

[Notice: Bedford River Events 2017](#)

When: During 2017

What's happening: Various Bedford river events.

[News story: GES Career Stories](#)

Danny Quinn – Economic Adviser at DFID

I joined DFID as a Fast Streamer in September 2011, having successfully navigated the awful horrors of first the FSAC and then the EAC (a joke! they aren't that bad – my tip, lots of caffeine and sugar, it's an endurance test as much as anything else). My first assistant economist post was in the Middle East and North Africa Department, which was rapidly expanding in the wake of the Arab Spring. This was very much a case of being in the right place at the right time, I had put DFID down as first choice but hadn't expected to get it as I knew it was very popular. Regardless, I took the opportunity and absolutely loved it. My work in MENAD was remarkably varied, from trips to the region, to cross-government meetings on sanctions to learning how to write a briefing like a good civil servant! Following a great year in MENAD, I held posts in the International Financial Institutions Department and DFID's Quality Assurance Unit. These posts gave me valuable insights into the international development system and the breadth of DFID's work. In 2014 however I finally got the opportunity I had been excited about since the day I joined DFID, the chance to go and work overseas!

I arrived in Sierra Leone in early 2014, nervous, bewildered and excited. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world and ranks near the bottom of almost every development index out there. Despite these hardships, Sierra Leoneans are some of the warmest, generous and most optimistic people I have ever met. In those first few months I began finding my feet, learning what is expected of an assistant economist in a country office. My main lesson was – there is no hiding! I may have been new blood but was expected to pull my weight, managing programmes, producing analysis on the Sierra Leonean economy and developing relationships with Sierra Leonean Government counterparts. In the summer, the situation changed fundamentally.

The Ebola virus, which had previously been confined to a small area of dense forest in neighbouring Guinea, entered Sierra Leone and began spreading rapidly. Ebola is terrifying, the mortality rate for those who caught it was well over 50% and the associated symptoms were catastrophic to the body. Those early days were full of fear; evacuations of staff and dependants, airlines closing flights, continual rumours of new cases popping up. However, despite this fog of desperation, the response in combatting this deadly virus

was truly astonishing and a privilege to see first-hand. UK government departments mobilised and got people on the ground; Public Health England, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and DFID. The remarkably brave nurses and doctors who volunteered to work in treatment centres were absolute modern day heroes. Finally, of course, the Sierra Leoneans who formed the bulk of the response, were resolute in the face of daily danger. My job changed almost overnight, as I began working on the systems for paying hazard pay to the Sierra Leoneans working in treatment centres or in burial teams, all of whom were assuming considerable risk.

Thankfully, the threat passed. Following Christmas, the number of new infections began to wane. On November 7 2015, the World Health Organisation declared the end of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone. We celebrated with gusto in Freetown but the rehabilitation process in Sierra Leone will continue for many years. I left Sierra Leone in the summer of 2016. There had of course been considerable lows, but I left with many great memories and a feeling of optimism for Sierra Leone. What the experience really demonstrated to me though is just how fragile everything is in the countries where DFID operates. While there may be an outward veneer of normalcy, these countries are remarkably vulnerable to crises, be they related to infectious diseases, climate change or the economy.

Working in DFID gives you the opportunity to address these vulnerabilities, mitigate them where possible and respond where necessary. I can't recommend it highly enough!

Malindi Myers – Economist at Office for National Statistics

When I graduated in economics, I had enjoyed my degree – I wanted to be an economist, and work in economics. In thinking about what I could do with my economics degree, I went to careers service who offered endless brochures and PR events for investment banks, accountancy firms, management consultancies, commercial banks with little information on how I could actually work as an economist!

Frustrated, I decided to do a Masters in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics. Fortunately a friend recommended a junior economist post at the Treasury, which I happily took and spent a couple of years finding my way as an up-start economist monitoring the UK's contributions to the EU Budget.

I was also making in-roads into the British rowing team, so after a year and a half as a junior economist, I took a few months away from work to concentrate on training and qualifying for the World Champs.

I returned to the civil service, to an economics role working on the UK's GDP data submission requirements for the EU (to Eurostat). I then went off to the European Commission on a secondment scheme that the European Commission run for young professionals, initially for six months but it turned into two and a half years! I worked on their global forecast model, coordinating input across country and regional desks. I really enjoyed the international

environment, the bright and open minded people that work at the heart of Europe, living in a foreign city and getting myself set up as a 'proper' economist!

I then applied to the GES and passed and came back to a fantastic job at the Treasury, with a great manager who helped me integrate and find my feet. I covered India, Pakistan and other bits of emerging Asia, which was so interesting at a time when globalisation was becoming very much centre stage in economic and political debate. My boss covered China and I covered India in the Treasury global team, so between us we covered about a third of the world's consumers. Gordon Brown, the chancellor at the time, was all over 'globalisation' and we had to supply endless facts and explanations for speeches, notes, etc. for him. Our facts were in the Chancellor's parliamentary speeches, and I was just one year in to my GES career.

I then moved over to cover Japan, the US and Canada – forecasting growth, providing briefing to senior officials and ministers, and analysing economic developments. I was in (professional) heaven! I was discovering my interest and enjoyment of macroeconomics, in the most central economic policy-making department. My assessments, forecasts and country economic data were in the Budget reports, Chancellor's speeches, UK official statements and fed into the UK economic forecast – I felt that my work really counted and mattered, and made a difference.

I am now at the Office for National Statistics, which is a non-ministerial department, independent of political pressure by design. It's at the centre of so much economic policy making, economic assessment, and economic commentary. I've done five posts during nine years in ONS including delivering the ONS's flagship monthly economic analysis article, and now over-seeing the economics profession in the ONS.

I have been working as an economist for most of twenty years, and in the GES for thirteen years. I love it!

Cabinet Secretary pledges to stand against inequality, violence and abuse on International Women's Day

Leading a debate in the Senedd, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“The first International Women's Day took place over 100 years ago. Since then it has grown into a truly global event – a day when the achievements of girls and women are recognised irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, wealth or politics. It

is an excellent example of how people can come together, as one, for a common cause.

“Shining a spotlight on inequality and presenting the stark evidence that exists to show how women are still being treated unfairly can only facilitate meaningful change. Men have a duty to speak out on inequality, violence and abuse. We need an International Women’s Day because those battles are not yet won. Until that time comes, I’m proud to stand with those who call out the abusers, the sexists and the denigrators of women – whoever they may be and wherever they may peddle their poisonous misogyny.”

The theme for International Women’s Day in Wales this year is ‘Creating an Equal Future’ and the Cabinet Secretary highlighted action the Welsh Government is taking to enhance the lives and opportunities of girls and women across Wales.

He said:

“Creating an Equal Future” chimes well with the Welsh Government’s aims and commitments. From tackling poverty, delivering a more diverse pool of decision-makers in public life, lessening the pay gap, supporting women back to work after having children and tackling violence and abuse, our Equality Objectives ensure that action is focused on the areas which disproportionately affect women and the other protected groups.

“We must recognise the importance of men playing their part in working for gender equality. We all have a part to play. Without men as committed allies, and supportive partners in this quest led by women, genuine change will not happen. The positive impacts of gender equality are good for all of us, our families and society as a whole.

“We must also stand together against domestic abuse and other types of violence against women, which can have devastating and long-lasting consequences. The key is to change attitudes and get the message across that violent behaviour is not acceptable in any circumstances, and will not be tolerated in our society.

“This is a day to celebrate the achievements of women. We are not complacent – there is more to be done before we can claim to have ‘created an equal future’. But Wales has much to be proud of and we stand committed to supporting women and girls to aspire and achieve.”

Tories and SNP need to listen on the budget



By Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale MSP

Tomorrow, Tory Chancellor Philip Hammond will continue to pursue his failed austerity agenda.

Time and again, the Tories have been shown up for failing to grow our economy.

Real wages are down, while the cost of living is up. Hard-working families are being squeezed, while the Tories refuse to ask the richest in society to pay their fair share.

It is society's most vulnerable that are paying the price of Tory failures. And Theresa May's pursuit of a hard Brexit will only make the situation worse.

Mr Hammond will continue to try to balance the books at the expense of the worst-off, while his boss simultaneously wrecks our economy by pulling us out of the single market.

It doesn't have to be this way.

The last Labour government presided over the longest period of sustained economic growth since the Second World War. We delivered tax credits and the minimum wage, to name just a few policies designed to help – not punish – hard-working families.

That is the kind of agenda Philip Hammond should be pursuing – and I have written to him setting out Labour's demands.

With austerity having failed and Brexit a profound threat to the Scottish and UK economies, a change of course is not just necessary – it is vital.

I want to the Tories to:

- Reverse planned welfare cuts.
- Do more support for our North Sea oil and gas industry.
- Take action to end the anomaly by which the police and fire services in Scotland are required to pay VAT, at a cost of around £35 million a year.

Policies that disproportionately affect women and lead to increases in child poverty are fundamentally unacceptable. That's why he should reverse planned social security cuts.

But here in Scotland, we also have the powers to take a different path. Our Scottish Parliament has the ability to make the richest pay their fair share. But we know that Nicola Sturgeon – the anti-austerity champion of the 2015 General Election – has been found out.

Where she could tax the richest, she has chosen to cut £170million out of local services. Where she could invest in education, she instead argues for a tax-cut for first-class air passengers. Where she could focus on building a fairer, more progressive society, she instead obsesses over breaking up the UK.

The SNP has turned the Scottish Parliament into a conveyor belt for Tory austerity, with a government whose only aim is to drive a wedge between us and our nearest neighbours.

I will always fight austerity economics and nationalist politics – be that from the Tories or the SNP. I will always stand-up for hard-working families, because that’s what Labour politicians do.

It was pressure from Scottish Labour that finally forced the SNP into action over the bedroom tax. Thousands of people are better off in Scotland today because we never gave up the fight, despite nationalist reluctance.

Just last week, I put forward our plan to use the new powers of the Scottish Parliament to top-up child benefit – a move that could take 30,000 children out of poverty.

These are the kind of policies Labour will fight for.

I hope Philip Hammond and Nicola Sturgeon sit-up, take notice and realise there is a better way.

This article first appeared in the Daily Record

[Press release: Colin Allar’s response to the recent ofsted inspection of Oakhill STC](#)

Colin Allar’s, YJB Chief Executive, response to the recent ofsted inspection of Oakhill STC

Colin Allars, Chief Executive of the YJB said:

“The improvements Oakhill STC has made on academic achievement, resettlement and staffing have been positively recognised by the inspection teams.

“It is clear, though, that more needs to be done to effectively address the levels of violence and other concerns raised in this report.

“We are working with the provider to raise their performance so that the expected standards of service and care are met fully.”

Note to editors

Read the report on the [Ofsted website](#)