

THE ROYAL SOCIETY

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*With the Secretary's Compliments*

COMMONWEALTH SECTION

between Malcolm, son of Mr and Mrs I. J. Hancock, of Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire, and Juliet, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs M. Kinchin-Smith, of Epwell, Oxfordshire.

## Nutritionist's prize

The Royal Society of Arts has awarded the R. B. Bennett Commonwealth Prize for 1984 to Dr M. S. Swaminathan, FRS, director general of the International Rice Research Institute, Los Banos, Philippines, for his contributions to agriculture and human nutrition.

lower school production of *Macbeth* on December 12, 13 and 14. Term ends with the carol service on December 15.

## Church news

Church of Scotland  
Appointments

The Rev J Macdonald, from Newbattle to Gairloch and Dundonnell.  
The Rev Margaret G. McLeen, associate minister, Isle of Mull, to community minister, Annandale and Eskdale.

Retirements

The Rev J Caldwell, from Abernethy and Dron with Arngask.  
The Rev T M Phillips, from Carlisle with St Andrew's West Linton.  
The Rev H Macpherson, from Grantshouse and Houndwood with Reston.

Dr R. W. Baltarbee was the guest speaker at the opening meeting of the Autumn session of the discussion circle of the Royal Overseas League held at Over-Seas House, St James's, last night. Mrs Elizabeth Cresswell presided.

## Latest appointments

Mr J. G. M. Laws to be First Junior Treasury Counsel, Common Law, in succession to Mr Simon Brown.

Vice-Admiral Sir Simon Cassels to be promoted Admiral on November 15.

## Science report

# Falkland spiders link to New Zealand

By Tony Samstag

A study of spider species in the Falkland Islands suggests that the region may be a missing link between the famously isolated fauna of New Zealand and the rest of the world.

If the "Gondwanaland" hypothesis is correct, and there was once a monolithic southern continent that broke apart to form the various continents that exist today, it follows that slight resemblances among species might remain, however far apart their environments drifted and however divergent their evolutions became over the intervening aeons. Intermediate regions between the continents might also, logically, have evolved intermediate kinds of species or subspecies.

Only five people have seriously studied the spiders of

the Falklands; there is little published material on them, almost no knowledge of their lifestyles, and none of the 19 species recorded is known to have acquired a popular English name.

Of seven species of spider collected on Beauchene Island, the most isolated of the Falklands archipelago, two very small species of the Mynogleninae sub-family of money spiders strongly suggest a New Zealand origin.

Mynogleninae have been recorded previously only in New Zealand, except for a few species in upland areas of southern Africa and one possible species in Australia. *Falklandoglenes spinosa* is a typical member of its sub-family, thought likely to represent a remnant popu-

lation isolated for millions of years after the break-up of Gondwanaland, and is the first record of a new world Mynoglenina.

*Beauchenia striata* is less convincingly a Mynoglenina, although its male palpal organ is typical of the sub-family. It may, however, be the only spider with an uncoloured flap of skin projecting downwards from under its eyes and shielding part of the fangs.

A recent series of Falklands postage stamps portrays two species of spider; more than half of the indigenous species may remain to be discovered.

Source: "Spiders in the Falklands Islands", by Dr Michael B. Usher, newsletter from the Falkland Islands Foundation, no 2, August, 1984 (PO Box 9, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 1BY).

14TH SEPTEMBER 1984



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R.B. BENNETT COMMONWEALTH PRIZE

With the approval of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, President of the Royal Society of Arts, the Society's Council has awarded the R.B. Bennett Commonwealth Prize for 1984 to Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, FRS, Director General of the International Rice Research Institute, Los Banos, Philippines, for his contributions to agriculture and human nutrition.

This Prize, of 100 guineas, is awarded every three years for an outstanding contribution to the arts, agriculture, industry or commerce. It commemorates Viscount Bennett, a former Prime Minister of Canada, and President of the Society, 1945-47.

Dr. Swaminathan has held his present position since April 1982. The Institute in Los Banos in the Philippines is internationally renowned and has done pioneering work in developing new strains of rice which have helped to enhance agricultural progress and human nutrition in a number of developing

countries in the Far East. Previously Dr. Swaminathan took a major part in helping his own country, India, to reap the benefits of the Green Revolution, as researcher and teacher at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute and later as Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Agricultural Research and Education. He was Permanent Secretary with the Ministry of Agriculture and later served as a Member of the Planning Commission in charge of agriculture, rural development, science and technology. He is currently President of the Indian Society of Genetics and Plant Breeding and was the President of the XV International Congress of Genetics held in New Delhi in December 1983. From 1981, he has been the Independent Chairman of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1973. Twenty universities in India and abroad have conferred on him Doctor of Science degrees (honoris causa).