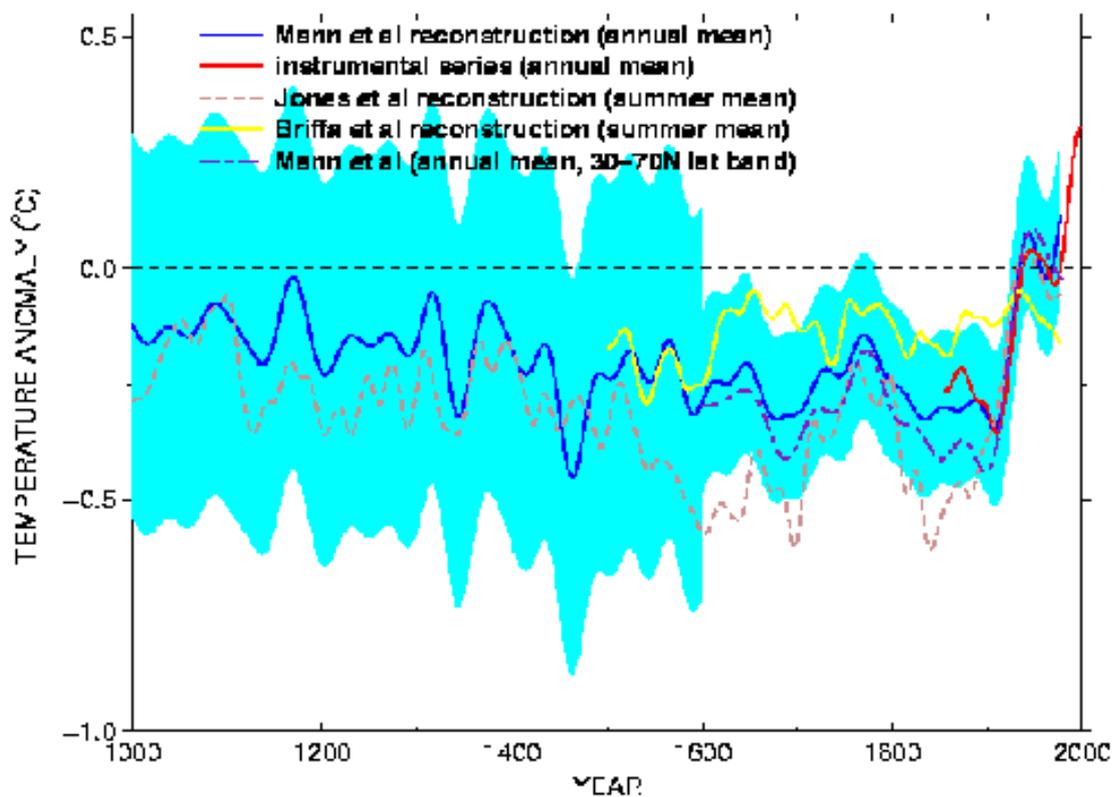


Figure 1. IPCC Third Assessment Report Zero-Order Draft Figure 2.3.3a Comparison of millennial Northern Hemisphere (NH) temperature reconstructions from different investigators (Briffa et al, 1998; Jones et al, 1998; Mann et al, 1998;1999a)... All the series were filtered with a 40 year Gaussian filter. The problematic Briffa reconstruction is the yellow series.

No minutes of this meeting are available, but Climategate correspondence on Sep 22-23, 1999 provides some contemporary information about the meeting. Mann noted that “everyone in the room at IPCC was in agreement that the [decline in the Briffa reconstruction] was a problem”:

Keith’s series... differs in large part in exactly the opposite direction that Phil’s does from ours. This is the problem we all picked up on (everyone in the room at IPCC was in agreement that this was a problem and a potential distraction/detraction from the reasonably consensus viewpoint we’d like to show w/ the Jones et al and Mann et al series. (Mann, Sep 22, 1999, 0938018124.txt)

IPCC Chapter Author Folland of the U.K. Hadley Center wrote to Mann, Jones and Briffa that the proxy diagram was a “clear favourite” for the Summary Policy-makers, but that the existing presentation showing the decline of the Briffa reconstruction “dilutes the message rather significantly”. After telling the section authors about the stone in his shoe, Folland added that he only “wanted the truth”.

A proxy diagram of temperature change is a clear favourite for the Policy Makers summary. But the current diagram with the tree ring only data [i.e. the Briffa reconstruction] somewhat contradicts the multiproxy curve and dilutes the message rather significantly. [We want the truth. Mike thinks it lies nearer his result (which seems in accord with what we know about worldwide mountain glaciers and, less clearly, suspect about solar variations). The tree ring results may still suffer from lack of multicentury time scale variance. This is probably the most important issue to resolve in Chapter 2 at present..(Folland, Sep 22, 1999, in 0938031546.txt)

Climategate Letters, Sep 22-23, 1999

The Climategate Letters contain a flurry of correspondence between Mann, Briffa, Jones and Folland (copy to Tom Karl of NOAA) on Sep 22-23, 1999, shedding light on how the authors responded to the stone in IPCC’s shoe. By this time, it appears that each of the three authors (Jones, Mann and Briffa) had experimented with different approaches to the “problem” of the decline.

Jones appears to have floated the idea of using two different diagrams - one without the inconvenient Briffa reconstruction (presumably in the Summary for Policy-makers) and one with the Briffa reconstruction (presumably in the relevant chapter). Jones said that this might make it “somewhat awkward for the reader trying to put them into context”, with it being unclear whether Jones viewed this as

an advantage or disadvantage:

If we go as is suggested then there would be two diagrams - one simpler one with just Mann et al and Jones et al and in another section Briffa et al. This might make it somewhat awkward for the reader trying to put them into context. (Jones, Sep 22, 1999 Jones 093801949)

Another approach is perhaps evidenced in programming changes a week earlier (Sep 13-14, 1999), in which programs in the osborn-tree6/mann/oldprog directory appear to show efforts to “correct” the calibration of the Briffa reconstruction, which may or may not be relevant to the eventual methodology to “hide the decline”.

The correspondence implies (though this is at present not proven) that IPCC section author Mann’s first reaction to the “problem” was to totally delete the Briffa reconstruction from the proxy diagram, as the correspondence of September 22 seems to have been precipitated by Briffa being unhappy at an (unseen) version of the proxy diagram in which his reconstruction had been deleted.

Briffa’s length email of Sep. 22, 1999 (938031546.txt) should be read in full. Briffa was keenly aware of the pressure to present a “nice tidy story” of “unprecedented warming”, but is worried about the proxy evidence:

I know there is pressure to present a nice tidy story as regards 'apparent unprecedented warming in a thousand years or more in the proxy data' but in reality the situation is not quite so simple... [There are] some unexpected changes in response that do not match the recent warming. I do not think it wise that this issue be ignored in the chapter. (Briffa, Sep 22, 1999, 0938031546.txt)

He continued:

For the record, I do believe that the proxy data do show unusually warm conditions in recent decades. I am not sure that this unusual warming is so clear in the summer responsive data. I believe that the recent warmth was probably matched about 1000 years ago. I do not believe that global mean annual temperatures have simply cooled progressively over thousands of years as Mike appears to and I contend that that there is strong evidence for major changes in climate over the Holocene (not Milankovich) that require explanation and that could represent part of the current or future background variability of our climate. (Briffa, Sep 22, 1999, 0938031546.txt)

Thus, when Mann arrived at work on Sep 22, 1999, Mann observed that he had walked into a “hornet’s nest”. (Mann Sep 22, 1999, 0938018124.txt). In an effort to resolve the dispute, Mann said that (subject to the agreement of Chapter Authors Karl and Folland) he would add back Briffa’s reconstruction, but pointed out that this would present a “conundrum”:

So if Chris[Folland] and Tom [Karl] are ok with this, I would be happy to add Keith’s series. That having been said, it does raise a conundrum: We demonstrate [through

comparing an extratropical averaging of our northern hemisphere patterns with Phil’s more extratropical series) that the major discrepancies between Phil’s and our series can be explained in terms of spatial sampling/latitudinal emphasis (seasonality seems to be secondary here, but probably explains much of the residual differences). But that explanation certainly can’t rectify why Keith’s series, which has similar seasonality *and* latitudinal emphasis to Phil’s series, differs in large part in exactly the opposite direction that Phil’s does from ours.] This is the problem we all picked up on (everyone in the room at IPCC was in agreement that this was a problem and a potential distraction/detraction from the reasonably consensus viewpoint we’d like to show w/ the Jones et al and Mann et al series. (Mann Sep 22, 0938018124.txt)

Mann went on to say that the skeptics would have a “field day” if the declining Briffa reconstruction were shown and that he’d “hate to be the one” to give them “fodder”:

So, if we show Keith’s series in this plot, we have to comment that “something else” is responsible for the discrepancies in this case. [Perhaps Keith can help us out a bit by explaining the processing that went into the series and the potential factors that might lead to it being “warmer” than the Jones et al and Mann et al series?? We would need to put in a few words in this regard] Otherwise, the skeptics have an field day casting doubt on our ability to understand the factors that influence these estimates and, thus, can undermine faith in the paleoestimates. I don’t think that doubt is scientifically justified, and I’d hate to be the one to have to give it fodder! (Mann Sep 22, 0938018124.txt)

By the following day, matters seem to have settled down, with Briffa apologizing to Mann for his temporary pangs of conscience. On Oct 5, 1999, Osborn (on behalf of Briffa) sent Mann a revised version of the Briffa reconstruction with more “low-frequency” variability (Osborn, Oct 5, 1999, 0939154709.txt), a version that is identical up to 1960, this version is identical to the digital version archived at NCDC for Briffa et al (JGR 2001). (The post-1960 values of this version were not “shown” in the version archived at NCDC; they were deleted.)

As discussed below, this version had an even larger late-20th century decline than the version shown at the Tanzania Lead Authors’ meeting. Nonetheless, the First Order Draft (Oct 27, 1999) sent out a few weeks later contained a new version of the proxy diagram (Figure 2.25), a version which contains the main elements of the eventual Third Assessment Report proxy diagram (Figure 2.21). Two weeks later came Jones’ now infamous “trick” email (0942777075.txt).

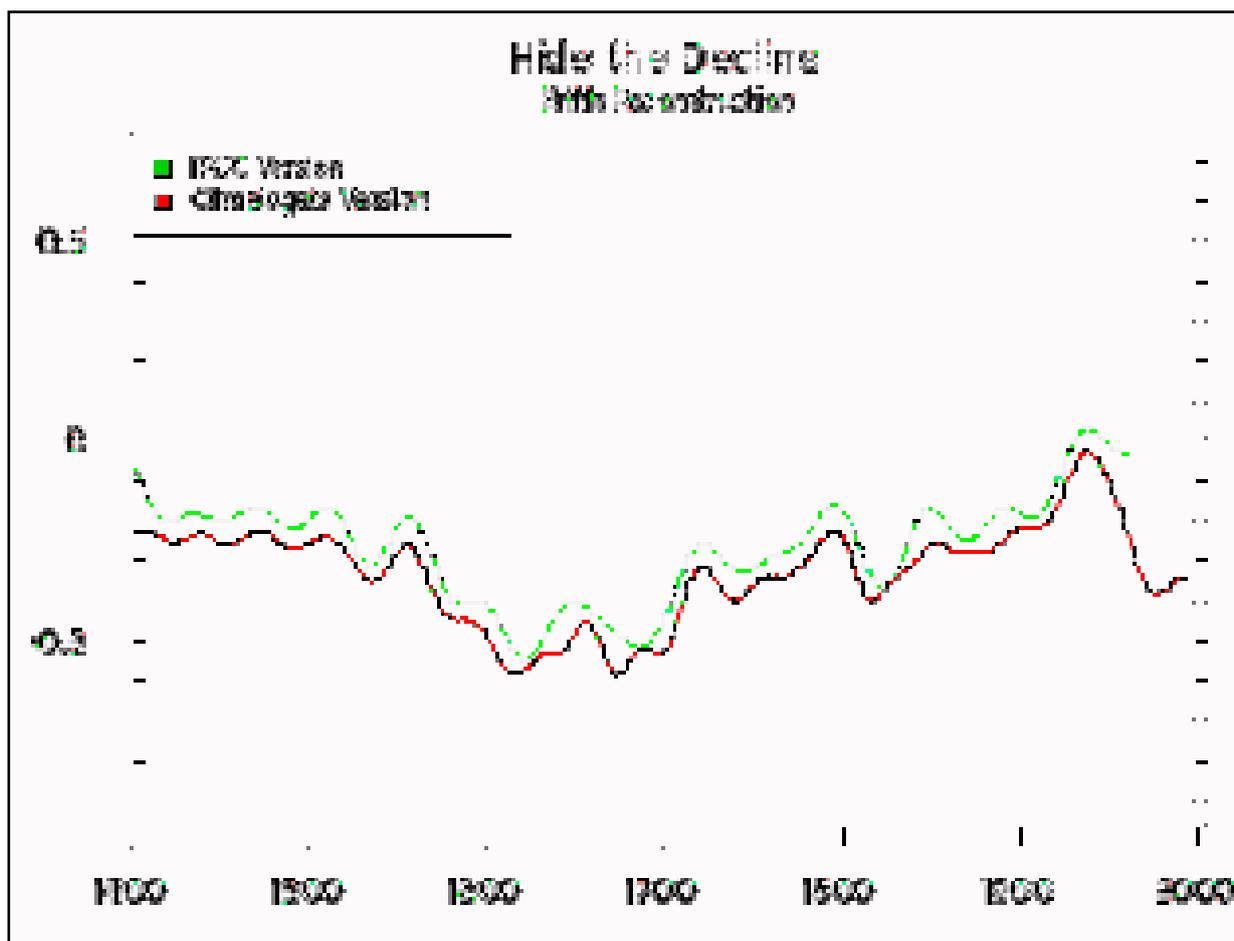
The IPCC Trick

Mann’s IPCC trick is related to the Jones’ trick, but different. (The Jones trick has been explained in previous CA posts here, here and consists of replacing the tree ring data with temperature data after 1960 – thereby hiding the decline – and then showing the smoothed graph as a proxy reconstruction.) While some elements of the IPCC Trick

can be identified with considerable certainty, other elements are still somewhat unclear.

The diagram below shows the IPCC version of the Briffa reconstruction (digitized from the IPCC 2001) compared to actual Briffa data from the Climategate email of October 5, 1999, smoothed using the methodology said to have been used in the caption to the IPCC figure (a 40 year Hamming filter with end-point padding with the mean of the closing 20 years).

Figure 3. Versions of the Briffa Reconstruction in controversy, comparing the original data smoothed according to the reported methodology to a digitization of the IPCC version.



Clearly, there are a number of important differences between the version sent to Mann and the version that appeared in the IPCC report. The most obvious is, of course, that the decline in the Briffa reconstruction has, for the most part, been deleted from the IPCC proxy diagram. However, there are some other frustrating inconsistencies and puzzles that are all too familiar.

There are some more technical inconsistencies that I'll record for specialist readers. It is very unlikely that that the IPCC caption is correct in stating that a 40-year Hamming filter was used. Based on comparisons of the MBH reconstruction and Jones reconstruction, as well as the Briffa reconstruction, to versions constructed from raw data, it appears that a Butterworth filter was used – a filter frequently used in Mann's subsequent work (a detail that, in

addition, bears on the authorship of the graphic itself).

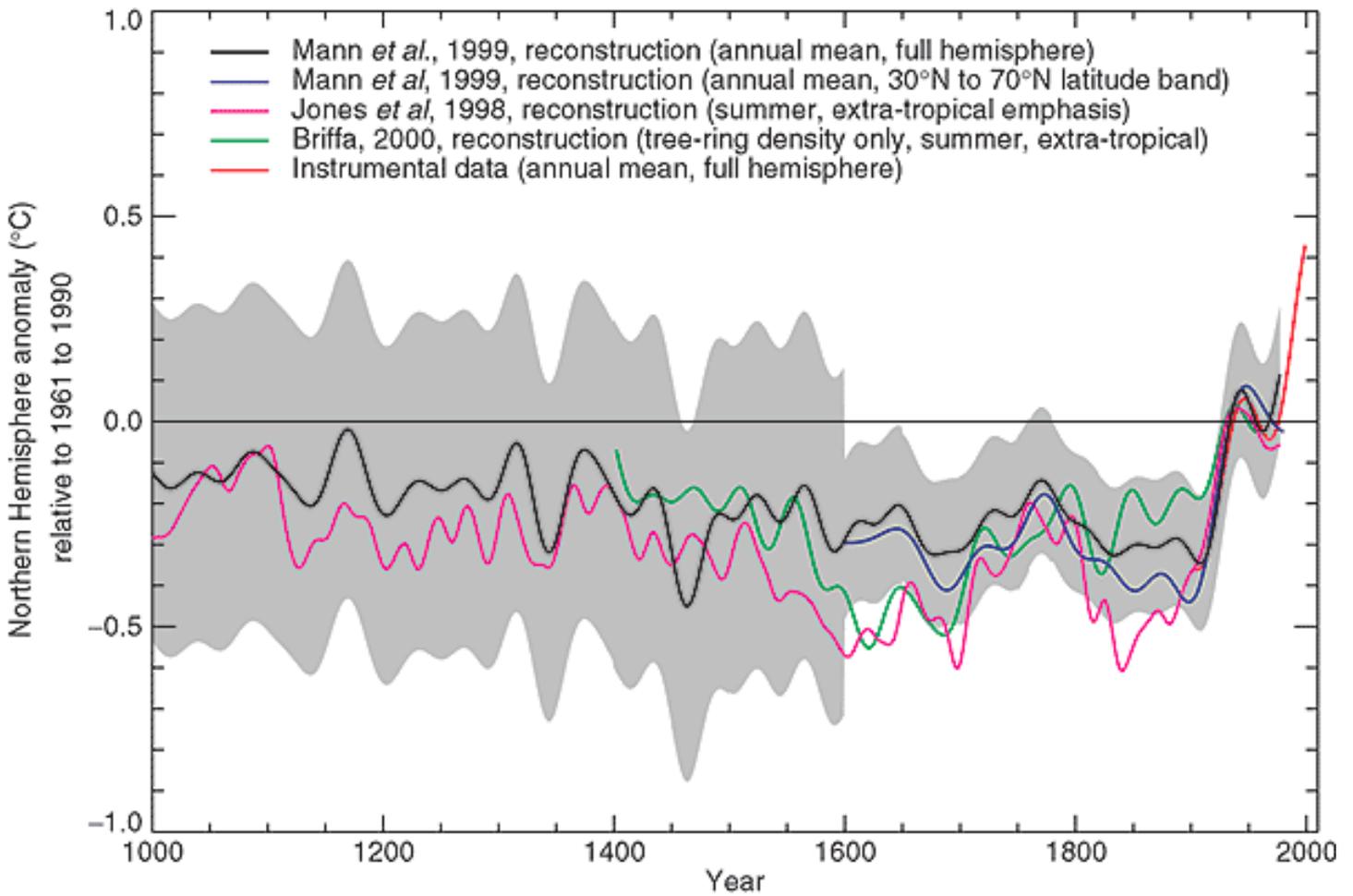
Second, the IPCC caption stated that "boundary constraints imposed by padding the series with its mean values during the first and last 25 years." Again, this doesn't seem to reconcile with efforts to replicate the IPCC version from raw data. It appears far more likely to me that each of the temperature series has been padded with instrumental temperatures rather than the mean values of the last 25 years.

Finally, there are puzzling changes in scale. The underlying annual data for the Jones and Briffa reconstructions are expressed in deg C (basis 1961-1990) and should scale simply to the smoothed version in the IPCC version, but

don't quite. This may partly derive from errors introduced in digitization, but is a loose end in present replication efforts.

The final IPCC diagram (2.21) is shown overleaf. In this rendering, the Briffa reconstruction is obviously no longer "a problem and a potential distraction/detractor" and does not "dilute the message". Mann has not given any "fodder" to the skeptics, who obviously did not have a "field day" with the decline.

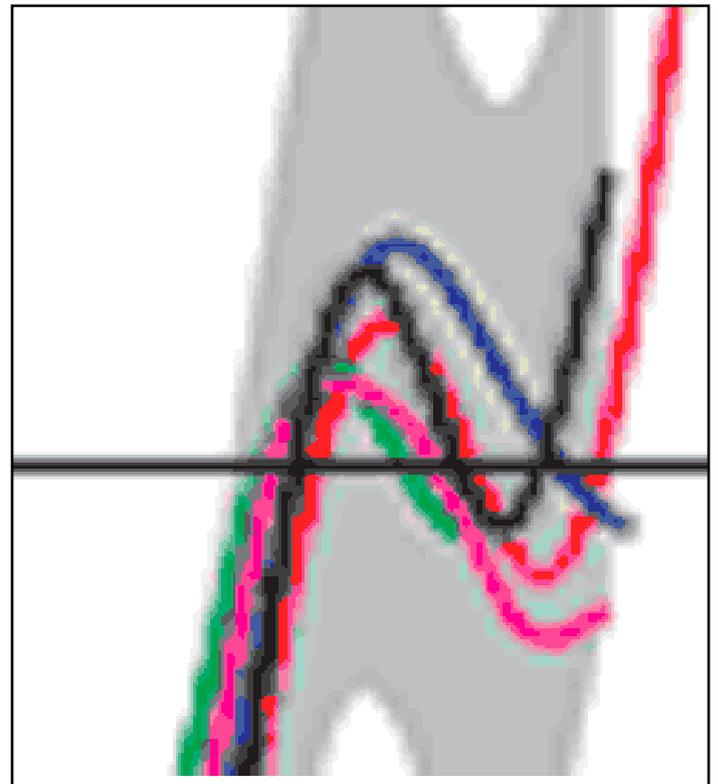
IPCC Third Assessment Report Figure 2.21: Comparison of warm-season (Jones et al., 1998) and annual mean (Mann et al., 1998, 1999) multi-proxy-based and warm season tree-ring-based (Briffa, 2000) millennial Northern Hemisphere temperature reconstructions. The recent instrumental annual mean Northern Hemisphere temperature record to 1999



is shown for comparison. Also shown is an extra-tropical sampling of the Mann et al. (1999) temperature pattern reconstructions more directly comparable in its latitudinal sampling to the Jones et al. series. The self-consistently estimated two standard error limits (shaded region) for the smoothed Mann et al. (1999) series are shown. The horizontal zero line denotes the 1961 to 1990 reference period mean temperature. All series were smoothed with a 40-year Hamming-weights lowpass filter, with boundary constraints imposed by padding the series with its mean values during the first and last 25 years.

Contrary to claims by various climate scientists, the IPCC Third Assessment Report did not disclose the deletion of the post-1960 values. Nor did it discuss the “divergence problem”. Yes, there had been previous discussion of the problem in the peer-reviewed literature (Briffa et al 1998) – a point made over and over by Gavin Schmidt and others. But not in the IPCC Third Assessment Report. Nor was the deletion of the declining values reported or disclosed in the IPCC Third Assessment Report. [Dec 11.- IPCC TAR does contain a sly allusion to the problem; it mentions “evidence” that tree ring density variations had “changed in their response in recent decades”. Contrary to claims of realclimate commenters, this does not constitute disclosure of the deletion of the post-1960 values in the controversial figure or even of the decline itself.] The hiding of the decline was made particularly artful because the potentially dangling 1960 endpoint of the Briffa reconstruction was hidden under other lines in the spaghetti graph as shown in the following blow-up (right):

Figure below. Blow-up of IPCC Third Assessment Report Fig 2-21. To my knowledge, no one noticed or reported this



truncation until my Climate Audit post in 2005 here. The deletion of the decline was repeated in the 2007 Assessment Report First Order and Second Order Drafts, once again without any disclosure. No dendrochronologist recorded any objection in the Review Comments to either draft. As

a reviewer of the Second Order Draft, I asked the IPCC in the strongest possible terms to show the decline reported at CA here:

Show the Briffa et al reconstruction through to its end; don't stop in 1960. Then comment and deal with the "divergence problem" if you need to. Don't cover up the divergence by truncating this graphic. This was done in IPCC TAR; this was misleading. (Reviewer's comment ID #: 309-18)]

They refused, stating that this would be "inappropriate", though a short discussion on the divergence was added – a discussion that was itself never presented to external peer reviewers.

Returning to the original issue: climate scientists say that the "trick" is now being taken out of context. The Climategate Letters show clearly that the relevant context is the IPCC Lead Authors' meeting in Tanzania in September 1999 at which the decline in the Briffa reconstruction was perceived by IPCC as "diluting the message", as a "problem", as a "potential distraction/detraction". A stone in their shoe.

Update (Dec 11) : Some of the follow-up comments on this post do shed light on this sequence and enable a more precise interpretation of the emails. With the benefit of these comments, there are a couple of points on the chronology that I need to modify, particularly in respect to the role of the October 5 revision of the Briffa reconstruction in respect both to the Arusha meeting and to the hide the decline.

The Arusha meeting objected to the Briffa reconstruction "diluting the message" and reducing confidence in the multiproxy reconstructions. And, of course, it is the overstated confidence that has been the primary objection here. However, I agree with critics who observe that the proximate objection to the Briffa reconstruction at Arusha was not that the decline per se diluted the message, but

the Briffa reconstruction overall diluted the message and interfered with a "tidy story". The stone in the shoe was that the Briffa reconstruction prevented a "tidy story"; the "decline" as a separate problem came a bit later.

After the Arusha meeting, Briffa hurriedly re-did his chronology and the new version was delivered to Mann on Oct 5, 1999 – it was this version that had the big decline. In the First Order Draft of Oct 27, 1999, IPCC author Mann deleted the post-1960 portion of the Briffa reconstruction plus other things that I don't yet quite understand. Jones' trick, as observed in the post, is a little different. (The post-1960 portion of the Briffa reconstruction was also deleted from the NCDC archive and the Climategate Letters, as previously noted, was the first digital "archive" of the post-1960 Briffa reconstruction used in TAR.)

As of Oct 5, 1999, the revised Briffa reconstruction had not been presented in any peer-reviewed literature but nonetheless was adopted by IPCC. The hasty recalculation of the Briffa reconstruction resulted in a big decline in the late 20th century – this is the decline illustrated in the graphic in my post.

In the First Order Draft of late October 1999, IPCC did not show the decline. In the Jones trick email two weeks later, as noted above, Jones hid the decline in a slightly different way.

Another issue raised by readers pertains to quotations. The post was already long and I tried to keep the quotations relatively concise. Some readers have criticized the ellipsis. I've accordingly amended the quotations (amendments in square brackets.)

Courtesy of URL: <http://climateaudit.org/2009/12/10/ipcc-and-the-trick/>



MPs weren't brave enough to deserve a medal

Can you believe that MPs give themselves a medal for visiting a war zone?

By Azeem Ibrahim - Tuesday March 16 - Yahoo! News.

The other day I read that MPs get a medal just for visiting a war zone. If you cannot believe what you have just read, believe me: I couldn't either. They don't have to spend months in the country like our service personnel. They don't have to wait months after they come home to be presented with the thing. Nor do they have to display any particular bravery, contribute to the war, or do anything, really. They just have to get on a plane and have a look around.

The medal is a reward for ten or more years' membership of the armed forces parliamentary scheme, a body set up to encourage MPs to spend around 22 days a year with the military on duty. Their medal is made of silver and is attached to a crimson, gold and green ribbon representing the colours of the Lords, the Queen and the Commons. MPs in the scheme are also given a uniform, and are invited to take part at the entry level rank of Major. If they go on enough 'training' days, they can earn a promotion to the 'rank' of 'Colonel'.

So, compare and contrast. The armed forces have to serve in a war zone or display conspicuous bravery to be awarded a medal; MPs can get one just for dropping by. The real rank of 'Colonel' is one which is earned by years of dedication, discipline, getting up before dawn, selfless service to the defence of the realm, and bloody hard work; MPs reach a rank of the same name by sticking around in a 'scheme' for long enough. This is ridiculous.

Unsurprisingly, the awards have been criticised by ex-servicemen, the families of service personnel who have died in Iraq, and also by a senior officer who led British forces in Afghanistan. One Colonel said: "It seems a bit rich to give a medal to an MP for visiting a combat zone, yet the government is not prepared to give a medal to someone who has lost a leg or an arm in battle."

The scheme was set up by an ex-MP in 1988 'to give MPs a clearer idea of what life is like for service personnel'. "What I am trying to get them to do," he has said, "is support the men and women in the armed forces." Of course, this is a laudable aim. But did it not occur to him that perhaps medals and military-style promotions are not the most sensitive way to do it?

This scheme degrades the real medals that our brave troops get. It is right that medals are for acts of bravery and heroics, and anything less degrades the rightfully-earned medals earned the hard way.

Even politically, the insensitivity is shocking. After all the evidence over the last year that MPs set themselves apart from those they represent when deciding how much they should be allowed to charge to the taxpayer, one would have thought that your average MP would have been on the lookout for any practice which offered even a hint of insensitivity. And yet this badly sets them apart from those they are seeking to represent; it is an example of a particularly egregious and insensitive double standard. At least the expenses scandal was about greed. This is in many ways lower - it cheapens the lives of our armed forces.

It is perhaps possible to believe that this ex-Tory dreamed up the idea of these medals in good faith. But for MPs not to have twigged that it was offensive in the extreme shows an extraordinary lack of sensitivity which almost calls into question the ability to do the job of representing their constituents who serve in the forces. How could they not have seen how this looks?

I am proud to have worn the Queen's uniform as a reservist paratrooper for seven years. MPs need to realise that medals are all the recognition we as soldiers get for spending long months in staggeringly deprived locations getting shot at and blown up. I urge you to visit <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/notompmedals/> and sign the petition against these insulting medals for MPs.

Azeem Ibrahim is research scholar at the International Security Program at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, member of the board of directors at the Institute of Social Policy Understanding and a former reservist in the 4th Battalion Parachute Regiment.

Courtesy of URL: http://uk.news.yahoo.com/blogs/talking_politics/article/108843/



Welcome to the age of irrationality

by **Melanie Phillips**
The Spectator, 30 April 2010

It is a truth universally acknowledged that reason and religion are mortal foes. Reason deals a death blow to religion; religion is clearly irrationality on stilts.

If only religion didn't exist, reason would rule the world and there would be no more wars, tyrannies or murderous hatreds. It follows therefore that religious people are either stupid or unbalanced and are inimical to progress, modernity and happiness.

Well, this universal truth isn't true at all. In fact, reason is underpinned by religion — at least the Biblical variety. Without Genesis there would have been no Western science, no equality and human rights and no liberal belief in progress.

I see I've already caused you to throw your Spectator round the room. What about the Enlightenment, you cry. That's what gave rise to Western science and the opening of the Western mind, precisely because it ushered in an age of reason that knocked religious obscurantism out of the park.

Ah yes, the open Western mind. But if you look around you — with a mind that is truly open — you will see much evidence that the Western mind is currently snapping tightly shut. Indeed, the paradox is that some of our most noisy advocates of reason say a lot of things which are demonstrably absurd.

Take those scientists who promote not science but scientism — the belief that science can deal with every aspect of existence. The scorn and vituperation they heap upon religious believers is fathomless. And yet their materialism leads them to say things which are just... well, nutty.

For example, Professor Richard Dawkins told me he was 'not necessarily averse' to the idea that life on earth had been created by a governing intelligence — provided that such an intelligence had arrived from another planet. How can it be that our pre-eminent apostle of reason appears to find little green men more plausible as an explanation for the origin of life than God?

The answer is that in certain areas science has overreached itself by trying to play God, and as a result has turned into an ideology.

Contrary to popular myth, Western science was not created by Enlightenment secularism. It grew out of the revolutionary claim in the Bible that the universe was the product of a rational Creator, who endowed man with reason so that he could ask questions about the natural world.

With the rise of secularism, the striking thing is that people

didn't lose the drive to believe. They stopped having religious faith — but that drive was diverted instead into the creation of a wide variety of secular religions, otherwise known as ideologies. But these are the true enemies of truth and reason.

Just look at environmentalism. This defines the modern 'progressive' — and yet it is fundamentally irrational, illiberal and pre-modern.

Based on a spiritual belief in the innate, organic harmony of the universe, it grew out of pagan and animistic ideas which not only defied reason but, in elevating emotion and subjectivity as well as downgrading mankind, were to feed directly into such regressive thinking as eugenics and fascism.

Indeed, all the ideologies so prevalent today in 'progressive' circles — scientism, environmentalism, anti-Americanism, anti-Zionism, moral and cultural relativism, egalitarianism, multiculturalism — are deeply reactionary, illiberal and coercive.

This is because ideology, by wrenching evidence to fit a prior idea, is inimical to reason and sacrifices truth to power. That's why environmentalism's most famous offspring, man-made global warming theory, is totalitarian gobbledegook. There is no evidence to support it, plenty of evidence against it and even more evidence that much of the 'science' on which it is based is fraudulent.

But like other ideologies, it appears immune to challenge, however compelling the case against it. And that's because these are not propositions to be debated in a rational way, but rather self-evident truths which have the infallibility of religious dogma — and which are equipped with secular inquisitions against heretics.

They represent not a point of view but virtue itself. All opposition must therefore be stamped out. So reason is replaced by bullying, intimidation and the suppression of debate.

Thus scientists sceptical of man-made global warming are subjected to funding famine, character assassination or professional ostracism. Or Christians asserting the need for a child to be brought up by a mother and father find themselves forced off adoption panels and vilified as 'homophobic' bigots.

In Manichean fashion, the left divides the world into rival camps of good and evil. Anyone who is not on the left is 'the right' and thus beyond the moral pale. But much that is demonised in this way as 'right-wing' is simply an attempt

to uphold truth, reality and liberty against the distortions, fabrications and bullying of ideology.

What's really odd is this. Just like the persecution of medieval heretics, these secular inquisitions are driven at root by fear — the terror that a challenge to the Received Truth might actually succeed.

Scientific triumphalists may realise that what they are saying about the origin of the universe is ludicrous. Yet they persist because of their fear of the alternative explanation — God.

As the Harvard geneticist Richard Lewontin has candidly explained, such scientists 'take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs' because they 'cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door'.

So what is it about the possibility of even a Divine toenail over the threshold that terrifies these men of reason into becoming so irrational? Or to put it another way, if they are going to believe in ten impossible things before breakfast, then why not believe in the one impossible thing which happens to have an infrastructure of critical thought, thousands of years of history and their own civilisation attached to it?

It can't be that religion has committed terrible atrocities, because atheism has committed terrible atrocities too. Maybe it's the fear that Biblical morality fetters the freedom to be footloose and fancy-free. After all, if genes are selfish why should they alone have all the fun?

Maybe it's a projection on to religion of all the bad stuff in human nature. For if the Biblical God is the cause of intolerance and war, tyranny and genocide, then humanity gets a free pass.

But since Biblical religion actually underpinned reason and morality, the decline of religion means the erosion of truth and conscience. If religious totalitarianism was rule by the Church and political totalitarianism was rule by the 'general will', this is cultural totalitarianism, or rule by the subjective individual.

In Britain, the effects are plain to see. Everything is upside down: the transgressive becomes the norm while the normal is discriminatory; victims become aggressors while aggressors are indulged; education leaves children in a state of noble savagery; broken families are promoted as lifestyle choice.

And a brutal utilitarianism means elderly or coma victims are starved and dehydrated to death, with anyone who dares to mention the sanctity of human life dismissed as a Bible-bashing nut-job.

Once the pre-eminent nation of reason and free debate, tolerance and civility, Britain is now the global leader of the rout of rationality and the retreat to a pre-modern war of all against all, facilitated by secular 'human rights'. Britain—first into the Enlightenment, and now first out.

Melanie Phillips's new book, *The World Turned Upside Down: The Global Battle over God, Truth and Power* is published by Encounter, New York.

Courtesy of URL: <http://www.melaniephillips.com/articles-new/?p=734>



This fantastic photograph of the Khalifa Tower in Dubai, U.A.E. was taken by our friend Stephen Whelan who lives in Qatar.

News from Qatar



We're pleased to have received some photographs from Nadia, taken at The Pearl in Doha, Qatar. I wish we were back in the Middle East with you all. *above: Michelle. below: Michael.*





Top left: Michael, Michelle and Nadia.
above: Nadia and Michelle.
below: Michelle, Leonardo (Nadia's husband), Michael.





Alan's Reflections

Alan's Reflections

Just the other day, Grace asked me something that made me think. She asked me what it was I got out of doing the newsletter. After all, I devote so many hours to compiling it every month - even when Little Lad wants me to play with him; in itself, precious time.

The answer is very difficult to express meaningfully in a few words on these pages - as it was to try to tell Grace the answer. I'm not even sure of the answer myself. Maybe there isn't one. I told her that even when I was a Little Lad myself, I was interested in writing and in trying to put pages together in some form of publication. Of course, in those far-off days, I didn't even have a typewriter, and computers hadn't even been thought of outside scientific laboratories. I remember that, un-beknown to my parents, I responded to an advertising postcard that came through the door in a magazine. It was an advert for teaching typing - and if you signed on to the course the student would be given a small typewriter to use.

Some days later, there was a knock on the door and there stood the typewriting course salesman, clutching a small case which held the portable typewriter. This was something I wasn't expecting - and neither was my mother who opened the door to him. Of course, she told the salesman that she didn't know what he was talking about when he said he'd come as a response to my enquiry. As I was there, and still hoping, I told the pair of them that it was me that had made the enquiry. My mother immediately dismissed the idea of me learning to type - and the salesman. Later on, I tried to hand-write a mini-magazine for my friends and that too wasn't exactly a roaring success.

Later, I turned to my interest in photography and devoted lots of passion in that direction. This too, lead me into writing and I had some success in writing features for some photographic magazines, illustrated with my own photographs. This was in the mid to late 1970s. In those days I had to handwrite the text and get someone to type them for me before I could send them to the magazine. I used to pay one of the secretaries in my office to do it on the typewriter she had at home. It took a long time to prepare a magazine feature as, apart from taking the photographs, I had to wait to get them processed before I even knew if they were acceptable to use - as well as waiting for the typing to be done.

Now, everything is so easy - and relatively inexpensive compared to those days of more than forty years ago. Not only that, but we have so much versatility with the design and layout compared to those days - and instant photographs from super digital cameras. In those days of low income and high cost I used to spend, proportionally, huge amounts on my photography. Almost all my disposable income was needed to be an amateur photographer in those days. It

was always considered to be an expensive hobby and one that few working class folks like me could (or wanted to) afford and I really struggled to pay for it all. The first roll of process-paid slide film I bought would have cost about the same as my nett pay for a full day at work for me as an apprentice - about £1.50.

Now, I am so pleased that I can produce my magazines and photographs quickly, easily and inexpensively wherever I happen to be. This was brought home to me while travelling on our recent weekend mini-holidays to Wales, illustrated in this edition. As soon as we booked into our hotel, I was able to set-up my laptop computer, two external hard-drives and various other bits and pieces and download the photographs I'd taken that day. I could also put together some of the pages you see in this edition. Isn't that fantastic? Had I been so inclined (and had more time), I could have also uploaded those photographs onto the internet and built a web-site / photo-gallery depicting our travels for the day, which I could then have shared with you during our trip. I could have even shared views of us sitting on the beach or in the hills with a live webcam. Incredible technology. All the technology that we need to enable us to communicate with each other wherever we are in the world. It is just so exciting that we can do this - even from the beach or hotel room - in many countries around our planet.

Of course, I'm aware that all this doesn't really answer Grace's question - but I hope it explains a little about me in this regard. I can only answer by saying that compiling this little magazine gives me some satisfaction and helps me communicate better with our family and friends around the world; a world that now seems much smaller with the technology that brings us all together much more closely that could have ever been dreamt of when I was a Little Lad.

Alan



The photograph above shows me as a Little Lad with Auntie Hilda (right) and her mother, Lily Simmonds (nee Muggeridge - left) in the home of my grandmother, Florence Cook, Lily's sister, in 48 New England Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex, where I spent much of my childhood.

