

Brexit lecture – including the impact of the EU on our economy over 45 years

The lecture I gave in Speaker's House will be shown again on BBC Parliament Channel at 15.10 on the afternoon of Monday 2nd April, for those interested.

Five women tell us their ambitions for women in Scotland

Today marks the end of Women's History Month – a month celebrating the vital role of women in our society, past and present.

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Money for school improvements

I have been making the case for more money to help our schools for some time. I have been keen to see money made available for the Holt and Forest for building improvement following visits to those schools.

This week the government has announced £136,880 for the Holt and £139,853 for Forest, which is welcome.

Face to Face – Stories from the Asylum

From the Curator of Museum Services at the University of Dundee :

FACE TO FACE

Stories from the Asylum

An exploration of patients' lives through
photographs and histories

Tower Foyer Gallery, University of Dundee

Now on and running until 9th June

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 7pm and Saturday 1pm to 5pm

Our understanding of the Victorian lunatic asylum, and our perception of the history of psychiatry, is often fed by myth and fiction. The nineteenth century did indeed see a massive rise in the building of asylums, as institutional care became the dominant means of caring for the insane. But what do we know of the lives of those who entered them as patients? How did they experience mental illness?

Face to Face: Stories from the Asylum is an exhibition exploring the lives of a small group of patients admitted to Dundee Royal Lunatic Asylum between 1886 and 1902. Using information and photographs from their case notes, the exhibition examines the circumstances which led to their committal to the asylum, the dilemmas faced by their families, and the nature of their mental illness.

Looking at examples from the past is a valuable way to consider the social and cultural contexts that create understandings of mental disorders. Through the poignant stories of past sufferers, the exhibition aims to engage with contemporary concerns about the experience of mental disorders, past and present, the effect on family and community, and the wider social attitudes associated with mental illness.

This exhibition is part of the 'Promoting Mental Health through the Lessons of History' project, based at the University of St Andrews, and is a collaboration with University of Dundee Archive Services.

The exhibition has been curated by PhD student Morag Allan Campbell.

Easter ideals?

This week end Christians remember the brutal execution of Christ and the resurrection.

We read of him as a great figure. The Son of God to Christians, a great prophet or teacher to non believers. His words echo down the centuries. They

are as fresh and relevant today as they were when uttered.

Some wrestle with difficulty with the great gap between the peace loving messages of Christ seeking to improve relations between people and to calm tensions and conflicts on the one hand , and the deeds of the Churches in their centuries of power and wealth on the other.

Sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe was ravaged by religious conflict as rival views of the Christian message were used to fight for money and political control. The Church Militant often struck a political pose, supported warring powers, and provided some of the most influential people and arguments to progress the conflicts and hatred.

Gradually the policy of toleration spread, though it took until the last century to arrive at proper religious toleration in most western countries. I welcome the way today in the UK the Christian Churches respect each other and seek to avoid conflict. Today politics in the UK is not primarily about religion. Mr Blair was strongly advised not to do God as PM.

In today's world there are still religious wars, and still too many incidents of religious persecution affecting several faiths. Sometimes the western allies intervene in these conflicts, with very mixed results.

In the UK we are left with an Established Church that does make forays into domestic politics, with some of its leaders urging their anti Brexit views on anyone who will listen. Often their main idea is that the state should provide a solution for every economic and moral problem. The private sector is usually something to tax and regulate to prevent or alleviate the alleged harm it does.