

2005 COMING ENGAGEMENTS

At the time of going to press these are my engagements for the next four months. For up-to-date news of any additional meetings, log on to www.johnblanchard.org Please pray for God's enabling at these events — and if possible plan to attend any that are being held near you.

- January 5 SUTTON: Surrey: Sutton Grammar School.
15-16 BIRMINGHAM: Anniversary meeting and services at South Birmingham Evangelical Church [Info:colintamplin@blueyonder.co.uk]
The remainder of January is reserved for study, preparation and writing.
- February 6 CANARY ISLANDS: South Tenerife Christian Fellowship, Los Cristianos, Aronas, Tenerife [Info:stcf@arrakis.es]
26-27 WORCESTER: Woodgreen Evangelical Church [Info: 01905 724252 or peter.barham@lineone.net]
The remainder of February is reserved for study, preparation and writing.
- March 3 ZAMBIA: Copperbelt University, Kitwe [Info:tulip@zamnet.zm]
4 ZAMBIA: University of Zambia, Lusaka [Info:tulip@zamnet.zm]
5 (am) ZAMBIA: Evangelistic meeting in Lusaka [Info: tulip@zamnet.zm]
5(pm) – 10 SOUTH AFRICA: Engagements in Gauteng, including University of Witwatersrand, Rand Afrikaans University and The University of Pretoria [Info:peter@christianbooks.co.za]
11-13 SOUTH AFRICA: Engagements in Kwa Zulu Natal, including Durban, Pinetown and Pietermaritzburg. [Info:peter@christianbooks.co.za]
15-21 SOUTH AFRICA: Engagements in Eastern and Western Cape, including University of Cape Town [Info:peter@christianbooks.co.za]
- April 1* BRIGHTON: Brighton and Hove City Mission [Info: 01273 609484]
6* ANDOVER: Koinonia Independent Evangelical Church [Info:elder@koinonia-andover.org]
12* CHORLEY, Lancs: Parklands High School, Southport Road (organized by Chorley Evangelical Free Church) [Info: 01257 233804 or andrewneedham909@hotmail.com]
13* CONGLETON, Cheshire: New Life Church, Danesford Community Centre, West Road [Info: mail@nlchurch.org.uk]
14 PRESTON: North Preston Evangelical Church, Fulwood [Info: 01772 863742 or davidwhitenpec@aol.com]
15* LIVERPOOL: Belvidere Road Church [Info: 0151 728 9293 or ian.higham@belvidere.org.uk]
16* LIVERPOOL: Orrell Park Baptist Church, Whinfield Road [Info: 0151 286 0328 or davwillis@blueyonder.co.uk]
17 WIGAN: Cave Browne Church, Ashton-in-Makerfield [Info: 01942 711755 or hgolfw@hotmail.com]
23* N.IRELAND: Tandragee Baptist Church, Tandragee, Co Armagh [Info: 020 3884 2023 or WReid4651@aol.com]
24 (am) N.IRELAND: Tandragee Baptist Church, Tandragee, Co. Armagh [Info: 020 3884 2023 or WReid4651@aol.com]
24 (pm) N.IRELAND: Carryduff Baptist Church, Belfast [Info: 028 9081 5346 or map@cduffbap.fsnet.co.uk]
25 N.IRELAND Edenmore Golf Club, Co Down.
Men's Baptist Golf Day and evangelistic meal.
26* N.IRELAND: Cookstown Baptist Church, Co Tyrone [Info: 028 8676 5401 or ASASloan@aol.com]
27* N.IRELAND: Portstewart Baptist Church, Portstewart [Info: 028 7035 2582 or george@dowie1936.freeseve.co.uk]
28* N.IRELAND: Rathfriland Presbyterian Church, Rathfriland, Co.Down [Info 028 4063 8812 or 028 4063 1533 or Joe.mcKnight@nifb.org]

* Indicates a Popular Christian Apologetics meeting



Four-monthly notes from John Blanchard, with news of his ministry

No.6

January 2005

OUR ONE BUSINESS

Thank you for taking this issue of *Newsline*, which I hope you will enjoy reading.

Time seems to have flown by since the last issue and at one stage engagements in England, Scotland, Wales, the Republic of Ireland, Romania and the United States were squeezed into a few weeks. More significantly, the recent months have seen larger attendances and greater blessing than for some time.

When a friend invited another Christian to one of these meetings he was told, 'No thanks — John Blanchard is past his sell-by date'! If so, few people seem to have heard the news; it has certainly not reached the church that has invited me to speak at its Centenary in 2010! Over 200 years ago John Wesley wrote to his brother Charles, 'Your business as well as mine is to save souls. When we took priest's orders we undertook to make it our one business. I think every day lost which is not mainly employed in this way.' I continue to agree!



The Irish Outreach Conference

The next four months include two given over to research, preparation and writing and I would especially value prayer for the necessary wisdom, energy and discipline. The Apostle Paul's words should be the mission statement of all Christians, 'full time' or not: 'I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.' I hope this issue of *Newsline* will help you to endorse it and to stand with me as I seek to do the same.

A warm welcome in Wales!

One highlight of The Evangelical Movement of Wales' year is always The English Conference, held in Aberystwyth on the west coast. It had been several years since my previous visit and I looked forward to this one with a great sense of anticipation. I was not disappointed! My two speaking engagements were on the same evening (in a sweltering heatwave!) and at both there was an unusual sense of God's presence and blessing.



The first was in the Great Hall at The University of Wales, where over 1,500 people, the largest Monday night crowd the organizers could remember, gave a great opportunity to speak on 'Motives for Mission', urging Christians to respond to the world's need and the 'Great Commission' by committing themselves wholeheartedly to the work of evangelism, whatever the cost.

Immediately afterwards I was whisked off to Extratime, a fine meeting of teens and twenties held elsewhere on the campus. I would have gladly travelled to Aberystwyth for this meeting alone. The large hall was crammed, latecomers having to stand around the sides, and there was an almost tangible sense of God's presence as the evening came to a close. A note from one of the Extratime leaders says, 'Your determination to do as much as you can as well as you can for as long as you can really challenged us. Your enthusiasm was infectious!' Thank God for such an opportunity — and such a privilege! The visit to 'Aber' was also enriched by meeting a number of people influenced by the ministry over the years, including a pastor's wife converted through reading *'Right with God'*.

Thank you

God has graciously continued to meet all my needs for the support of the ministry, even when I have taken necessary time 'off the road' for research and study and for the writing of new material, and I am so thankful to friends who are 'tuned in' to the situation and whose timely kindness enables the work to go on.

If support of my work has been included in any gifts you have made through the CM Trust, please accept my sincere thanks. Friends who give directly are of course thanked personally at the time.

LIGHT IN THE EAST

One of the joys of working in conjunction with Evangelical Press is that the company lives up its motto — 'Publishing with a Mission'. Some fifteen years ago, in French West Africa, it began what was to become an ongoing series of conferences in order to support the work of missionaries and others working in the countries concerned. Ideally with an Evangelical Press author as one of the speakers, these conferences have been primarily tailored to help, equip and train local pastors 'to preach Christ from all the Scriptures'.

Two years ago I shared in one such conference in Poland (hurriedly switched there from Belarus for prudent political reasons) while I have recently returned from another held in Romania. Some eighty pastors from Oradea and the surrounding area met for two days in Emanuel Baptist University (the largest such institution in Europe) and it was a great privilege to serve Christian leaders now delivered from the restrictions imposed by Communism but still working under economic and other pressures.



Dinu and Lydia Moga

Sharing the ministry with me were Gareth Crossley from England and Dorin Hnatiuc, who is on the faculty of the university. My own sessions were presented under the general title of 'Reaching the mind; changing the heart' and in these I sought to show how there could be an effective marriage between apologetics and biblical preaching. Other subjects covered during the conference were the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, passion in preaching, and the place of preaching in times of spiritual awakening.

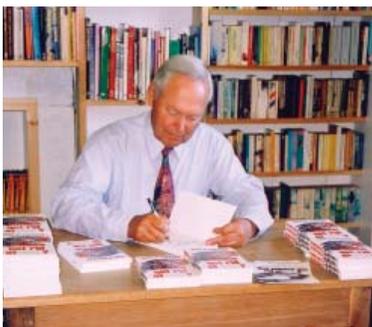
Many memories of the conference will long remain with me, but none more vividly than the stirring fervency of the times of prayer, especially after the teaching sessions. I left Romania with several invitations to return. They may be difficult to decline!

Notes from the 'Tartan Tour'

After several years in which visits to Scotland were few and far between, it has suddenly appeared much more often in the diary. No problem there! My years on Islay as a Second World War evacuee have given Scotland a special place in my heart and I was delighted to return there recently for a second Popular Christian Apologetics tour in just over twelve months.

This particular tour of Scotland began in Wales! As the dates and venues slotted into place I took in an engagement in **Mold**, Flintshire, where Dr David Hughes organized another superb meeting following a similar one held a year earlier in Ebenezer Baptist Church. The lovely modern building was nearly filled and the evening was especially marked by the depth and relevance of the many contributions to the Question and Answer session. A very good beginning to the tour.

The first stop in Scotland was another return visit, this time to **Wigtown**. With a population of only around 1,000, it is hardly a major centre, yet it is widely known as 'Scotland's National Book Town', with nineteen bookshops clustered around its attractive town square. Before the well attended evening meeting, held in the beautifully refurbished County Buildings, I accepted an invitation to do a book-signing session in The Book Shop which with its 80,000 volumes claims to be the largest second-hand outlet of its kind in the nation.



Three car journeys and two ferries later I was in **Campbeltown**, near the southern tip of the Mull of Kintyre. Campbeltown is farther from its nearest town than any other in the United

Kingdom. The Kintyre Christian Fellowship hosts a two-monthly gathering from April to November and because of the long travelling distances involved rarely more than forty people attend. To the great encouragement of Kelvin and Moreen Moller and others who hold KCF together the attendance was more than doubled for a real 'clan gathering' of people who came from many miles around to join in a very worthwhile evening together. Travelling the length of Kintyre to our 'digs' late that night, Howard Williams and I were treated by a dazzling display of the *Aurora Borealis* in the western sky — as if God was adding an artist's flourish to a delightful day.

On to **Lochgilhead**, where the few Christian causes struggle against serious spiritual forces. A Saturday afternoon meeting (in dire weather) was all that could be fitted into the schedule, but some fifty or so people came, a great encouragement in a church whose Sunday congregation is often less than half that number.

The evening engagement was at The Alexandra Hotel, **Fort William**. Half way alongside Loch Fynne our timing was torpedoed by a fatal car crash which forced us to backtrack nearly twenty miles before driving up the long, winding road alongside Loch Awe. We barely made it to the hotel in time, but were glad we did as again an unusual number of people made the effort to be there.

The next day began with an hour on Radio Nevis, in the shadow of the great mountain, where a sympathetic interviewer gave excellent scope to share the heart of the gospel with many listeners in that remote part of the Highlands. By the evening we were in **Dornoch**, Sutherland for an evening service swollen by many visitors from other churches and elsewhere. This proved excellent preparation for Monday's meeting in Dornoch Academy at the invitation of the Principal, John Garvie. The Royal Borough of Dornoch (pop. c.2500) is renowned these days for having the best northerly golf course in the world — and yes, Howard and I did tread its lovely links! More importantly, the evening attendance was three times what was expected by the organizers and we left Dornoch praying that a significant impact had been made.



In **Inverness**, Richard Gibbons, responsible for co-ordinating the Church of Scotland's evangelism in the northern part of the country, had drawn together a team of local ministers to sponsor a fine meeting in Culloden Academy. Some 200 people came and the presentation was filmed by a group planning to offer the edited result to Sky Television, though at the time of going to press I have no information on whether or when it might be screened.

The final engagement of the tour was in **Musselburgh**, on the East Lothian coast. Once again the local organizers, this time at Musselburgh Baptist Church, had worked hard and the church was filled for an excellent climax to a very rewarding tour.

'Haste ye back' is the Scottish way of encouraging a visitor's early return. Plans are already in hand.....

FULL HOUSE AT 'THE NORTHERN'

I have had the privilege of speaking at the Scottish Northern Convention several times over the years, both in Strathpeffer and latterly in Dingwall. Now in its 73rd year, the convention moved recently to the Church of Scotland in Castle Street, which has proved ideal for the event.



Blanchard and Begg

Sharing the open sessions with me this time was a long-time friend, Alistair Begg, who now has a significant ministry in the United States, while Richard Gibbons got the week off to a fine start with a large youth rally. Attendances at the convention had been on the decline in recent years, but on this occasion the church was comfortably full from the start and

bursting at the seams by the end of the week. The Chairman of the Convention Committee told the closing rally that it had been 'many, many years' since such numbers had been seen and Alistair and I were thrilled to be part of it all, and to re-tie the links of personal fellowship.

As well as public convention meetings I also spoke to the faculty and students at Highland Theological College, of which I am a Governor, and at a meeting of church leaders. Dingwall has a very special place in my 'Memories of '04' and, as with 'Aber', meeting people converted or significantly helped through the ministry in the past was a lovely 'bonus'.

JOIN THE TEAM!

If you have not seen *Newsline* before and would like to receive future copies (by post or e-mail) please let me know.

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Green Shoots in the Emerald Isle

Four recent engagements in the Republic of Ireland began with a Saturday night evangelistic meeting in Springhill Court Hotel, Kilkenny, where there was rapt attention to the message and the Question and Answer session was the liveliest I had known for a very long time. It was an added joy to meet two people converted to Christ while reading one of my evangelistic books.

The Sunday included two excellent and well-attendance services in Kilkenny Presbyterian Church. Some twenty years ago it had just over ten members; attendances are now near the 200 mark, many having been soundly converted from staunchly Roman Catholic backgrounds.

Still in Kilkenny, the following two days were taken up by The Irish Outreach Conference. Begun some thirty years ago as a reporting session for a handful of Christian workers, it has become an important factor in the lives of many more, and now draws well over 100 full-time workers involved in various forms of evangelism throughout the Republic. These include pastors of mainly small churches, church planters and missionaries sent from the UK and elsewhere. The conference's aim is to encourage the delegates in their evangelistic work and equip them for the task — and by all accounts it succeeds brilliantly. It was great to sense the depth of their fellowship and the benefit they gained from sharing aims, ideas and experiences. I spoke at three of the conference sessions, one being given over to the after-life and its motivation to serious and urgent evangelism.

My last stop was in Bandon, Co Cork. Three nights of evangelistic apologetics

(billed as 'lectures') in a small rural town sounded like a high-risk strategy, but Westside Baptist Church was well rewarded for its efforts as many outsiders came to the meetings and showed keen interest in the subjects. Another highlight was an extended interview on Radio 103FM ('Cork's Favourite Music Mix') when the station was bombarded with so many telephone calls that I was invited to return for another interview the next day. Listeners were also offered a free copy of 'Why Believe the Bible?' and there was an encouraging response to this offer. It was a good note on which to end a very fruitful week and I hope to return for an extended visit at some time in the future.



Kindred spirits in Killarney