

South of the border (occasional snippets from)

Nick Must

Meet the new 'C' – same as the old 'C'

Much fanfare – huge media excitement, it seemed – at the appointment of a woman as the new Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (the 'C' of SIS, for the acronym enthusiasts). The whole point of this, it would seem, was to herald a gentler, more feminine touch to our spying. Soft power, anyone? Ms Blaise Metreweli (for it is she) has, however, previously been quite forthright and aggressive in her outlook.

Her rise within the intelligence community had included 'a Director-level role in MI5'¹ and she fronted for them in a couple of media interviews (where she was referred to by anonymous monickers). In one of these, she referred to the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury as part of a spate of 'crass assassination plots'.² Which is an odd way of describing what had happened, as the Merriam-Webster definition of crass is 'having or indicating such grossness of mind as precludes delicacy and discrimination'.³ Indeed, leading figures from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) would have it very differently. Speaking a month after the attack, having already identified the poison concerned, the chief executive of the DSTL at Porton Down told Sky News the substance required 'extremely *sophisticated methods* to create, probably something only in the capabilities of a state actor'.⁴ (Emphasis added.) More recently still, testifying at the inquiry into the

¹ See <<https://www.sis.gov.uk/news/appointment-new-chief-secret-intelligence-service>>. A spook career that can include stints at both 5 and 6 is now much more normal than in the past. A 2021 recruitment post from SIS at 'brightnetwork' ('an early career platform that connects students and graduates with the opportunities, advice and insights they need to kickstart their careers') hinted at such, saying 'MI5 and MI6 may be different organisations, but we share the same goal'. See <<https://shorturl.at/RATk0>> or <<https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/graduate-jobs/secret-intelligence-service-mi6/summer-diversity-intelligence-internship-2022>>.

² See <<https://shorturl.at/XDXvT>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/12/03/exclusive-meet-director-k-mi5-spy-responsible-keeping-britain>>.

³ <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/crass>>

⁴ See <<https://shorturl.at/33YG7>> or <<https://news.sky.com/story/porton-down-experts-unable-to-identify-precise-source-of-that-poisoned-spy-11315387>>

death that resulted from the novichok poisonings, a 'Witness from Porton Down laboratory' said the toxin 'was so pure that it must have been manufactured by a *sophisticated* laboratory'.⁵ (Emphasis added.) Those are words which don't bring 'crass' to my mind.

Being skewed from the truth like this, the new 'C' is very like the old 'C'. In an April 2021 profile puff-piece for the *Daily Mail* the current 'C', Sir Richard Moore KCMG, claimed his staff were 'extraordinarily idealistic and committed' to doing 'the right thing – we don't cut ethical corners'.⁶ This from the head of an agency that played a core role in the abduction and torture of suspected terrorists – and, when it was found out, launched 'desperate attempts at denial'.⁷

Other parallels between the new 'C' and the old 'C' are that they're both public school educated (she: Westminster School, London – he: St George's College, Weybridge) and Oxbridge graduates (she: anthropology at Pembroke College, Cambridge – he: philosophy, politics and economics at Worcester College, Oxford). Pretty much what one would expect for a senior spook.

What is surprising, regarding the new 'C', is that for several years she has been regularly photographed in a public environment, with her real name mentioned. This is because she was a keen rower, both during her university days and as an Oxford alumna. She competed as a member of the Oxford women's team that won their boat race in 1997. In 2024 (by which time she was a senior intelligence officer, of course), she was a regular member of the 'Women's Veterans' Boat Race Crew'. A website dedicated to competitive rowing features several pictures of her with others such as, for instance, Annamarie Phelps CBE, a former Olympian.⁸

I am sure that there is a metaphorical censor's pen at Vauxhall Cross, poised to remove these records of her previous activities. They've already had

⁵ See <<https://shorturl.at/aqZlY>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/nov/13/miniscule-amount-of-novichok-could-have-been-fatal-scientist-tells-inquiry>>.

⁶ See <<https://shorturl.at/yZ0b4>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9431853/MI6-chief-Richard-Moore-admits-went-half-dozen-lectures-Oxford-University.html>>.

⁷ See <<https://www.declassifieduk.org/abduction-and-denial-the-uks-role-in-torture/>>

⁸ She does appear to have been quite well-known in the rowing community. 'Hear the boat sing' – the website that 'covers all aspects of the rich history of rowing' – included her details in a piece reviewing the 'The Drama of the Dead Heat in 2024' <<https://heartheboatsing.com/2024/04/10/the-drama-of-the-dead-heat/>>.

Following the announcement of her appointment as 'C', the same site honoured her with her very own item: 'From CUWBC To C (Via Q)' <<https://heartheboatsing.com/2025/06/20/from-cuwbc-to-c-via-q/>>.

Both reports name numerous of her teammates and the opposing crew.

a go at the Companies House filing for her directorship of Wispway Properties Limited. For a brief time following the announcement that she will be the new 'C', the regular details for a company director (i.e. full name, date of birth and contact address) were listed for her. That page now has her not as 'Blaise Florence Metreweli' but just 'Not Available'!⁹ The Companies House listing for Wispway continues to give the other directors names, all of them with the same service address. So it is relatively safe to assume that it is a company set up for the leaseholders of a residential property.¹⁰

There are a number of other websites that also list the details from Companies House, so intrepid sleuths can follow the trail to still existent echoes. A quick glance at one such, 'companycheck', will reveal everything MI6 doesn't want you to see.¹¹

Plodding on....

As the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) plods ever onwards, I've noticed a couple of things that are worth mentioning. These are both somewhat old information, in terms of the life of the inquiry, but it's possible that you'll also have missed them – and therefore also missed their importance.

One is the statement of perhaps the first ever Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) officer. He has been given the 'Herne Nominal' HN299/HN342, and he spied on numerous organisations on the political left. These included the International Marxist Group, the Irish Solidarity Campaign, the Spartacist League of Britain and the Troops Out Movement. For the SDS he operated undercover with the name 'David Hughes' and, on his pre-SDS days, his statement says

I think that the success of the reporting that I did during that assignment [against the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in early '68]

⁹ See <<https://shorturl.at/8uMSj>> or <<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/officers/oW24DMA7DBKxNLS6WKMagPacXWY/appointments>>.

¹⁰ That address in London SW1 is not blurred on Google Streetview . . . yet! And it's convenient for her work, being a 10 minute drive or a pleasant 30 minute walk to 'Ceaşescu Towers' aka Vauxhall Cross.

¹¹ See <<https://shorturl.at/ufhTc>> or <<https://companycheck.co.uk/director/906995982/BLAISE-FLORENCE-METREWELI/companies>>. Just in case I've now Barbra Streisand-ed it, the page is archived at <<https://archive.ph/v2jTf>>. (If you don't understand this niche cultural reference, please see my 'South of the Border' from *Lobster* 86 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/86/south-of-the-border-10/>>.)

might have been one of the inspirations for the SDS being set up.¹²

So he's a man with a lot to answer for!

One of the Special Branch reports by 'David Hughes', dated 11/11/71, notes that the 'Spartacus League and International Marxist Group' had recently held a meeting in the 'small bedroom' of a member's flat. In spite of the room's size, a surprising thirteen people were present – and he recorded that 'four of [them] were females'.¹³ A man with an eye for the ladies? Slightly ominous, when one considers how a number of male SDS officers fathered children with the women upon whom they were spying.¹⁴

The second item of note, is how the officer known to the inquiry as HN4 has pleaded for anonymity – and he's ticked off!

I am sad and angry about the length of time this Inquiry is taking and that I will have to go on living with these feelings for years to come. I didn't have any sexual relationships whilst deployed and feel angry toward the undercover officers whose behaviour has led to this Inquiry.¹⁵

HN4's health has been medically assessed as being too vulnerable for him to be named, even via his cover ID. From what he has told the inquiry, he appears to be a little paranoid.

Whilst I don't think the people involved in the [group he spied on] were the type to be a risk of physical harm to me, I am concerned that they may, for example, post my details online and others *may* use that information to find me and *could* pose a threat to me. In particular, I think there *may* have been collusion between senior members of the [group he spied on] and other more violent organisations. [...] I am also worried that a lone wolf *might* take it into their own hands and pursue me as a less high profile and easier target. (Emphases added.)

And, reading further from his statement (at least, that which is not redacted), it seems that working undercover for the SDS caused this. All that is available in that particular section is the summary 'Sets out circumstances in which SDS

¹² See <<https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MPS-0745773.pdf>>.

¹³ See <<https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MPS-0732356.pdf>>. Many such reports that are reproduced on the inquiry's website show that copies were sent to 'Box 500', aka MI5.

¹⁴ See <<https://shorturl.at/AikGu>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14454913/Undercover-spy-cops-dated-targets-fathering-children.html>>

¹⁵ See <<https://shorturl.at/aVtb1>> or <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/3-20180530-DL-HN4_Open_Impact_Statement.pdf>.

career ended including health issues’.

Writing for *Consortium News*, Asa Winstanley has made the analogy that the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) should be seen as the equivalent of America’s Cointelpro/FBI scandal of the 1970s.¹⁶ He’s certainly right that the UK media attention should be bigger than it is: it should, in fact, be bigger than the US media attention that was focused on the US Senate Church Committee. Cointelpro existed from 1956 – 1971, a total of 15 years. The Special Demonstration Squad existed from 1968 – 2008, a total of 40 years!

The shitshow continues

Regular perusers of this column may recall my item from *Lobster* 78 on facial recognition.¹⁷ The 6th August report on the BBC news website that ‘Facial recognition tech mistook me for wanted man’¹⁸ informs us that the shitshow continues. Presumably, we are supposed to be comforted by the statement that

The Met, which announced last week that it would double its live facial recognition technology (LFR) deployments, and it . . . remained confident its use is lawful.

Which makes it perfectly alright then!

It’s not what you know.

William McGrath was the housemaster at the Kincora children’s home in Belfast, and a vicious abuser of young boys placed in his care. He was also an MI5 asset, which may explain why he got away with it for so long.¹⁹ There would seem to be some parallels with the recent scandal within the Church of England regarding John Smyth in that it’s not what you know but who you

¹⁶ See: <<https://consortiumnews.com/2021/03/17/britains-secret-political-police/>>. Our editor also makes reference to this in his recent book review of *Disclosure: Unravelling the Spycops Files* by Kate Wilson <<https://shorturl.at/cXqRd>> or <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/91/disclosure-unravelling-the-spycops-files-by-kate-wilson/>>.

¹⁷ See the second item of my ‘South of the Border’ in that issue <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/78/south-of-the-border-4/>>.

¹⁸ See <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cqxcg8v74d8jo>>.

¹⁹ See <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce39338ly70o>>.

know.²⁰

Weirdest book competition

In his 'View from the Bridge' in this issue, Robin Ramsay mentions a book by John Robles. As Robin points out, it's a self-published rant about NATO apparently being founded by Nazis. If you're into this wackier end of the conspiracy oeuvre then I'm sure you'll also enjoy *Kennedy's Last Stand: Eisenhower, UFOs, MJ-12 & JFK's Assassination* by Michael E. Salla.²¹ And . . . yes . . . it really does claim what you're thinking it claims.

²⁰ See <<https://shorturl.at/zh51M>> or <<https://news.sky.com/story/who-was-john-smyth-the-barrister-at-the-centre-of-the-church-of-england-abuse-cover-up-13252818>>.

²¹ Kealakekua, Hawai'i: Exopolitics Institute, 2013. The book is also, effectively, self-published, as Dr Salla owns Exopolitics Institute – exopolitics being 'the political study of the key actors, institutions and processes associated with extraterrestrial life'. See <<https://exopolitics.org/about/founder/>>.