

Graffito 48

Libraries

Countryside

and the British

Council

The search to understand the application of the marketing concept to management education at Cranfield was greatly assisted in a series of assignments with which I became involved. As the title suggests, they were with libraries, the countryside and the British Council. Each one was subjected during the seventies to pressures that opened a yawning gap between what the providers felt they wanted to offer by way of service and the resources available to them by way of subsidies. So the challenge was precisely the same as that I have already described under Privatising the First in Graffito 46. However, only in the case of the British Council did the key answer appear to be similar to ours at Cranfield.

Our libraries' work culminated in a book entitled *The Beneficial Library*, penned with my colleague Christine Oldman. It began simply enough as an exercise in seeking a better understanding of how to offer library support most effectively to student managers on the Cranfield MBA programme. A goodly sample kept a diary of their information needs as they arose for six months, how they set about meeting them and with what success.

At once it became clear that on a programme as intensive and as structured as a taught MBA, needs were in the main dictated by the tutors leading the several courses. If the tutor recommended the library everybody came; if the tutor did not, the students did not. There was a conclusion. We were obviously researching the wrong audience or at least missing out on the key brokers in the process. What, one might wonder, led tutors to suggest their students should use the library?

The extent to which any library in such circumstances could contribute beneficially on a proactive as opposed to a reactive basis, was obviously circumscribed by the librarian/tutor relationship. Yet most efforts had gone into user education for the library.

Such a conclusion is obviously not the case when an individual student is conducting a literature search for an independent piece of research. But on structured courses, it was valid not only in the MBA context but more widely. For a university library to be marketing-oriented required a careful understanding of the educational structure and processes of the diverse programmes offered, i.e. a close liaison and integration with faculty.

The customary behaviour of getting faculty to liaise with the library and vice versa who were already interested was frequently going to give a very biased view of what was happening educationally to the student body at large.

The countryside was a more difficult concept although perhaps similarly relaxing to a library. Most of my exposure to the countryside from a marketing perspective was, alas, via secondary sources. However, one obvious question was asked early on: what does the countryside mean to its consumers? The answer contained the key to a marketing bonanza that delivered greatly increased benefits at no extra cost. Resources were simply diverted from high cost/low benefit applications.

For any middle-class individual brought up either in the country or accustomed to driving out to a pub for a Sunday drink or evening dinner, the countryside was the absence of folk and if too many began to consume it, it lost its value, at least temporarily. And if it was commercialised at all, then it lost its value permanently. As such, the fewer visitors the National Park had, the greater the pleasure the individual consumer of peace and quiet could gain.

For the majority by far, however, the countryside meant "something green". A field nearby, a canal side towpath, common land on which to walk a dog. It didn't mean a formalised park although that had virtually all the same ingredients. It was necessary to scramble through a fence or over a stile and needed a walk or a short drive to get to it. It had little nothing to do with National Parks, which were absorbing almost all the resources the state chose to make available and which were inaccessible to virtually all the country's inhabitants.

To increase benefit from the countryside, it was necessary to adopt a customer-based definition what it meant. Funds were channelled into country parks, riverside walks and canal restoration schemes - the latter often in association with Manpower Services Commission job creation schemes and like.

As with librarians, marketing had helped us to seek an answer that the intended beneficiary of subsidised countryside service could relate with, rather than telling us all what we should appreciate. This conclusion is not very far removed from our latter day conclusions on management education outlined in Graffiti 42 and 44.

The British Council's situation concerned teaching English as a foreign language worldwide. It is hard to imagine a better brand name under which to market and sell the English language than the British Council's Royal Charter. Yet they were losing money and market share worldwide when colleagues at Lancaster University's Marketing Department began looking at the situation and subsequently asked me to get involved briefly.

Market share was being lost to private institutions (not always sure they are doing the job properly you know), and to American schools - huh! At British Council, there was a widespread belief, as there always is in subsidised institutions, that all we needed was a bigger grant in aid from the Government or somebody other than their customers. The fact that private schools worldwide made a suitable return on capital employed seemed to escape their notice. Happy to report, the work of Lancaster University's team and committed senior officers in the British Council turned matters round. Once it became absolutely clear that an ever-growing subsidy was not on, the intrapreneurial talent surfaced - or was called to the fore as it had been at Cranfield. Today the teaching of English worldwide by the British Council flourishes and is economically most worth while.

My involvement in these three areas while at Cranfield made me enduringly curious about the marketing concept in non-profit organisations. It was noteworthy, incidentally, that many were staffed by part-timers or even volunteers. One such was the St. John Ambulance, who asked us at IMCB in 1986 to develop its County Directors to be more effective at marketing and selling their first aid training. St John is in a duopoly market with the Red Cross in Britain, offering first aid training

particularly to industrial customers who must, under safety legislation, train their staff regularly. The public image of St John's Brigade at football matches is a long way from the substance of what goes on. One of my colleagues developed the most detailed training resources and ran action planning workshops across the country to ensure careful market analysis accompanied by sales training was undertaken.

Our most recent experiences have been with head teachers in schools in Surrey and Lincolnshire and the professions with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Chartered Institute of Transport. The latter two I will discuss later under Graffito 59, Professional Pals. School headteachers came into our sights because the Department of Education and Science in 1986 resolved to make management education for headteachers its national in-service training priority area No. 1.

As a Business School, we pondered what we could do. We concluded that the quick-fix approach was not for us at IMCB and we launched with HMI a full-scale MBA-style programme directed exclusively to school management. We called it our Master of Educational Management (MEd (Mgt)) and 29 teachers are nearing completion of the initial pilot schemes as I write. The impact on them, as on us, has been startling. Just as startling as startling it was with my library colleagues ten years previously at Cranfield. Their analysis of their markets for the output of their school was clearly determined in order of priority as: (1) employment generally; (2) self actualisation; (3) further education as a route to (1) or (2) above.

In achieving these output goals, schools are vitally concerned with the individual wishes of students as they mature, and of their parents. To accept quite clearly that parents and students are key customers, and that employers are customers as well for the outputs of their schools, in addition to universities and colleges, requires the most stringent evaluation of resource allocation, curriculum design, cultural influences and the like.

Oh, so many teachers in schools (as in universities and business schools) have not been outside the educational confines. The ladder of school, university, teacher training and school again is often the breadth of their experience. It is not surprising that their teaching of industrial matters reflects the sociologically depressing news of the 19th century and gives little or nothing on the achievements of industry in creating wealth in society. Our MEd (Mgt) programme quite specifically requires that head teachers must at least go to industrialists to learn how to manage their school - not how to teach or what to teach but how to manage finite resources to accomplish whatsoever teachers resolve should be their schools' goals. The devolution of financial management responsibilities to schools is, as I indicated in Graffito 46 for Continuing Studies at Cranfield, one of the most powerful motivators available. I do not see it as an end in itself but I do see the heart of management responsibility as having sufficient authority and autonomy to manage scarce resources having alternative uses among competing ends.

My concluding Graffito 40 in *Business School Graffiti* in 1976 was entitled Creme Caramel. It was reflections on the power of the comparative method of research. The examples I have given above of libraries, countryside, the English language, first aid and educational management, all made an inestimable contribution to my own understanding of management itself and the opportunities open to me for the managerial conduct of my current office as Principal of IMCB.

Graffito 49

How High is a Doctor?

I had entered the academic world in 1965 directly from industry and without any higher degrees, although I held the Diploma in Management Studies with distinction, from Slough Technical College, now under the aegis of the CNAA. So I resolved fairly early on it was appropriate to put that right.

As a practising academic, most institutions offer faculty the opportunity not to submit a thesis for Master or Doctor but instead to table published works. I had a considerable plenty of these so I set about looking for the key strands in them in order to produce an explication for my examiners. I first submitted at the University of Bradford in 1972 but my transfer to Cranfield prevented any conclusion. Next, I tried my alma mater, the University of Reading. Here I submitted all the relevant documentation via the Department of Economics as there was no Business School as such. But I drew a blank with the conclusion that what I submitted did not amount to a higher doctorate. Finally, I submitted on my home territory for what was known as Doctor of Science (DSc).

The faculty had difficulty gathering together three external examiners and it took my colleagues over a year but the end result was the same as at Reading. It was not what they had in mind for a higher doctorate. They thought I might make Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) if I cared to submit for that. So I did although only after being referred back by a professor at my oral examination who admitted he had not read the books I had tabled as my submission. Extraordinary. No names, no pack-drill.

When the result came through, I had already left Cranfield to become Principal of IMCB in Buckingham. The Secretary of the University overlooked letting me know and phoned me just a few days before the graduation ceremony which alas, therefore, I missed. Nonetheless, I am authorised to carry the letters PhD alter my name, indicating Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing and Logistics, based on my explication of and contribution to the development of Marketing Studies in British Universities 1965-82.

Ironically, while all this doctoral submitting was going on, I undertook a detailed evaluative assessment of the continuing studies work I had responsibility for at Cranfield and submitted it to The Open University as a thesis. I gained my Master of Philosophy degree there in Educational Administration (MPhil). Then in 1984, our Canadian associates at Northland Open University conferred on me the academic degree *honoris causa* of Doctor of Administration (DAdmin).

This personal saga left a deep impression on me. I was not unduly bitter because I was knocked by Reading and Cranfield for my higher doctorates although I would have liked to believe they felt I was worthy. Rather I became determined to delineate at IMCB a different approach to doctoral awards for the business school faculty member and, even more importantly, for the senior executive. We have established three major descriptions internationally - Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) and Doctor of letters (DLitt). All three can be obtained by explication and the DBA and DPhil can also be gained by coursework thesis. In all doctoral studies we expect action learning to be present, but the primary requirement introduced has been that the output is either

already published or publishable. As its most extreme statement, we welcome published books with unpublished technical/explanatory appendices. It is, we argue, most important that what has been learnt and written about should be widely disseminated.

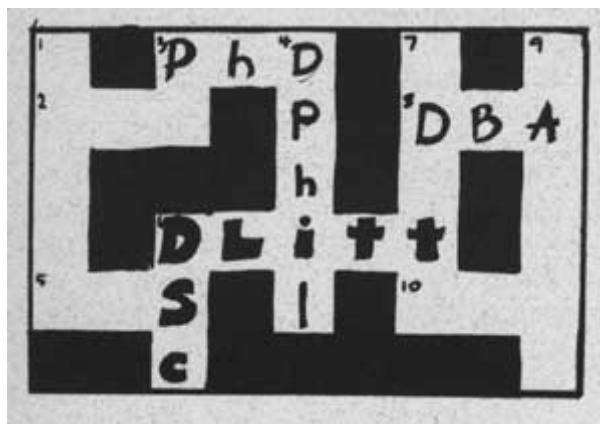
All those submitting for their doctorates must offer a public workshop as well as their published works and must demonstrate how it has been applied to their own enterprise.

Our most profound innovation is what we call the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) for Chief Executive Officers. Over a period of two years, CEOs meet on a rotating basis within their own enterprises inviting the others to listen and dissect the corporate strategic analyses and plans that they have developed. Then the brains trust's views must be noted and internally shared with the CEOs' fellow directors prior to preparation of a portfolio of corporate strategic plans and an explication of the processes of general management. Finally, all CEOs together convene an open public workshop for invited guests and the external examiners.

We are using our DBA at IMCB to capture the imagination, then to focus and develop the intellectual leadership of CEOs in a way few other schools are attempting. We are doing so because, beyond any reasonable doubt, it is clear that the quality of intellectual leadership and enterprise at the top determines the emphasis on quality throughout. From such an exercise in top management development springs a wide array of issues that can be parcelled out to upcoming managers as dissertation topics at MBA level or simply as action learning development projects, without any formal qualification involved.

The balance and larger part of our doctoral work, however, is more scholarly in the traditional sense. Advanced doctoral seminars are followed in key areas of management, a short dissertation is prepared on the open DBA on business policy specifically focusing on entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship, then a major thesis is required on an issue of strategic significance for the manager's own enterprise. It and the DPhil programmes are only open by such study to action learners with a Master's degree already to their credit.

The contrast between my own views today on doctoral work for a business school and the traditional pattern is profound. Many doctoral candidates in business schools are young individuals with little or no managerial experience. Their work in the UK is a major thesis and the preoccupation throughout is with sophisticated research methodology. Little if any significance is accorded to the application of knowledge by the researcher or to the conclusions themselves. The doctorate is little more but no less than a fine exercise in research methods training and defence of the approach adopted. The completion rate, incidentally, is very poor indeed.



Because so few resources are available for such scientific work and because so little expertise is available to the candidate by way of support, the output of doctoral studies is of little or no consequence to the business school. They are, as I said, predominantly a research training. Doctor of Philosophy is a gross misnomer although I wish very much it were not so.

The word doctor can, however, be returned to its root meaning. The opportunity for grounded, phenomenological theorising and philosophising can be readily and enthusiastically embraced.

Work that cares not for the relevance or significance of its outcomes except the development of the research skills of the candidates must be recognised for what it is. Yet we need true Doctors of Business Administration, of Philosophy in Management and of Management letters and they should be

what you expect them to be.

None of which is to belittle what is the highest qualification designation in the academy. Rather, I seek to redefine it and bring it to a vital role in the development of managerial effectiveness.

Graffito 50

If at First You Don't Succeed

"...try once again and then do something else", suggested Peter Drucker in *Managing for Results*. I took his advice as recorded in Graffito 49 for my doctorate and I took it again in my quest for the top management job in a UK Business School. In 1972, Bradford University preferred an engineer to me and Cranfield did the same again in 1982. In both competitions, I was an inside candidate with a strong record of major involvement in the School's general work and I conceded victory to one less involved. Was I sorry for myself? Well, yes, but having lost twice, I resolved to seek to understand myself better.

For better for worse, the analysis I found I could live with (and act upon) was that I was a good leader for start-up situations and disasters. My loving wife said I was better at disasters, when my back was against the wall. No matter. I seemed to flourish best when vision and good news were both needed. I had better therefore seek out and find such circumstances if I wanted to be a Principal of a Business School. Thus far I had played both roles successfully as No 2 or No 3 within a School. Because I had done my part well, my own boss had drawn credit (why not? He chose me) but I worked myself out of the successor role when he came to leave.

Graffito 36 in *Business School Graffiti*, entitled Huff and Puff, explored my Bradford University disappointment. So I shall concentrate here on Cranfield. May I begin by saying that at no time did I play any cards in any conscious way to get the top job until the lists of applicants were officially opened. When I arrived at Cranfield in 1972, in any event, the Head of School had ten years to go before his CBE.

In 1980, however, he first raised the matter of his retirement, asking me what I thought he should do. I proposed he should go quickly rather than slowly. The declining years of any senior manager are most difficult times. He has no long-term perspective to manage towards and he cannot obviously prefer any individual who may have a claim because he has no control over the ultimate choice. Worse still in our world, to maximise one's pension one must maximise earnings in the final years. With a fixed salary structure, this can only be done by hanging on to as many sinecures as may be, which attract extra rewards, e.g. Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Head of School Dean and the like. A decorous retreat to a professorial role would make sense managerially but not pension-wise. So it was to be. He soldiered on to the end of his natural term in all offices, nominating as his deputy at all times an individual who had no intention of taking up his office. Indeed, his deputy himself took a year off to teach Business Studies in the sixth form of a public school as the decisive time drew near.

The short list was eventually narrowed down to the two of us. Engineer and Marketer. Cambridge and Harvard graduate versus Reading and The Open University. Winner versus loser. We were asked to prepare a discussion paper for the development of the School and this became the focus of our

interviews. We knew all the appointing committee members since they were by and large the Heads of the other Schools on the campus - 80 per cent engineers and scientists. After the first session, we were asked to offer supplementary written ideas. That was in December 1981. Silence until April 1982. I was then politely told by the Vice-Chancellor that the other man had been offered the job and accepted it.

I remember my reply well. "Oh dear", I said. "I may not be the right man but he certainly isn't either." He held the job for two-and-a-half years, I left to become Director General of the British Institute of Management, where he stayed nine months.



I can think of several reasons why I was not the right man for the job either in Bradford or Cranfield, as well as dreaming of what might have been. But at Cranfield they chose a very talented teacher, who did not enjoy the work of management and had shown no interest in it during his eleven years in the School prior to his appointment. What on earth possessed the appointing committee? What theory of academic leadership did they have? Or are they so naive as to believe that anyone can be a manager or that management is an inferior art and science even in a School of Management?

Cranfield, of course, flourishes to this day as one of the leading Schools of Management so they are right at a satisfying level but what opportunities were missed?

However, as Peter Drucker said ... do something else. I asked the Vice-Chancellor for a second meeting and for his advice. He said: "Leave Cranfield and prove us wrong"; by which he meant go and develop in the Business School world along the lines I had sought unsuccessfully to convince him were appropriate. I took him at his word, which is another yarn.

Since 1967 I had been involved with a group of faculty mainly drawn from the University of Bradford Management Centre, in academic management publishing. From modest hobbyist beginnings with a single journal, *Management Decision*, an enterprise employing today nearly 100 people worldwide has blossomed with over 50 journals in print. It is known as MCB University Press and is the largest English language academic management serial publisher in the world.

My Cranfield blues in 1982 post-dated my MCB University Press colleague's blues from Hull University but coincided with the blues of two more at Bradford University Management Centre. We

met in Lincoln at the White Hart Hotel in November 1982 and resolved to launch IMCB. It was in the very room where the First World War inventors of the tank had convened. For me the appeal was not only that it was a start-up situation but that it was to be market-driven, based on action learning. As I have indicated in Graffiti 41 and 42, that's where I wanted to be and my success/failure analysis seemed to indicate it was where I ought to be. Additionally, of course, my Vice-Chancellor had thrown down the gauntlet anyway.

I was surprised that my two Bradford University colleagues in the publishing house shared the blues that my colleague from Hull and I had got. It meant that we could swing the resources of the publishing house behind the new School with a vengeance because two of the other three owners/partners in MCB University Press were close confidants of mine at Cranfield and resolved to make the break as well.

The man who stayed behind at Cranfield was a fellow marketing and logistics academic with whom I had worked at Bradford and Cranfield since 1967. It was an uncomfortable parting of the ways because not only did he stay at Cranfield but also resolved to withdraw from the publishing house. It took us some while to raise the funds to buy out his stake in MCB University Press, bearing in mind that all resources were focused in the new School for its launch.

As a team we ran a successful and growing publishing house. Whether we were ideal as a management team to launch a Business School was yet to be discerned. A merchant banking friend remarked at the time, however, that we had one vital ingredient for success. We had worked together for a long while before, knew one another well, and had seen good and bad times together and survived. Much of the balance of this book relates to my work from 1982 to 1987, as Principal of IMCB, to a period of time when I took up the gauntlet the Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield threw down. In Graffiti 52 I will reflect on his influence on me while I was at Cranfield and since I left.

Graffiti 51

The xxxx Run

The point was made earlier that Australia was the largest contributing overseas country to Cranfield's MBA programme. A Cranfield in Sydney Club flourishes to this day. It was not surprising, therefore, that I made a sabbatical visit to the University of Western Australia in 1980, as my term of office as Chairman of Continuing Studies came to an end. From there it was but a short psychological step to apply jointly with my Cranfield R&D colleague for the advertised Chair of Management at the University of Queensland in 1981.

Our joint proposal took the University a lot by surprise. We both wanted a full-time Chair for five years to launch a University of Queensland Business School, focused on the Asia Pacific Region. It was to be in partnership with local industry. The Vice-Chancellor in Queensland, a Northern Irishman recently arrived from the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor in Canada at Simon Fraser University, responded in good faith. After initial interview in London, he flew us both out to Brisbane not only for interviews over a week-long session but also to meet and explore our ideas with local businessmen.

The senior industrialists and public servants in the State worked with us at the University on a brainstorming session and agreed to raise \$A 250,000 to endow the plans we had outlined. This was achieved in exactly one week. They were impressed but, much more mightily, so were we. In

comparison with the pattern of top-level industrial involvement in the UK at the time, this was truly invigorating.

Our plan went further, however, than simply developing a University of Queensland Business School with an Asian Pacific perspective. We wanted to convince our colleagues at Cranfield that a Queensland/Cranfield link would make good sense for them too. If I had been successful in the competition for Head of the School at Cranfield, no problems would have arisen over such a linkage although I would not have been able to take five-year secondment to the University of Queensland. However, the winner at Cranfield did not like the scheme and I reluctantly declined the Queensland offer, going instead to IMCB as Principal in Buckingham. Queensland for its part did not move ahead with an IMCB link because we were a start-up organisation and wholly unknown. Nonetheless it will be apparent from the fact that I am penning these graffiti as a Visiting Professor of the Graduate School of Management of the University of Queensland that something did come of the XXXX run in 1981/82 and that our relationship has been sustained.

My colleague, Cranfield's R&D Director, took up office as Professor of Management and Director of the University of Queensland Business School from 1982 to 1984. At that juncture, a very able local academic who had worked with us throughout and remained as Administrative Head of the Department of Management, took up total responsibility School, which eventually became the Graduate School of Management in 1987. A goodly range of company programmes was developed in association with two other tertiary institutions in the State, the Queensland Institute of Technology and Griffiths University. My former colleague from Cranfield and also a partner in MCB University Press reverted to his role of research and development on an in-company basis.

The Asia Pacific connection and the European connection failed to materialise, however, until 1988, when the first dozen SE Asian students travelled to join the MBA programme in Brisbane. More will follow but, most importantly, it is hoped sooner rather than later to deliver at least the first half of the Queensland MBA in East Asia with the balance on the Brisbane campus.

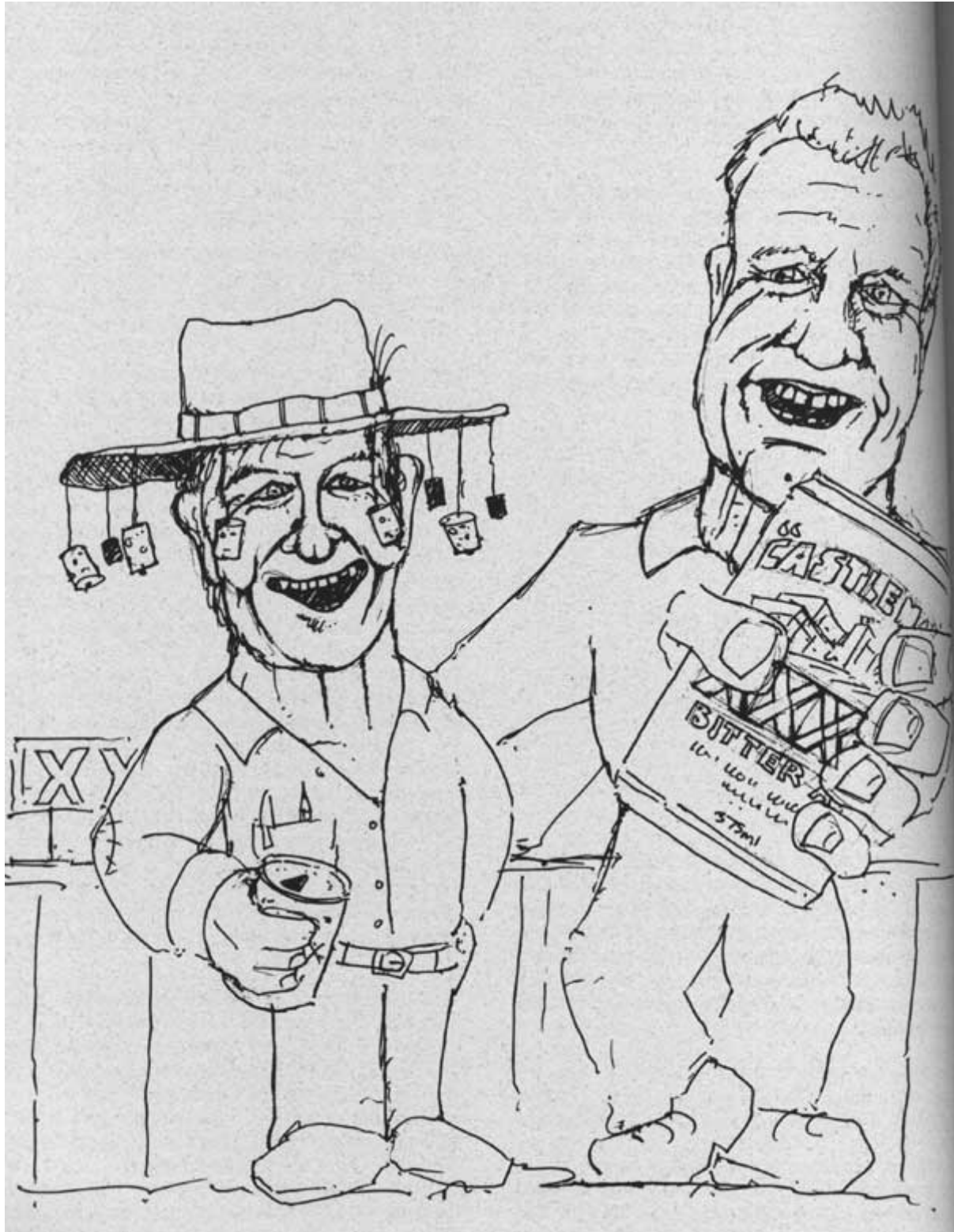
What Queensland University and Cranfield did not do however; IMCB was able to accomplish, albeit modestly. I will describe elsewhere how we went directly ashore from the UK into Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia and, more recently, into Brunei and Vanuatu. We did not bring the managers we worked with for IMCB's MBA back to the UK but we sent the faculty there instead to work with the not inconsiderable local talent ready to be involved in the IMCB network.

In January 1987, with the University of Queensland Graduate School deliberately committed to traditional programmes of study for MBA, my MCB University Press partner in Brisbane resolved that the time had arrived to initiate IMCB in Australia. He gathered a team together in Toowong at a splendid Chinese restaurant to decide what to do next. I attended. By September 1987, he and his colleagues locally had signed up and commenced Australia's first-ever in-company MBA programme with ICI. They also had a major programme under way with ACI, the packaging enterprise. Finally, a joint venture was concluded with the Australian Institute of Personnel Management in Victoria, to offer IMCB's Master's in Human Resource Management to all its members initially in Melbourne.

These developments readily convinced me that, as Principal of IMCB, I had to join them for at least four months in Brisbane. With 1988 targeting to have up to 100 Australian managers on Master's programmes, which would amount to nearly one-fifth of all IMCB's candidates worldwide, it required that I ensured they did not go off at a tangent nor relearn old lessons unnecessarily.

I decamped therefore from Buckingham, with my family and my secretary, to join Pacific Region operations in Brisbane. My colleagues who stayed behind in the UK, who were accustomed to my continuous presence for better or worse, were initially uncertain whether it was too smart an idea. I was convinced my judgement was valid for two reasons. First, I had an important transference role to play as Australia took off as a major centre for IMCB's work. Second, and equally importantly, after

five years as Principal, the senior team in the UK needed to develop even greater self-reliance in the management of IMCB than it had already gained. I frequently recalled in conversation the old crack about the boss who went away on a course: who learnt most, the boss who went away on a course or the staff who stayed behind and got on with the job? In reality, we could all learn a great deal and it was vital for the organic network faculty model we had espoused in IMCB.



Paradoxically my presence in Brisbane was not under any circumstances intended to make them

dependent on me or on IMCB from the UK. Quite the reverse. I was intent on encouraging independence of action within the framework of IMCB philosophies and procedures. To the dismay of my control-oriented colleagues, I took to mis-quoting what I think is St Augustine's definition of a good Christian: love IMCB and do what you like.

From the very inception of thoughts that Australia could get up and run with IMCB's ideas, it was plain as a pikestaff to me that it must gain maximum autonomy at the earliest possible moment. Either this meant a painful long distance telex, fax and telephone growing-up phase, or a sprint start with me as coach. The latter was my choice. As we had been timely in the UK with our launch in 1982/83, so too were we timely in Australia. It was not luck, it was good judgement. We were not the trend setters so much as the first organisation in the market that offered the services that the market knew and said they wanted. We entered in Australia what Drucker has often defined as a growth market, that is a market where conventional offerings are at a maximum distance from what is known to be most effective. We were for practising managers in Australia, as we are in England, the answer to their fervent prayers. We are a disciplined intellectual treatment of their real challenges such that they can address them more effectively and learn.

How else could we explain our blue chip and almost only blue chip client list worldwide? How could we explain ICI and ACI for starters in Australia, as we had landed IDV, NatWest Bank and Dow Corning in the UK within our first six months? How could we explain that others had followed such as Du Pont, Midland Bank, Metal Box, Arthur Young, Jones Lang Wootton, Cummins Engines, Seagram, Allied Irish Banks, the Manpower Services Commission, Westpac, Ford of Europe, British Rail, Pilkington, CASE and the rest?

Our Queensland timing was interestingly coincidental with Alan Bond's establishment of Australia's first private university, Bond University, in the same State. Sensibly located on the Gold Coast, where ample out-of-season accommodation was available to students, it was exhilarating to watch the Bond University team step forward in grand style in comparison with the modest goals our close neighbours in the UK at the University of Buckingham espoused. Bond began with \$A 260,000,000 as the endowment fund; Buckingham spent fifteen years raising £8,000,000 (\$A 20,000,000)

The local community on the Gold Coast generally welcomed the Bond University Initiative and its Vice-Chancellor was called on by the Commonwealth Minister for Employment Education and Training to advise on the financial restructuring and development of university education in Australia.

The critics were there too with the familiar arguments that it should be free, not sold at \$A 36,000 for a Bachelor's degree programme. And if not enough was available from the state for university education to be free for all, selection should keep places for those most able to gain admission. In a world of finite resources from the state and a worldwide tax-cutting environment, egged on at the time by New Zealand making a bid as a South Pacific corporate tax haven, such a strategy could only mean far fewer university education places than customers wanted.

Yet even an indigenous Australian provision for all who could remotely qualify if it had been forthcoming flew in the face of the gigantic demand for an excellent education that was waiting to be tapped in SE Asia. Australia could and readily does offer the highest quality European-style education service in a more sympathetic context and with more geopolitical relevance for SE Asia than the UK/Europe can offer, or North America. As the Australian economy goes through the processes of trade deregulation, education, tourism and financial services as well as the staple commodities such as wool, coal and iron must become the mainstay. Manufacturing is going to face very tough challenges from SE Asian suppliers in many fields because of labour costs and productivity practices.

Graffito 52

Henry of Byzantium

I first met Henry at Cranfield in 1972, just after I knew I was not to be preferred at Bradford. My Bradford boss, now Principal of Henley Staff College, had canvassed Cranfield's Head of School to see if they could use a professor like me and they were kind enough to consider creating a Chair for the purpose. There was no formal teaching of marketing on a full-time basis at Cranfield in 1972 and so such a post would make sense. Cranfield had grown up from work study to O&M and through management services to operational management. It added finance and accounting as late as 1971 at professorial level, led by a private enterprise advocate whose most recent book when I joined was entitled *We're All Nazis Now*.

The interview was mainly an exercise in explaining what marketing could mean. I was offered a job with tenure and, much to Henry's amusement, I brought with me from Bradford a team of research faculty and doctoral candidates on a self-financing basis. He much approved then as he does to this day of a professor who adds considerably to the modest central funding required by external research and programme income.



The next encounter was very shortly after joining when he invited me, along with another newly joined professor, to dinner at his home. This was the first occasion I had dined informally with my vice-Chancellor - at Bradford such invitations were not extended, at least not to me. It was an enjoyable academic evening but, to my wife's own undying shame, she fell asleep as the evening got late.

My two initial impressions were accordingly of amusement and social enjoyment in his role as Chancellor I have never had cause to revise those Impressions. They have remained constant to Henry as his career as one of the UK's top educationists and most entrepreneurial vice-Chancellor has unfolded.

Such was his style of management at Cranfield that, after supporting an appointment, he normally left the appointee to get on with whatever he was good at. He was an aggressive delegator of all activities and responsibilities, excluding the corporate culture and goals of the institution. These he held on close rein and was undistractable.

His view of a university can be summed up as a centre of the highest academic and professional quality in research and teaching focused on the needs of tomorrow's society. The university could succeed in this role by recruiting as many leaders as possible and then permitting them a maximum of autonomy

to pursue best their own goals. As Vice-Chancellor, therefore, he saw his task as to ensure the best individuals were appointed in the first place and that the central management of the University was totally designed to facilitate and enshrine his view.

The advocates of centralisation and synergy got nowhere, whether it was in computing or libraries or shared resources between technology and management. Facilitation meant keeping fellow academics out of others' academic business ensuring they got on with their own work. In a classic statement, Henry frequently observed that, if you want to know how good your faculty is, ask people outside your own institution. How did London or Manchester rate Cranfield School of Management - not what did the Professor of Underwater Welding or Aeronautics think about it. Only if he heard bad news from Cranfield's competitors, students or research resources, did he get involved in the nature of the activity. He would then question it extensively as to where it was going, and why. If it was demonstrably failing and had no clear vision, as in at least two or three instances to my knowledge, he had done with it either by merger or termination if the latter was possible. The same approach was adopted towards any threats of resignation received from colleagues. He always accepted them there and then on the spot, so far as I know, as a matter of course.

It was against such a background that I was appointed as Chairman of the Library Committee, one of the few central services offered. Under the previous Vice-Chancellor and Principal the library had, as in so many universities, been very much a central concern. A committee of professors chaired by the Principal was rumoured to have chosen the books to be purchased in the early days.

The Librarian was an individual of great academic distinction although not accorded the title of professor until later on. His memories were of the old times and he found the new culture difficult to accept. As was to be envisaged, however, the Vice-Chancellor who joined the Committee for dinner one night to discuss our policy review, had little or no time for a central facility that was imposed by him on the Schools or by the Library Committee. The budget for the library must be negotiated with each school one by one, to provide the services they wanted. At a time when university libraries were in their growth prime, this was a tough pill to swallow but proved it had considerable benefits. The School of Management as well as several other departments were able to grow their own autonomous libraries with quite a different allocation from that preferred elsewhere. Centrally, electronics came to the fore, both in respect of knowing what was held in the several departmental libraries on the campus and also understanding the retrieval of literature from other institutions altogether

When the scholarly librarian reached retirement age, it was possible to carry this facilitative central role a key step further as well. A user-oriented information scientist took over the job and not only succeeded in developing the electronics facilities but persuaded several Schools that a central physical library facility could be of considerable value and benefit for them all to share in.

The patience Henry showed in the matter of library services and his willingness to devote very considerable time to helping those concerned understand why he would not impose from the centre was an object lesson that I have since sought to apply myself indeed, it may be apparent already to the that Henry became my unwitting mentor at this time. But I had several more lessons to reinforce the point to come in addition to the tale already told of our four-star hotel in Graffito 47.

The next major event for me was membership of the Joint Committee of the Senate and Council of Cranfield on the merger between the National College Agricultural Engineering (NCAE) at Silsoe and Cranfield Institute itself. NCAE met Henry's university specification in that it was indeed a centre of high quality research and teaching in its field. As Cranfield had been to aeronautics before its Royal Charter in 1979, so was Silsoe to agricultural engineering. To many on the faculty at Cranfield, however, its weakness or its strength was that it undergraduate, rather than postgraduate programmes. Cranfield until this time was almost entirely either postgraduate or post-experience work mature students. The weakness of the undergraduate inflow was that Silsoe provided the thin end of a wedge

that would flourish into a rapid growth of undergraduates at the expense of research work and consultancy. The strength of the undergraduate was for those who were not so successful at research and consultancy. It would provide them with an example of a way forward.

Henry's Byzantine tag developed during this episode as he moved deliberation on the matter from one to the next, seeking discussion and airing of views when agreement was not possible and decisions to proceed whenever they could be made. His patience was quite remarkable to me. There was no rushing. Everyone was given the opportunity to speak and discuss. But there was never any question about the cultural imperatives or the sense of purpose. Growth by acquisition on a distant campus, for Silsoe was twelve miles away, was absolutely an appropriate strategy for such a small institution as Cranfield was. How else could we rapidly acquire 300 acres, buildings, equipment and a going concern? Silsoe had in fact more students when it merged with Cranfield than the latter had in total when it gained its Royal Charter.

The act of merger again reflected all that was to be expected. Silsoe became a Faculty immediately in its own right, although with only a single School. Having joined Cranfield, it was immediately given its autonomy both academically and financially. The only intervention the Vice-Chancellor seemed to make was to encourage the Head of Silsoe to add additional professorial members to his team of high quality. No synergy was sought with the main campus. Administrative systems were not merged and the Silsoe library was encouraged to continue its own way. We eventually sought to bring the titles into the central information data base of what was available campus-wide for retrieval convenience.

What I had learnt as Chairman of Libraries and on the Silsoe Joint Committee stood me in good stead when I came to fly my own kite before the Vice-Chancellor at his newly formed Cranfield R&D company on campus. I wanted to raise £250,000 to fund the development of educational technology programmes known as the Cranfield Management Resource (CMR). He listened patiently but advised me, as I suppose should have been expected, (and I paraphrase), "It's your idea. You'll make it work. I'll not prevent you doing what needs to be done. But I'm not doing it for you nor diverting resources from the centre to your pet project at the expense of others. To do that makes me set the priorities around the university at a detailed project level."

We went away and pump-primed the project within the School of Management from other activities within our own logistics and marketing group. Today, the CMR concept has developed beyond all recognition at Cranfield and become the basis for IMCB's worldwide pattern of tutorial support to managers, where we call it the Buckingham Management Resource. MCB University Press has invested nearly £2 million in the development of the courseware, as it is known. It sells not only to all IMCB's qualification programmes, which implies 400 MBAs and 200 Bachelor customers annually, but on a wide range of in-company non-qualification programmes as well. Annual sales in 1987 alone reached £500,000 from over 4,000 pages of resources held electronically and indexed for easy retrieval, with specialist books published as needed within the journal series of MCB University Press. Such free-standing success would never have been achieved without the environment and culture that Henry insisted on but then nor would Cranfield have grown to its present position among British universities.

Henry personally privatised a State institution, taking the Government's share of income from 80 per cent in 1979 to 15 per cent in 1987. His most spectacular accomplishment for Cranfield was after I left. It was a contract to manage the affairs of the Royal Military College at Shrivenham. Its plant and equipment so generously kept up to date by the Ministry of Defence came as a massive injection of resources to Cranfield's faculty for research and development from the original campus. He followed his Silsoe model, immediately giving delegated administrative and academic responsibility. In the last two years he has established a joint venture with industry to develop information scientists based at Milton Keynes.

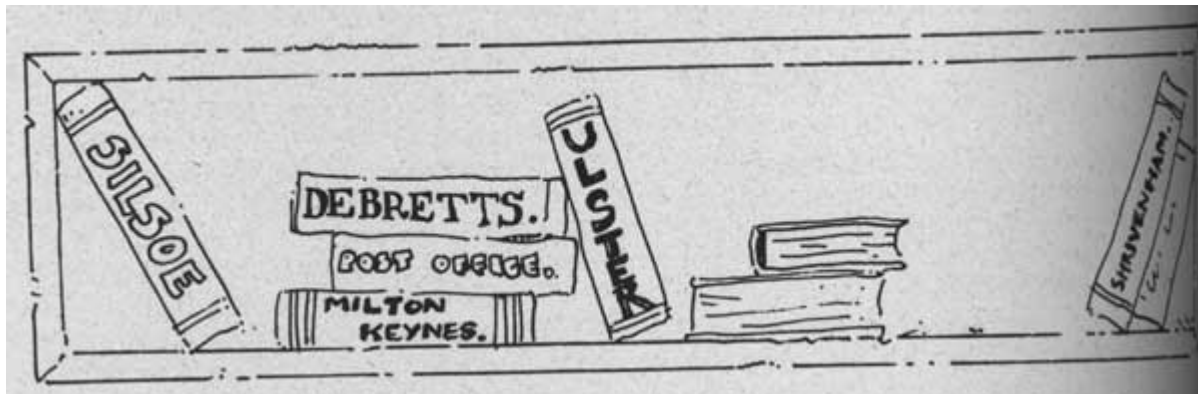
My contact with Henry over the six years since I left Cranfield in 1982 has been on just a few

occasions. The first was potentially acrimonious but didn't end that way. When I joined IMCB, Cranfield took it upon itself to cease paying my salary while I worked out my notice. I had to take them to an Industrial Tribunal to get it paid but they then willingly did so. Four years later, I went back to Henry to review the extent to which the gauntlet had been picked up and what success we were having. He was amused to see me:

"I wondered when you'd surface." My most recent visit was after he decided to move his office away totally from Cranfield to the Milton Keynes Business Exchange, keeping well clear of all his colleagues and confirming to me in conversation yet again saw the vital responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor his delegated structure as ensuring that the highest possible quality standards were maintained in the selection of staff that led the institution. He laughed a lot and was as sociable as ever.

Henry would always turn out for a private dinner party if invited by one of the faculty at their home. He and his wife visited us several times and came to parties in our garden as well. No matter how busy he was, nor indeed how successful his career might have been at the time, he always found time to share in such activities. But let it not be supposed that being Vice-Chancellor kept Henry busy enough. He worked a herculean week and managed to undertake many other tasks as well. He was Chairman of the Post Office for a year, he chaired a committee of enquiry into the restructuring of higher education in Northern Ireland that led to the merger of Ulster Polytechnic and the New University of Ulster, and last but not least he took on the task of being Chairman of Milton Keynes New Town. National recognition came as Knight Bachelor in the late seventies and Life Peer in 1987. He took the little Baron Chilver of Cranfield not Byzantium.

Many others have shown me kindness and give opportunities. But Henry is the exemplar of how to manage an educational institution that flourishes, and is prepared to talk about it and listen and help others who want to try too.



Graffito 53

Who Dares Wins

The events leading up to the establishment of IMCB's qualification programmes for MBA and DBA in 1982 have already been described. Our first and strategically most important decision was that it be a non-profit enterprise. We did not believe then, nor do we today, that qualification education is suitably conducted and controlled in the marketplace by profit-making concerns - although many do so

successfully.

As such, the appropriate vehicle was a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act. Conveniently, one was already in existence although quiescent, called the Institute of Scientific Business. It had some 300 or so graduate members with DMS and similar awards and had been founded by a group of six of us as long ago as 1964, when I was a night school student at Slough College. We convened a meeting in Bradford to co-opt additional councillors and change its name and then a meeting in November 1982 at the White Hart Hotel in Lincoln that adopted a revised Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The name we resolved to use was University Management Centre from Buckingham (UMCB). It had carry-over associations from MCB University Press which was to be our Official Publisher in due course. We were pleased the name was accepted by the registrar of Companies without any challenge, which is more than could be said for the University College at Buckingham. But I will tell that tale later in Graffito 60.

I was on the drafting committee with two colleagues and thoroughly enjoyed writing the preamble to the Memorandum and Articles. I even looked up the American Declaration of Independence to see if I could capture any of Jefferson's emotional language for the occasion. However, the preamble was not the daring part.

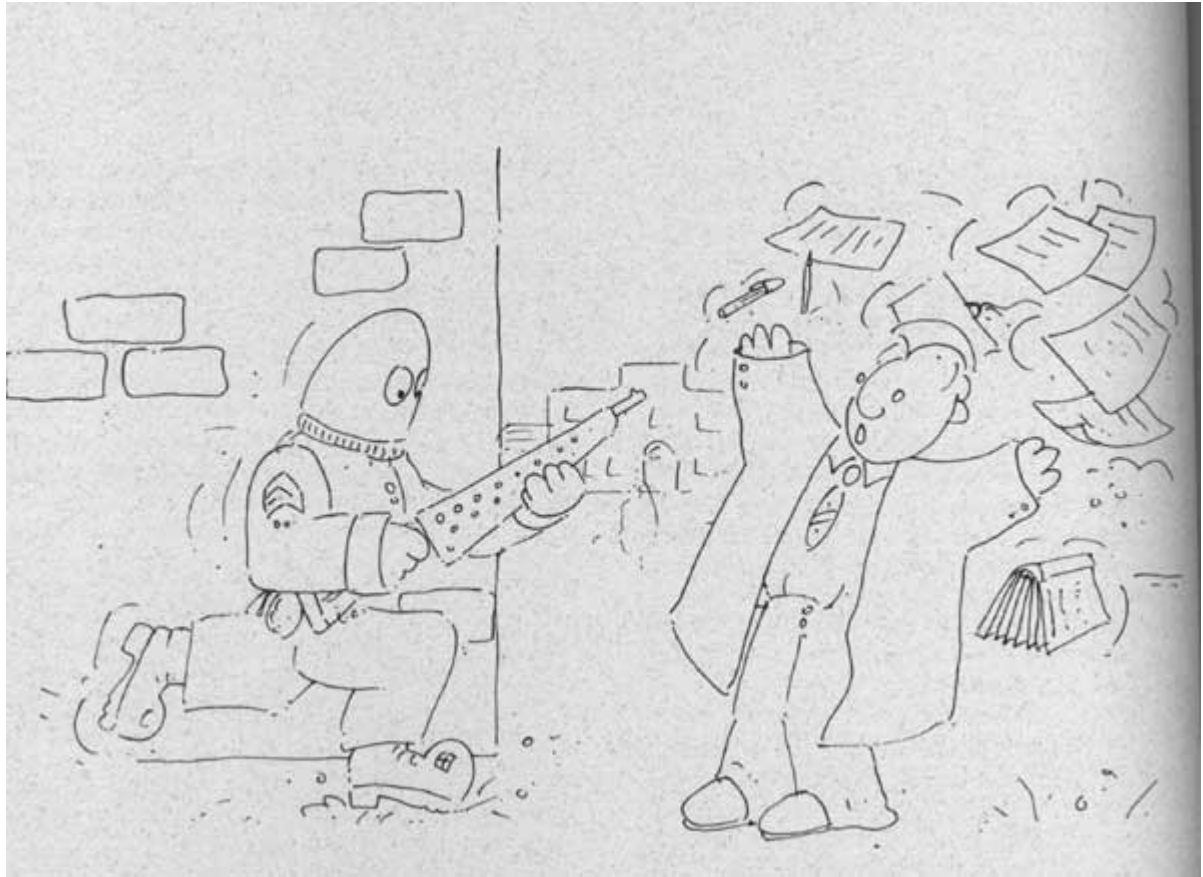
As it subsequently transpired, we were the first institution for over 100 years to register formally a not for profit company "resolved to award degrees" with the nomenclature Master and Doctor. We added Bachelor later in response to Far East marketplace demand in 1985.

We had no qualms at what we were about because we knew it was within the laws of England, but many of our customers and most of our competitors were surprised at our audacity. The causes of surprise were twofold. First, competitors thought we were cheating and should not be allowed to do it. We very quickly ran into an anonymous complaint from Maidstone to the Advertising Standards Authority, whose own legal status was the same as ours but who was our junior by several years.

The cause of the complaint was an advertisement in the British *Sunday Times* for staff at professorial level, which identified the programmes we offered as MBA level. It also indicated our links with MCB University Press. The complaint was that we were seeking to mislead by passing ourselves off as a real university institution, which we were not.

The Advertising Standards Authority's Reviewing Group had among its members a real professor from a real university. As we were led to understand, he took it upon himself to support the anonymous person from Maidstone, even after we had carefully pointed out to the Authority the nature of authorisation for degrees in the UK. No matter, we lost the first round and were informed that judgement would be published shortly.

We equally informed the Authority that, if such a judgement was published, we would sue them for damages. The matter lingered on for some time but, eventually, we persuaded them their earlier judgement was wrong and we got a clean bill of health on the firm understanding we readily gave that we were not purporting to offer degrees of any state-supported university in the UK but only degrees of membership in our own institution, under proper English laws.



Challenges and niggles and opinions that it should not be allowed continued and do to this day. However, as we began to succeed, it became clear that we were offering what the market wanted and, by due process of external examination, achieving standards that are as good as or better than the traditional institutions.

I suggested two forms of surprise earlier on from the critics. The second was that there was at the time a substantial growth of "degree mills" from the US and Switzerland but also in the UK itself. We were obviously not one of those but academic peers were surprised we did not consciously distance ourselves from them by seeking validation or accreditation from some well-established authority. The answer was of course, that we did, and still regularly do, explore whether or not some such well-established institution might care to give us their public seal of approval. Apart from our academic partners in Canada, who are as well-established as we are and faced with similar niggles all the time, we did not find any other institution that was willing to respect our intelligence, our experience, our wisdom and our ability to organise action learning studies the way we felt was most appropriate for the customers concerned, albeit always to commonly agreed UK externally examined standards. Without exception, all sought to tell us how we should organise the inputs and the process. They were normally either not participants in the field of mid-career adult education or not very successful at it, but they wanted to insist how we should do it via their Senate structure, dominated by professors of almost anything but management.

That was quite simply not why we launched IMCB. We again and again resolved that we must continue to dare. We saw no future success for ourselves as the 51st department in a university structure or just one more business school. The marketer in me cried out that we had to have, and continually major upon, our unique selling proposition.

The dilemma we faced was that almost all of came from traditional university environments, which would so much have liked to approve of what we were doing But, just as Reg Revans had found for 40

years before, there is no reason why they should so magnanimous. We were, whether we said so or not, a living criticism of what they and, until very recently, we had been doing since the mid-sixties.

The proposition that kept me going as innuendos and complaints of passing off and poor standards were lobbed at us was the sure knowledge that none of them would ever be our customers. And not that far behind this came the happy knowledge that you should not publicly knock your competitors. Many of our customers take great delight in telling us at IMCB that we must have got the traditional schools very rattled indeed. They were so venomous about us.

We also dared something which had been proposed for at least a decade but with little or nothing done about it. We resolved that, every five years, those who were on our faculty or were our graduates as Master or Doctor must update themselves or lose their right to membership. We called it continuing renewal and it amounts to the requirement for a 7,000 word submission to the Registrar that will be assessed and returned to the member. It needs to identify how he has remained up to date for the duration plus how, and this we deemed important, he has ensured that his own subordinates at work are being developed.

Continuing membership was more than just a five-year renewal requirement. We included at IMCB an annual subscription each and every year, just as a chartered accountant or doctor is required to settle up.

Lord Bowden of Chesterfield, previously UMIST Principal and a Minister of State for Higher Education in the Wilson Government, was greatly impressed and wondered why nobody else had thought of it before. Yet most were unbelievably scandalised. We were immediately accused of seeking a way to make members pay again and again to keep their degrees legal.

1985 was an important year for IMCB in the uphill to innovate among hostile friends. Obliging the British Council encouraged the establishment of the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education. The Council was made up of representatives of the Committee of University Vice-Chancellors and Principals, the British Council itself, the Society of Chief Education Officers, the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts Manufacture and Commerce and other well-established institutions. Most importantly, it did not wish to second guess what independent institutions were doing. It took as read their fight and hence ours to do what we felt was appropriate. Its role was to let the world at large know and students everywhere in particular, but especially Overseas, which British institutions were "efficiently" organised. After a worldwide series of visits, the official Inspectors gave us a clean bill of health. We believed we deserved it but it was also greatly welcome to us that they could do so without the regular dose of advice not to do things the way we did them. On the contrary, the Inspectors were very supportive and offered constructive criticism that we readily acted upon.

It would be fair to say that some Councillors at the British Accreditation Council came to regret that we had ever been considered *ab initio* but, once we were within their framework of accredited institutions, they were honourable throughout and concurred that they would live with their conclusions.

We greatly value their recognition of us as efficient. It publicly removed the possibility of a slur being cast on our activities. The only question that critics therefore continued to raise was how good were we? As I said before, if our external examiners were to be believed, we were good,



better than most of them had expected to find. And thus we dared and won until Guy Fawkes Day 1987, of which more later.

Graffito 54

Privatising the Second

Mrs Thatcher was only three years into Britain's longest-running Prime Ministership in the 20th century when my colleagues and I at MCB University Press resolved to privatise IMCB within the Business School movement with a vengeance. As I mentioned earlier in *Privatising the First*, Graffito 46, lessons had been learnt at Cranfield but the environment in which we operated there was almost risk-free. Things were to be very different at IMCB.

We had little or no notion of how much it would take by way of an investment to get IMCB first to break even and then to yield a healthy and self-sustaining return. We were resolved on one principle, however. We would not look for benefactions. If we were to seek investment finance then we had to run our Business School to gain a proper return on it or there would be no future resources for growth or development. We have only allowed ourselves one exception to this rule, which is our current appeal for endowments for the Revans Chair of Management Action Learning at IMCB.

Cash flow is not an endemic problem of a qualifying business school, any more than it is of a journal publishing house. Customers pay up front and the service is spread over a lengthy period of time. Ideally our terms of trade are for fees paid six weeks before commencement, therefore and, if we keep overheads under sensibly tight control, all can be well. I say "can" because we found several market-based reasons why such a straightforward proposition cannot always be achieved.

Programmes, especially for individuals paying their own way in the Far East or Africa, wanted phased payment schemes which even with reasonable interest rates are not as good. They also increase the number of collections that had to be made with all the concomitant hassle.

It was five years before Standard Chartered in Malaysia and then Barclays in Britain arranged for loans to our managers that meant we could collect all our fees up front and the bankers could handle the phasing and the interest. The drive is now on to make such schemes mandatory worldwide for all our qualification programmes.

However, I must identify at once two obvious fallacies in seeking to fund a Business School out of fees in advance. First, expenses are inevitably incurred in recruiting the managers in the first place. Such costs have to come from somewhere. And courseware resources for the whole programme have to be created even if only one manager is participating. Second, the right volumes must be achieved on each programme and that right volume for us is 16. It is not only right financially but it is right educationally for action learning sets. We split the 16 into 2 x 8 sub-sets who share and compare as they go along but operate very well indeed in their eights for intense discussions and interpersonal support.

In our first five years, our average attendance on Master's sets has been around 12 worldwide. This has meant we have broken even on running the sets, i.e. we would be worse off if we did not proceed, but their contribution is not yet sufficient to meet the overheads being incurred.

The good news is that the average attendance is rising and we have stipulated that no in-company action learning programme can run without a minimum of 12 participating managers or their financial equivalent. We have, of course, determinedly kept overheads down to the lowest sensible minimum. Nevertheless the conclusion has had to be that we are undercapitalised and that the idea is too big for the resources available from our associated publishing house and faculty members concerned. As I write, the search is on for a major partner, who can resource the minimal overheads and marketing expenses that will get us to the target level of average attendance of 16 on qualification programmes.

The sources of capital so far tapped, and now virtually exhausted, have accordingly been MCB University Press, faculty investors and fees in advance. MCB University Press has made its contribution in two ways. First, it funded the speculative creation of courseware for the MBA, DBA, MPhil, MEd (Mgt) and Bachelor programmes, which reached a full cost of nearly £1 million. They are produced to Open University standards in a fraction of the time by exemplary editors and production staff within MCB University Press.

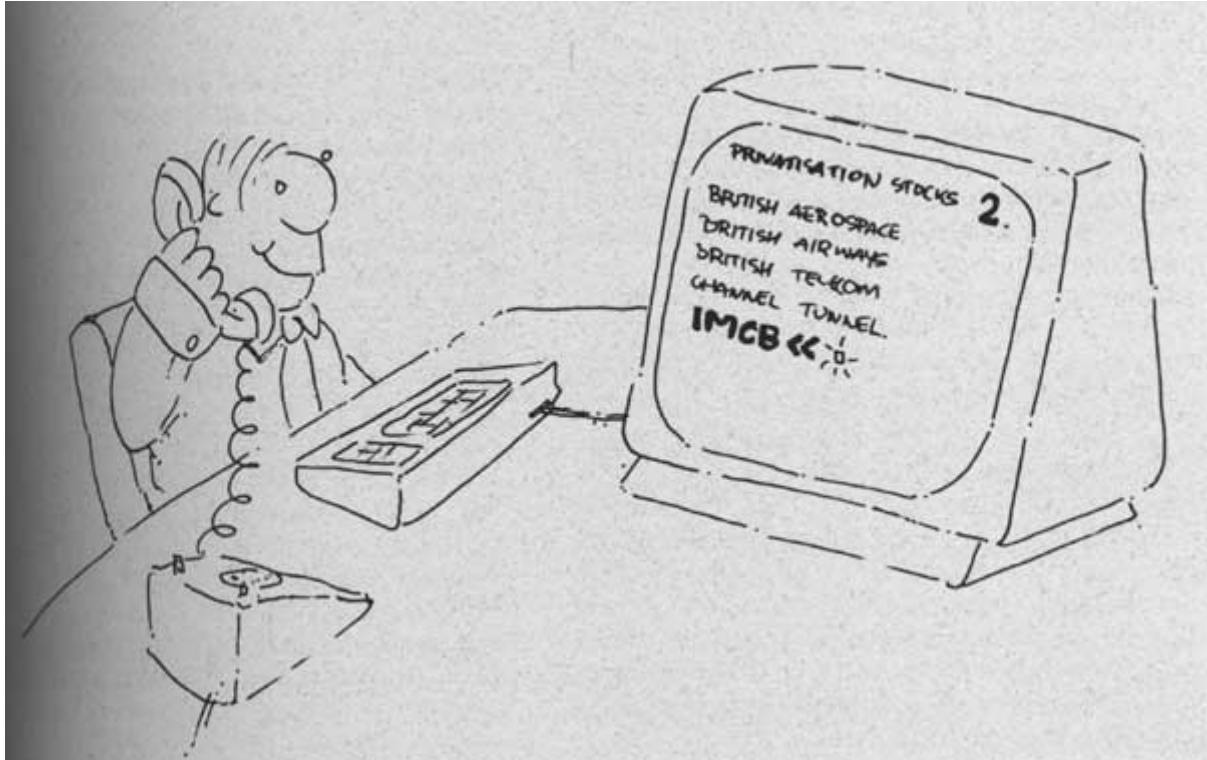
Second, MCB University Press provided managerial services during the first four years, in return for a royalty conditional on the future profitability of IMCB in the marketplace. This was, of course, tax effective in all directions and MCB University Press has an equity option it can exercise in due course in lieu of royalty.

In return for these investments, the Council of IMCB accorded MCB University Press a 20-year exclusive contract worldwide to supply courseware to all its programmes, whether for qualifications or not.

I have not yet described the processes of privatisation as they bore in on faculty investors but it is of the utmost significance. MCB University Press was an institutional investor and, like Cranfield before it, could stand the investment horizon of five to ten years involved. With appropriately agreed transfer prices for courseware, and with spin-off also into the open market as well for the resources thus created, it made good sense.

However, in 1986, the Directors of MCB University Press resolved it was time to share such investment opportunities with the professoriate and other faculty in IMCB. A company was acquired known as Buckingham House Limited, which took over the management services contract, but not the courseware contract, from MCB University Press. It issued 600,000 x £1 shares to some 40 faculty and administrative staff on an internally circulated plan, offering no dividends until 1990. Ten full professors subscribed for the bulk of the "A" class shares with 50,000 each, enough to be felt very acutely by the individuals concerned as individuals.

We proceeded throughout 1987 to invest the new funds in short order. We opened full-time offices in Singapore for the Far East Region and in Brisbane for the Pacific Region. We provided working capital for programmes to begin in Australia. We appointed three new full professors in Health Care Management, Training and Development and Marketing and logistics, who experience showed would need at least 12 months to reach break-even and events proved correct. Finally, we invested heavily in developing our Master of Educational Management (MEd(Mgt)) programme for head teachers in the UK, which is a market of infinite potential but no small difficulty to penetrate as an outside innovator. To date, the cumulative investment by Buckingham House Limited stands at £300,000. Naturally enough, we are now in the harvesting mode to 1990. Where things are not working well, we shall be cutting them out and, where they do work well, we shall be concentrating our efforts.



It would be wrong of me not to include in these notes on privatising what has become known as the Ashworth Effect, named after our first Registrar in the Far East. He is a well seasoned international marketer with a career history in Fisons and Shell before he joined IMCB. As such, he was a wise man about start-up operations in overseas countries. "Never lead with your overhead, always lead with your sales revenue function", he asserts. He used his strategy everywhere, always to the chagrin of my perfectionist colleagues. The chagrin was, of course, the result of the phenomenal catching up that administrators and deliverers of programmes had to engage in once the sales revenue had been assured.

I readily supported his principles once he had taught me which was, I must confess, two years after our launch in 1982/83. At our launch, we had done the reverse and we lost our first £100,000 in three months.

This was that tale of loss. So successful had we been at Cranfield in selling shorter non-qualification programmes, where 12/16 managers would attend for 2/10 days, that we believed we could repeat the exercise at Buckingham. Apart from commencing our MBA programme, therefore, and gaining two excellent contracts for non-qualification development within NatWest and Dow Corning Europe in Brussels, we launched 15 short programmes. We spent nearly £80,000 on direct mail leaflet promotion from a total budget of £120,000.

We were determined not to be caught out by the flood of enquiries and sales at Buckingham. We took on full-time support staff and devoted a great deal of time to booking hotels. We paid retainers to faculty members who helped us design the programmes before they ran.

Not one single short programme ever ran. The maximum level of registrations on any was four. The extent of the disaster we were facing was apparent after 12 weeks, when the budget was two-thirds spent. At the review session, I argued: cut our losses. But believe it or not (I could not) there were voices raised that said: "We have not all the budget yet. Let's do that and see what happens then."

I never had much time for budget spending philosophies at the best of times. But here I was apoplectic. Had they never heard of trajectory goal setting in astrophysics? Not a single astronaut would ever have

returned to earth, so I understand, if their trajectories were not adjusted in flight, as circumstances materialised and information was fed back.

Privatising the second has taught me to keep all senior managers short of resources and to involve their own pocket in the outcome of their decisions as much as possible. Senior managers, who do not understand or are not personally brought to face with the financial realities of their decisions seldom seriously participate in any real manner. Academicians who do not understand are seldom able to offer much real assistance to the practitioner. By privatising our Business School at IMCB and then involving senior faculty in the equity of Buckingham House, we have transformed our Business School faculty into an action learning set itself. Rather than being an unwarranted distraction, it has proved to be very much a warranted one. It is as warranted, and as functional to our development as faculty members in an action learning Business School, as our development of MCB University Press has been in furthering our understanding of scholarship within the university environment since 1967.

Graffito 55

Into the Vale of Aylesbury Rode the 200

Buckingham traces its origins back to Saxon times and, of course, pre its name to the county. Its Dukes were famous as long ago as Elizabethan times and lives in their old London town house at Buckingham Palace. The castle has long since fallen to ruin and been lost but the former gaol and Town Hall are in evidence as well as an excellent open market. Yet Buckingham fell on hard times in the 19th century and, when the County Assizes were established and the seat of county government, they were located in Aylesbury to the south. Buckingham has the ignominy of being the only place after whom a county is named in England that has not housed the county's government. Such ignominy was taken further in 1974, when local government was reorganised and Buckingham was reduced from the status of Town Council to the minimal government level of Parish Council, although the tide of Mayor was retained from its Chairman. Once again, Aylesbury was selected to be the seat of the District Council govern Buckingham, taking the name Aylesbury Vale.

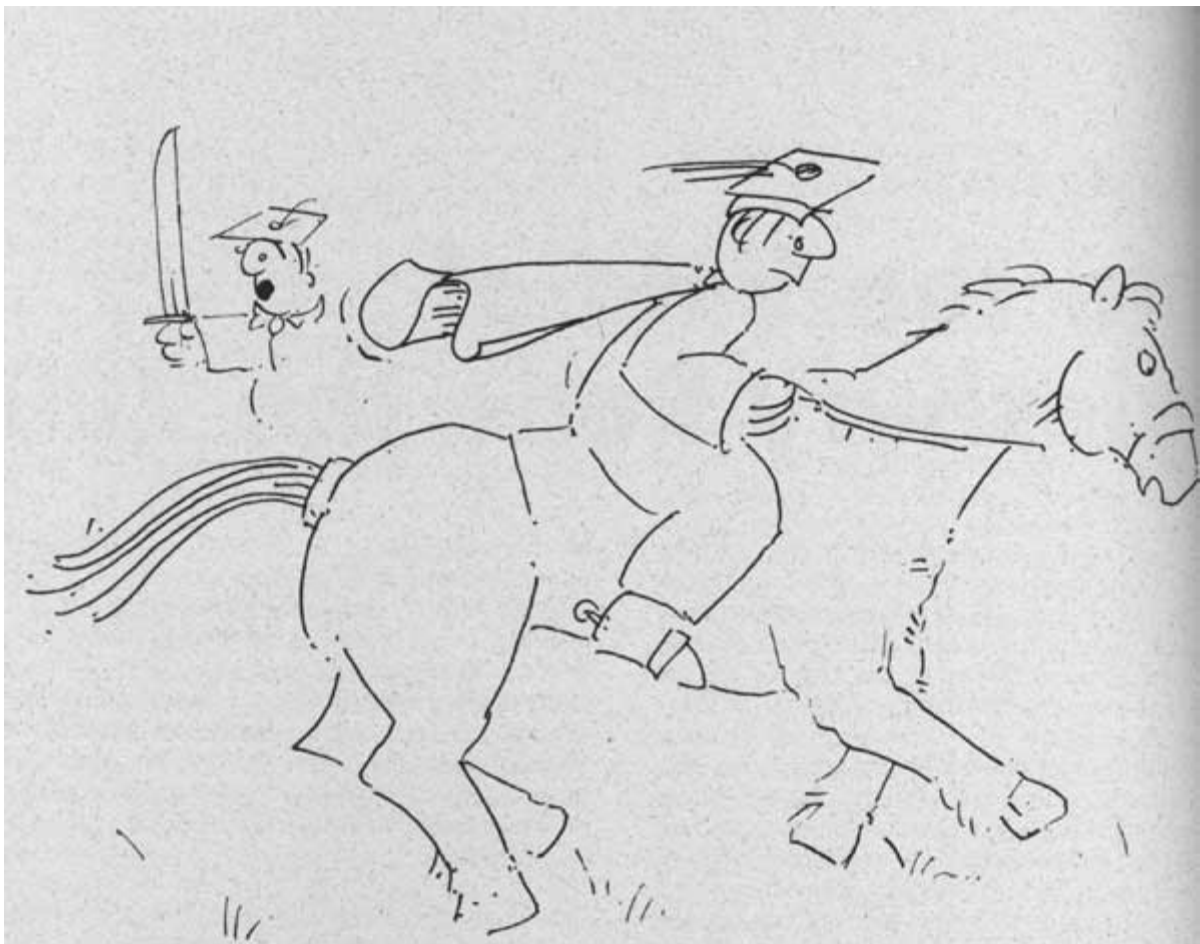
IMCB's abrupt arrival in the Parish of Buckingham attracted the attention not only of the University College, of which more later, but of Aylesbury Vale District Council. We were advised by our estate agents that the property we purchased would receive planning consent for change of use to our purposes. We were wrongly advised. Our formal application was turned down but not before a local dirty tricks department had engaged in some old, small parish dealing.

The contract for the property was forwarded to our solicitors for return within seven days to complete the sale. Unbeknown to us, the vendor's solicitors issued a second contract to a fellow local solicitor for that solicitor to purchase it for his own use the day after issuing one to us; and the other local solicitor completed before the seven days expired. We were nonplussed. Fortunately, our solicitor hit upon the duties of an executor as a way to re-open this nasty case of gazumping. No executor, any more than any trustee, may do other than that which is best for the deceased's estate and the sale was

being handled by executors. We found that the price offered and accepted by the insider solicitor was identical with our offer. Forced to admit their misdemeanour verging on illegal conduct of their duties as an executor, they relented and a sealed bid was arranged.

Yet dirty tricks were still to be played! Our invitation to bid was mailed to the wrong town and only a telephone call elicited the error just in time. Our bid was made for £2,500 more than the highest of any other bid received. Sealed tenders were to be opened in Newport Pagnell at mid-day on a Friday and we asked our Registrar to attend in person. He was not allowed into the room when the sealed tenders were being opened but, when they had been, he was directly informed by the solicitor concerned, that the other bid was higher. He asked how that could be. Confusion followed and he ultimately received a verbal apology that our bid had been misunderstood.

If this sounds like a bizarre beginning, you ain't seen nothin' yet. Having at last acquired a thoroughly derelict building of great potential, we set to work to restore it for our purposes. The purchase price was doubled in terms of our improvements and restoration with Barber and Dawkins, excellent builders, undertaking the work. The property turned out to be an extended 17th century cottage with a pleasant walled garden. It stood next to the church on Castle Hill.



While our tussle on change of use continued, we immediately fell foul of the Listed Buildings Regulations. All our area of Buckingham turned out to be a conservation area which means that, although any particular building might not *per se* be of architectural or historic interest, it plays an important part in its total environment. We inadvertently altered the form of french windows at the rear of the building from neo-Georgian 1930s to 1980s plate glass sliding doors. I have to be the first to agree that our doors were less than architecturally brilliant but what went before was equally inappropriate. Furthermore, what we had done was invisible from any direction except our own private

rear garden or on board a helicopter hovering overhead. We were summoned and fined £150 in the Magistrates' Court for the criminal offence of altering a listed building without the consent of Aylesbury Vale District Council. Aylesbury Vale, however, was not satisfied with this £150. They issued an Order to require us to change it to a window of which they approved.

We appealed and demanded a Public Enquiry in Buckingham. The Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment preferred to go to Aylesbury, which we at once opposed. We added to his remit incidentally our appeal for a further £44 against the refusal by Aylesbury Vale District Council to grant change of use. We employed a QC at a cost of some £10,000 in total to present our case. The big day came and the Inspector arrived half a day late. He got his diary mixed up. After a day and a half with us all and visiting the building, he went away and silence ensued for six months. It was eventually broken with a letter telling us that he had told the Secretary of State he did not believe the Order to change the windows should stand on technical grounds but that he could not agree change of use either. His Secretary of State, the Rt. Hon Kenneth Baker at the time, rubber-stamped his views.

However, we had made an important discovery for our appeal hearing. Although it might not be permissible for us to change use to a Business School headquarters, it was absolutely feasible to have a residential hotel on the premises. This we proposed to do after a fashion, with overnight accommodation for visitors. The reason we could thus proceed was because on Vesting Day for the Town and Country Planning Act in 1948, the building was in fact Manley's Hotel and such use was *de jure* proper.

In discussion with the County Historic Buildings Officer; we proceeded to amend the windows artistically but not replace them. We added white strips that quite definitely improved the general view from our garden.

The stalemate on the original building was fortunately broken when premises directly opposite called Marriotts, that were in the Parish commercial zone, became available. We acquired them again with a sealed tender at a reasonable margin above the highest other offer, together with an old fire station and coach house, a dairy and engineering workshops. This permitted Aylesbury Vale District Council and ourselves to declare peace on the basis that our original building was *sui generis*. Whatever that actually meant, we were most circumspect in ensuring that people slept there and were residential thereat.

Our restoration of Marriotts and the fire station and coach house won high local praise, as did the later conversion of the workshops and old dairy that lay behind Marriotts. Buckinghamshire County Council's Historic Buildings Officer was able to get two small grants towards our works, which we gave at once towards further improvements of street lighting in Castle Street, in support of other local residents. The grants were for Barber and Dawkins to restore paving on the old fire station and house and an interior glass dome in the main Marriotts premises.

Marriotts is a shop in the grand Edwardian style although its outbuildings date back much longer. It had been constructed in its present form to house a ladies' milliners with balcony upstairs at the rear, above which was the dome. Since the mid-twenties it had been in the hands of the Marriott family, who were automotive and cycle repairers. The condition into which the shop had fallen was almost indescribable. However, the Marriotts had preserved the finer elements: The dome, the spiral staircase, the angled mirror and its overmantel surrounds, the wooden panelling, the long counter and shelves and the brass rulers attached thereto for measuring out fabrics, the cash register and till.

As we again doubled our investment in the property we had bought, Aylesbury Vale District Council was once more called into action by an unfriendly passer-by. So that our builders could gain access to the rear of the site, they partially demolished an old stone wall to reach their skip with barrows. We

were told politely but firmly that we would have to apply for permission to demolish the wall temporarily and retrospectively at a cost of £44, then again to rebuild it for £44. For good measure, we also intended to ask permission to remove the broken glass from the wall top, placed there by Marriotts in the days when they stored cycles. We only sent one cheque for £44 for all three permissions but never had an official reply.

Aylesbury Vale's most recent gesture towards us was to grant us planning permission for change of use for the workshops at the rear of Marriotts from automotive engineering to management engineering. They imposed, however, a subsidiary condition that such change only applied to IMCB and not to anyone else we might subsequently sell it to. They were nonetheless emboldened to require that we reconstitute the kerbstones made low for entry by vehicles to the workshops that we no longer needed at a cost of a mere £1,500. We politely declined on the grounds that if we sold the premises as automotive engineering workshops in due course, which they were suggesting perhaps we ought, the low kerbstones would be needed again. We still await their reactions.

Such sagas can only give rise to great local amusement and to good friendships. It gave us a high profile in the Parish as can readily be imagined. When we reopened Marriotts on 1 May 1987; 150 neighbours and friends of Mr Marriott joined him for coffee and he conducted them all on a tour around the premises as grandly restored.