

# Graffito 56 Coursewares and Human Logistics

We had a colleague at Cranfield called Johnny Johnson, who graced the title of Academic Support Services Manager in his later years. He'd been there since forever and had been particularly impressed by how the School of Work Study had organised its course handouts long before the Management School was established. Before computers were readily to hand with their data processing approaches and word processors, he had evolved a straightforward and comprehensive indexing system.



Quite simply it meant that in support of any tutor for any session, he knew what support notes to issue. Last-minute rushes and poor quality were eliminated. The customer got good service.

He found the non-work study mentality of most of the new wave of academics who built on the back of work study at Cranfield from the 1960s, well, difficult to understand. Left to their own devices, in the exercise of their academic freedom, academics will enter a lecture room and do one of two things. They will either use their old material that they keep confidential, again and again, or they offer up-to-the-minute thoughts and amendments. These are decided as they talk or just before they enter the room. The latter category will often call for a great deal of frenetic photocopying just in time for the class but much too late for the equanimity of the Academic Support Services staff.

Any Academic Support Services Manager knows that academics, by and large, have little or no concern for those who work behind the scenes. Like actors in theatre, the man on the boards is seen as all-important and many academics are as temperamental as the actor.

All of which means that any system for providing wares for courses must be in the hands of non-academics. We developed a sophisticated concept we called courseware in support of our programmes, first at Cranfield and then most extensively at Buckingham. The essence is that a team of subeditors with a background often in English literature, pick the brains of the tutors to formulate the structure within which the courseware will be delivered to managers. In so doing, at Cranfield and Buckingham, we determined the way in which each of us expected to present his course to the customers and the base level quality of hand-outs.

We actually went further in due course. We trained our tutors face to face and via resource support materials in how to conduct their actual tutorial work more effectively, appointing a senior tutor who was in higher education, a trained teacher as an MBA herself. Later still we put a principal tutor in place full-time in the Far East, to train tutors there as they joined our faculty.

In this manner, via courseware structuring and training the tutors, politely called induction, we were able to raise the level of actual performance and to guarantee a minimum standard worldwide. This was enormously important as we spread ever more widely into the 16 countries where we work today from Buckingham. We accomplished it in such a way, incidentally that non-teachers, for example successful Chief Executives on strategy, could readily join the tutorial processes. Equally, those who were only well accustomed to formal lecturing in a traditional educational environment could quickly see what was required to be done differently.

We also accomplished our quality guarantee objective for customers without ruffling the academic and intellectual feathers of the many distinguished tutors we work with worldwide. Ample scope was available in the tutorial framework for tutors to add their own insights. Most importantly, however, the fullest possible rein was given to the participant managers themselves to contribute their own knowledge and experience. Our design with action learning requires that tutors respond to the managers' questioning with appropriate tutorial input rather than feeling compelled to monopolise the direction and content of the session. Structured courseware is never provided in excess of 50 per cent of the contact time. The balancing time is open.

This fortuitously assisted us to overcome some but not all the problems of quoting examples in courseware. Our programmes in Kenya, the UK, Queensland, Finland, Hong Kong and Vanuatu inevitably have very different managerial contexts. Of course the principles are the same but the macro-economic and political environment in which they are to be applied and the infrastructure of educated and skilled staff differ greatly. In Vanuatu, most mid-career managers left school well before the age of 16. In Australia, most with whom we work are university graduates or professionally qualified. Hong Kong with 1997 as a year to be conjured with is unlike Finland, despite the heavy breathing of their divers communist neighbours. The requirements of small and medium-sized enterprises and a dominating state sector in Kenya are a considerable distance from the multinationals such as Du Pont or Dow Corning, with whom IMCB worked in England and Belgium.

Personally, it gives me little difficulty conceptually, either as a Business School Principal or as a marketing teacher. Marketing orientation when one accomplishes it well demands, just as action learning does, that you find out where the customers are at. In *Business School Graffiti*, Graffito 40, I reported on my enjoyment also of comparative studies. They have always, for me as an academic, been one of the greatest sources of insight and understanding of my own professional subject. Markets worldwide are at such different stages of development that they provide a ready laboratory for analysis. The very intellectual foundations of export and international business and marketing are in the topographical differences and the dynamics of enterprise in diverse countries.

Not all my fellow faculty members have the same patience or intellectual curiosity as the comparative scholar has. They frequently search for absolute propositions. Why cannot all programme directors in all 16 countries worldwide ensure the uniformly high level of courseware photocopying and ring binder production we have in the United Kingdom or Australia, for example? For long I believed that travel would broaden such minds. We developed a major programme of international tutorial inputs so that all aw faculty colleagues could travel to the several locations in Africa, the Far East and the South Pacific. But some of the very best tutors wept when they grappled with the challenges of teaching presentation skills in Jakarta with managers, many of whom had only a limited command of English which of course misses the point. Whoever said a Business School should be in the business of teaching or insisting on English? If we are going to help Indonesians manage more effectively in their own country, it's normally going to be accomplished in the Indonesian language, not English or American or even Australian, all of which I speak fluently.

Nor of course, as the University of Wales conceded some years ago, is there any reason why examination arrangements should be fixed to any particular language. Nor the courseware itself. Translation into Chinese, Indonesian and Spanish is already contemplated and submissions in Finnish are also expected in the next few years.

The mirror image of the tribulations of a faculty member travelling internationally as I do, tutoring in 16 countries, is the magnificent opportunity it provides to see the world. Africa, the South Pacific and Indonesia were new to me. Despite experiences with the UN before 1976 in Mexico and Cyprus, my international experience as a tutor and the wealth of experience I had acquired marketer came predominantly from industrialised countries. In Vanuatu, two-thirds of the population simply do not participate in the exchange economy as we understand it in industrialised societies.

The two themes I have selected in this Graffito, of courseware and human logistics, may well sound far apart. But they are not. They are a distinctive hallmark of IMCB that exemplifies our marketing posture. The courseware and resources, provided in elegant, easy to handle carrier bags, are one of the few tangible elements of IMCB's work; ironically, the non-action learning element. in an intangible service such as action learning, with few buildings to marvel at and faculty always on the move, something tangible is vitally important to us all.

The human logistics of our faculty makes its particularly unique contribution by personifying our multinationalism. We are not a neocolonial educational institution. We move our faculty all around the world. Far East tutors from Malaysia work in Indonesia, from Singapore in Hong Kong, from Australia in Malaysia and from the UK in Australia and so forth. It would be incorrect to suggest that there is an even balance of movement at the present time between all 16 countries. However, it is our declared goal to stride in that direction. Multinationalism as a travel bonus for the faculty has a customer-oriented benefit of great significance. Managers in any one centre can learn vicariously as you will recall we worked with those Nigerian accountants at Cranfield in Graffito 45.

Finally, two of MCB University Press's excellent staff in the courseware editorial field, spent a great deal of time picking academic brains, would be the very first to admit just how much they had learnt in that process. They have been on a five-year management development programme working with

some of the leading faculty in the world in each specialist field.

# Graffito 57

# Industrial Faculty

# Rediscovered

As a young manager who joined the Business School movement from advertising in 1965, I have always believed managers have a key role to play in our tutorial inputs. However, I must confess they normally find the task a daunting one and we seldom do much to help. The normal level of contribution requested is to tell their story, a living case study, and to deal with questions.

The challenge I believe is to integrate industrialists as full members of the tutorial team, just as academics frequently play the role of consultant to management.

In Graffito 56, I have already indicated how our development of structured courseware made it more feasible for a practising industrialist to participate beyond the role of story-teller. What was available was a well thought-out structure of support materials that, provided the industrialist was familiar with educational processes as a consumer; could be readily fleshed out. Then the action learning mode required careful listening and intelligent questioning - a common enough requirement for good management therefore an attribute frequently held.

However, the approach we adopted required more occasional use of industrialists as faculty, of full-time academics tenured until aged 65. Industrial faculty became central to our work at IMCB because we never knew where our next client would materialise and whether repeat business would arise. Full-timers could scarcely be employed speculatively in all 16 countries. In any event, we wanted to break the mould of imposing tutors on to our customers. We wanted to offer our managerial customers on all our programmes the right to select and/or reject or even nominate themselves to our satisfaction, who their various tutors should be. Within courseware and its concomitant design structure for what should transpire, this proved readily feasible.

Accordingly, both from an IMCB employer's fixed cost approach and from the customer perspective as the arbiter of a good tutor, it made excellent sense to employ non-full-timers worldwide. We called them fractional faculty and they came from three main sources: practising line executives, free-lance consultants and academics from other Business Schools whose terms of employment encouraged such involvement.

Over our initial five years, a total of some 150 fractional faculty joined with us at IMCB. Most joined because we either already knew or had definite plans how we wanted them to become involved. Some, however, approached us and we gave them the challenge to show what they could bring to the Business School. All names and detailed areas of interest and expertise are carefully logged on a faculty data base for speedy computer retrieval. Who, for instance, knows about management in the field of chartered surveying or the South Pacific?

Relationships with any fractional faculty member settle down fairly quickly. Each new member is

inducted and if possible given his first outing with a well experienced tutor so he can find his feet. Then, if circumstances permit, a steady flow of requests follows. The most strenuous efforts are made to keep the network well informed and to build a general understanding that it is not only what IMCB can do for the fractional faculty member that matters but what that fractional faculty member can do for IMCB.

At its very best, the industrial faculty gets into a very close relationship with full-time core staff. Ideas fly. Our success with Cummins Engines, ACI, Jones Lang Wootton and in St Lucia in the Caribbean have all flowed from a highly successful relationship with industrial faculty. In other situations, an industrial line manager may well resolve to adopt the action learning approach in his own enterprise. This was so with Crown Paints. Cross-referrals also bought programmes in Metal Box and Arthur Bell Distillers.

I used the word network earlier, and that is what it is or has become. A rigorous newsletter discipline is followed to carry news all around the world on our progress for faculty members and programme participants alike. We have continued to circulate *Management Decision* as the house journal of IMCB, which it has been since its original inception in 1964.

The two most successful areas of fractional faculty participation are in human resources and strategic management. The former comes from the veritable army of free-lance consultants servicing personnel and training departments worldwide, the latter from the topmost executives of companies. The Chief Executive of one of Britain's most successful merchant banks offered to tutor on strategic management as a result of his involvement with one of our other Chief Executive tutors, who had collaborated on a management buy-out. Three other strategy tutors were first customers for their own senior management development work and then sufficiently convinced to agree to undertake some tutorial work as well. All in all, our experience is that, given the right infrastructure and induction, line managers not only make good mentors and organisational supervisors for project work but also good action learning tutors on formal course inputs.

It has been frequently remarked to me that it is a very effective way for senior managers to learn and to update themselves, without the perceived indignity of going away on a course. I certainly know only too well, as a tutor; how vital it is to prepare and prepare again if one's contribution is to be properly effective. For me, preparation includes deliberately seeking to include contextual issues and orientations that are new to me. You might ask how that can be achieved within the framework of structured courseware and I would plead that Johnny Johnson ensured I did so, without disrupting the core propositions. For our industrial faculty, however, many of whom have never formally led a tutorial session but all of whom have regularly led teams of managers on project analysis, planning, implementation and control, it is a valuable learning experience.

The paradox accordingly is that, given a suitably structured framework to work within, practising managers and senior executives are likely to be better action learning tutors than conventional teachers. Furthermore, industrial faculty approach their task and meet the customers with a level of relevant credibility as tutors that is higher than that accorded to the academic professor. Brilliant masters of the body of knowledge we may be, wizards of the stage we may also be when it comes to addressing an audience of hundreds. Skilled we may be with wit and repartee, and past masters of turning the question back to the audience or the questioner himself. But we greatly lack experience in working in the real business world, which is the laboratory for learning as well as the factory proper.

There are no more convincing tutors on the subject of management buy-outs, when resourced with courseware, than those who have lived through it and philosophised their way out on the far side. What our successful relationships with our industrial faculty constitute is, as I have suggested, their own continuing educational development. We did not comprehend this was what we had in store when we first began but the realisation now is very strong indeed.

All our faculty are required within IMCB, as are our graduate members, formally to attest to the registrar every five years that they have continued to learn. We have moved to offer assistance in this by encouraging many of them to take Master or Doctor of Philosophy programmes or to join the formal programme we offer for Chief Executive Officers. In June 1987 when the first such programme was launched, the Chairman of IMCB's Council, the Chairman of IMCB's Professional and Academic Advisory Board being the industrial faculty at large, and I myself, as Principal, joined in too. We were in order mentioned Deputy Chief Executive Officer of a wines and spirits company, Chairman of a District Health Authority and Chief Executive of the Business School. Our fellows on the programme now include the CEOs of a UK-based bank, the European division of a food industry conglomerate, the managing partner of one of the largest accountancy practices in the UK, the head of a secondary school, CEO of a solicitor's partnership and CEO of a paint manufacturer.

Something has been discovered. What I have alluded to above is some very considerable distance from the practising manager as an occasional speaker at a management course, or less still a few words after dinner and/or a donated prize.

As Brian Griffiths observed in his IEA report on Business Schools in 1985, entitled *Whose Business?* Business Schools surely belong to managers, not academics. We are only there to play our contributing part.

## Graffito 58

# Is There a Right Team?

I moved from Cranfield to Buckingham, Geoffrey Foster was kind enough to record in his "People on the Move" column in *Management Today* that I had moved "as usual plus others". By that he meant to imply I never manage alone, not even as an academic which is archetypically a solo role. But I had only the remotest idea until 1984 what "plus others" could mean.

1984 was the year two of our senior colleagues gave birth to their Team Management Index and its accompanying resources on *How to Lead a Winning Team*. Their brilliance was to take what to a very considerable extent was already known about from a psychological point of view, e.g. their extraversion or their introversion, and to just a 60-point index of work preferences. From this questionnaire, by computer analysis, word picture some 3,000 words long, with some 120 or so possible variants, was generated. The word pictures were elegantly drawn, politely pulling no punches, so that any charitable colleague could recognise the veracity of what the computer said about one.

There was no magic to the Index. It was a thoroughly workmanlike, well researched instrument. Subsequently, its use with over 4,000 managers has demonstrated its consistency as well as its face validity. What was magical about it was the opportunity provided for individual managers to share their own preferences in an objective way with one another.

Charles Margerison and Dick McCann, who were the creators, worked with me and others at MCB University Press and IMCB to turn it into a format that could readily be marketed and sold on the widest possible basis. Essentially, however, the focus was the bringing together of real teams of management players on or near the pitch on which they played, to talk about their game as a team and as individuals contributing to that team, and then decide what to do to improve their game.

Each player/manager, when informed of his own work preferences, and of what he does well and not so well, is required to join with fellow players to explore what the team is really seeking to achieve anyway. There are countless occasions since 1984 when I have worked with teams that, for the first time after oh so long together on the field of industrial competition, are objectively seeking to evaluate what one another does best so that the art of working with others can be developed more effectively on the basis of mutual understanding of where each and every fellow manager is coming from.

I well recall the management team that lived through the trauma of Britain's 1984 national coal strike that lasted over a year. They were the team that managed the railway's merry-go-round network of coal trains that did not run while the strike was on. Because the rail unions blocked coal from solidarity with the mineworkers, the railways lost its largest single profit earner within freight and perhaps in the whole railway service. Not only did the team live through that year, preparing and re-preparing plans to manage a return to normality when the strike ended, but they prepared in the context of a fierce battle with the mad hauliers who had been moving the coal to power stations from the pits in the interim.

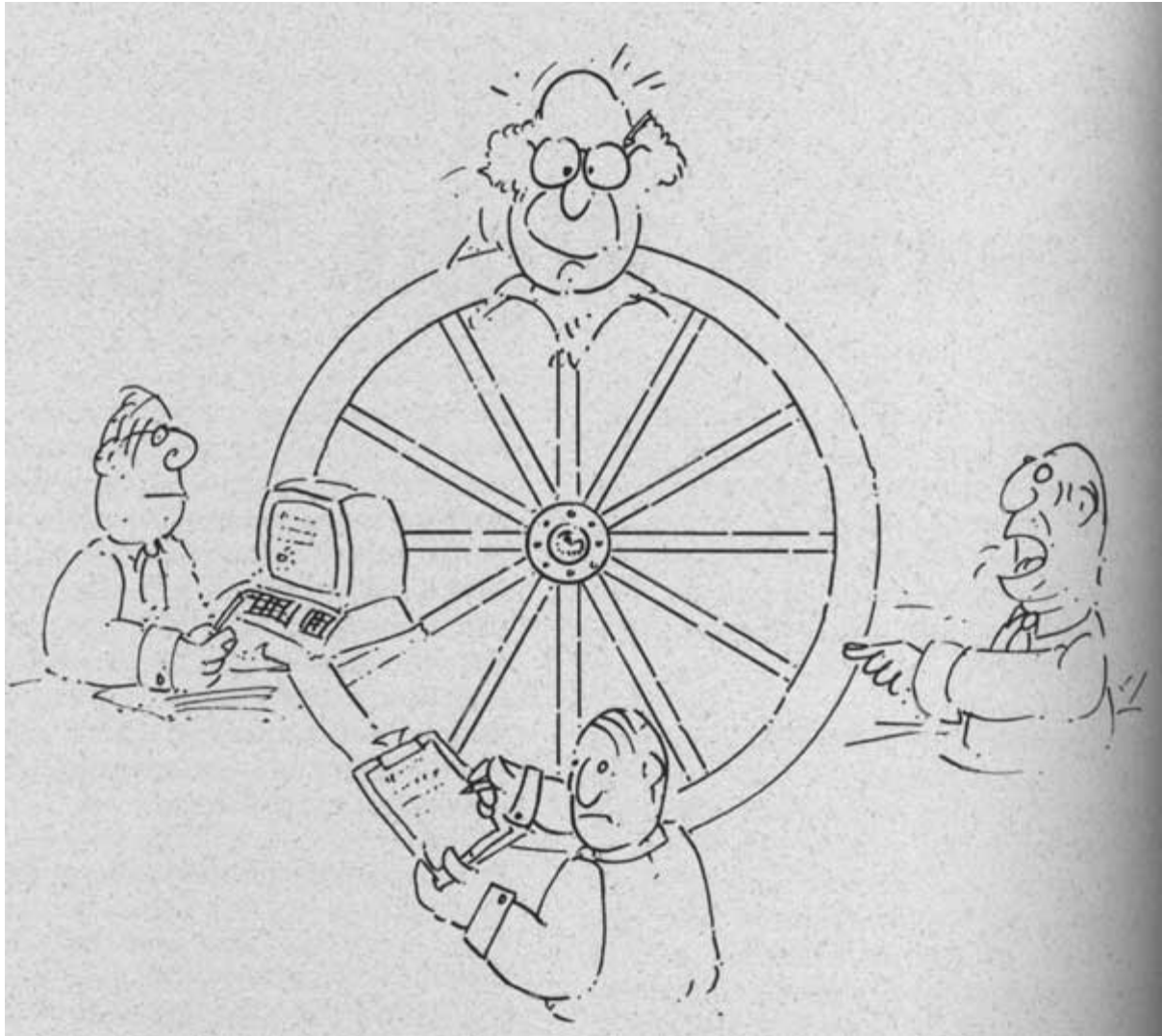
The session was held at Banbury over a weekend, as were so many others. A year later, I met the team leader on a train on the other side of England and he observed that it had been one of the most significant management training events he had ever experienced. The reason, he confided, was not because he was unfamiliar with psychological tests but because it was all done so openly and purposefully and because he was at once called upon to do something differently, not by IMCB but by his team colleagues.

Never again could he allocate work to his colleagues solely on the basis of their technical skills. Never again would he propose a working group on a similar basis without giving direct thought to the interaction that would take place between them.

The team working strategy used was simply to find out what each individual likes doing best and ensure that he does most of that in the context of understanding why other people often like doing the opposite, do it well and, by so doing compensate for what the first man does not excel at. The marketer or R&D manager has little time normally for the routine details of administration and systems development any organisation needs. On the other hand, many manufacturing managers and accountants do. Rather than finding such differences irksome as is so often the case, a well balanced team finds them complementary and respects them. Few management teams will ever win if they count solely on brilliant salesmen or marketing researchers or accountants.

The other powerful insight that all managers gain is a realisation that different challenges require different teams. It is not surprising that when a very successful company loses one its key players, things often go wrong for a goodly time. Everyone on the team has to re-adjust their game; quite often it cannot be done. I long ago concluded that it is seldom a sensible strategy to seek to replace like with like. All managers are unique in their own way and invariably require a good period to settle down with others. However, on the basis of the Team Management Resource, a view of what sort of talents and work preferences are likely to be most suitable can be divined. A normative, objective profile can be drawn up not simply of the professional competences needed but of the work and team preferences as well.

Do we need a creative financial manager or a budget accountant? These are not simply two accountants in different jobs. They are two almost totally different personalities. The first is about imaginative assessing and developing of possibilities whereas the latter must spend a great deal of time upholding and maintaining systems, continually inspecting and reporting progress against tightly defined criteria. And what is true for two different accountants is true also for a salesman and a marketer. It's true for a manufacturing operations manager and a research and development manager.



Neither is good nor bad, just timely. Equally so for the office of chief executive. The person who can manage a start-up, maturity or decline will often be different. Anyone caught out of time has a hard time of it. Of course, a well-rounded manager can cope but it is very difficult to excel over long periods in an uncomfortable role. The team must be reshaped with new members brought in and current ones dropped or, at the very least, the balance of power and responsibilities shifted from one side to another. Some may recognise here the concepts of matrix management that are reportedly very able to allow such shifts of focus to occur - and they would be right. But by saying that, I do not mean to play into the hands of those who say matrix management does not work. All such folk do indicate what their own work preferences are and how unhappy they personally feel in a matrix. Others, the innovators and explorers in particular, flourish in a matrix structure, able to wend their way through systems without meeting too many brick walls. Such managers are increasingly labelled the generic name intrapreneur. The confidence that arises from understanding one another's game in any team actually enables matrix management to work.



My remarks thus far have been on the benefits of the Team Management Index and its associated resources for the development of winning teams. However, as I mentioned briefly earlier, I was also involved with the management of its commercialisation into the marketplace. It took a great many goes at it to reach the approach now in place.

Our goal was to license enterprises to run the Management Index from the computer disks. Each enterprise was required to send selected trainers to IMCB in Britain or the USA to be inducted on how to do it effectively and then to proceed at whatsoever speed best suited their enterprise. The indices and the back-up textbook had to be purchased for each and every participant. A series of users' workshops are held on a regular basis, at which the authors get together all over the world with trainers to share experiences and to introduce new ideas and developments.

Our major problems lay in reaching the real team captains rather than the trainers *per se*. As we promoted the resources, increasingly large numbers of trainers and human resources managers joined with us to talk about the index and to compare it with others available. They were information gatherers in case someone asked them, and also frankly intellectually curious. We made the mistake as one so often does of talking to the monkey when it is the organ-grinder you need. We needed live managers and their own full teams of players not hypothetical teams put together for the sake of it on a general programme of education.

Our marketing and selling of team resources emphasised to us how very often indeed an in-company training department fails to accomplish the objectives it was surely set up to meet. It often fails to bring the reality of the organisation into the training and, having failed, compounds the felony by not using the very best available tutors on the subjects concerned. The reason is that trainers are seldom held in high enough regard by senior line managers. Sometimes it is because of the innate talents or lack of them among the trainers but, far more often, it is not. The fault is with the senior manager who does not believe in the training process provided but fails to see that it is put to rights. The activity is dubbed irrelevant, or an investment in corporate procedure or indoctrination, and receives scant respect.

But I digress. We found as we learnt in the marketplace that real team leaders were only too willing to support the approach. Their support, indeed participation therein, ensured that all others from the team joined in with committed enthusiasm, and won more matches against their competitors.

## Graffito 59

# Professional Pals

Henry often expressed the opinion in my Cranfield days that professionalism was the major challenge to the universities in the 21st century. The current lack of professional interest among 16-year-olds because of the counter-attraction of studying at school and going to university was felt to be a temporary transition. The professional world would move from an apprenticeship/undergraduate role to a postgraduate focus. And so they will, I do believe, but they are making heavy weather of it for obvious enough reasons. The most important is that those normally in command of the professions do not have the postgraduate aspirations and philosophies required to make the profession thus attractive.

Two groups we have been closely involved with illustrate this only too well. Our first and longest-standing friends are in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, conceived as the

Association of Municipal and Corporate Treasurers at the end of the 19th century. They are today the pre-eminent authoritative voice of the public sector accountant. Their research departments address the key issues and their membership drive focuses on the areas where the greatest demand exists for suitably trained financial experts. Forty per cent of the GNP in the UK is within the public sector. So it is not surprising that there is a not inconsiderable demand. Yet the profession has been racked by self-doubt. Merger proposals with the audit-based Chartered Accountants of England and Wales with 80,000 members or so for CIPFA with perhaps 8,000 has been proposed not once but many times.

I was privileged to be called in to research CIPFA's membership in the early 1980s and to advise on the corporate strategies to be pursued. The needs emerged simply as follows. First to ensure that the reputation of the professional body grew and visibly so, in order that the individuals who were members could bask in reflected glory. Second, to provide easy routes for individuals to share and compare with others their experiences, most typically through the annual conference but also at branch meetings locally. Third, to ensure that all members felt professional updating was available as and when needed publications, seminars and workshops and the like as well as news items through the journal.

Finally, there was a need to provide suitable training for young entrants to the profession from universities as well as at the technician level, in support of the fully qualified professional members.

The sequence in which I have written the needs here is not lightly done. While any accountant might well be expected to enter at a qualifying examination stage, the sequence listed nevertheless is almost universally seen as a correct prioritisation. It is, for example, the perceived prestige of the professional body that leads a youngster to resolve to begin study in the first instance.

A key element of the postgraduate focus of all professional work has inevitably become managerial as opposed to technical. The rising accountant in any walk of life will very soon have to make the decision as to whether to remain for ever an expert in tax, housing grants, rate support grants or national output budgeting, or resolve to be a manager of younger accountants and experts to ensure that best value is given by the professional expertise. As such, a vital element of development towards general management emerged and IMCB was to propose how it could best offer post-qualification work at MBA standard to public sector accountants.

Our recruitment strategy was to promote in partnership with the profession itself. Our offering was the CIPFA MBA delivered by IMCB for professional members all together. After all, they were all confronted with a similar challenge. They were accountants in teams and then managing as between accountants and line managers in public and administrative departments.

Such, however, has been the climate of privatisation in the early and middle eighties that most opted to join MBA programmes that diluted the homespun issues of the public sector accountant and shared in the ways of the private sector. Civil servants, health service and water industry managers opted to join manufacturing managers or bankers. We were able to help of course but it meant that our specific post-qualification development links with the non except at recruiting stage were not as strong as we felt they could have been. But the customer must always be right. Or is he? Several use such a broadening experience as the opportunity to switch from the public sector to the private sector, rather than to work more efficiently within it.

Our second major professional relationship was with the Chartered Institute of Transport and arose from IMCB's extensive work with British Rail in the mid-1980s. The CIT was the total reverse of CIPFA. It was and still is the dominant professional grouping within the transportation profession with the Princess Royal, Princess Anne, as its President. It had, however, for long been dominated by the railways and, as the freight and passenger transport industries were transformed in the 1960s and 1970s, had found it very hard to keep pace. It had an ageing membership and none of the statutory

grip on membership that an accounting body has. The new freight movers in air transport and overnight parcels were not directly drawn to it. Containerisation broke the old mould rather than worked with it. The growing professional grouping of logistics and distribution managers in the Institute of logistics and Management began life with the British Institute of Management, not the Chartered Institute of Transport (CIT).

As with the CIPFA, the President and Director General invited the IMCB to assist, and my colleague Peter Cooke conducted the study. He resolved to look at the CIT strategies as a professional institution. We almost repeated exactly the same consultation we had used with CIPFA's members and, not surprisingly, with the same pattern of results. A professional body cannot flourish if it lags behind where the new thinking is for its field. It must provide space for the profession to be the focus in which new ideas are placed centre stage. It must ensure an environment where challenging what is current is encouraged, where the young are listened to and catered for. Only members who like young people and work well with them can be allowed to serve on the committees and decision-making bodies.

If such a posture cannot be maintained, perforce the new and the young must seek other outlets. The splinter groups, the new professional bodies, both grow from the frustration with the constraints of their natural habitat. The more significant they are the more successfully they grow too.

This lesson applies most spectacularly in the field of publishing, by the way, which I got to know well. The media of communications must be opened to the disbeliever in what the rest of us believe to be fight. Young blood must have its bluff called.

Professional bodies are seldom the paragons of virtue described above. What organisation is? But if the senior officers do not have their hearts in the right place, there is little chance of continuing success beyond the manufacture of qualified newcomers at a young age and the sale of advertising space to the exclusive market which the membership constitutes in its journal. A lot of our professional bodies rise little or no distance above this dreary scenario, worthy though both vectors may well be. What then are the dynamics that set a profession alight, an organisation of 5,000 to 100,000 individuals who seldom meet but have an HCF in common one with another? In my experience it is either external threats or internal leadership. When the two come together as perceived in our relationships with CIPFA and CIT, the sparks can fly.

A profession is a collegiate bureaucracy. Everyone is equal once qualified. One man one vote. The office of President at the pinnacle has a ten year apprenticeship from Branch Secretary to Branch Chairman on to the National Council into an officer role, perhaps Treasurer, then Vice-President, President Elect, a President and Past President in order. To stay that course requires a most considerable stamina that only comes to a few of us and never to a charismatic leader - or do I do one or two an injustice? But then what bureaucracy wants a charismatic leader?

Charisma will more often arise among the permanent staff and the directorate. It is there to serve the committees and the Council but, like the Civil Service to the politician, it provides continuity of understanding and execution of projects that the part-time elected member can seldom bring to bear. But where are the youthful zest and challenging ideas? Too often the role makes the man rather than the man making the role.

The same is true, of course, of my own chosen profession in the academy. Few Vice-Chancellors or Principals have any zest for the management or leadership of their institution; which is a bad thing of itself quite simply because institutions such as universities cannot stand still. If they do not live and develop, they wither away, not literally but in terms of quality of service offered for each dollar invested therein or each hour spent by the student or the faculty member. A senior common room given over regularly at coffee and tea-time to playing bridge is, *prima facie*, a straightforward

symptom of poor academic life. It's LCM not HCF.

My own profession is in very poor shape. It has in the past decade bickered about salaries and resorted to strike calls. It has spent little or no time on insisting that all academics be trained professionally to teach and research or even educated to manage within itself and with others. The signs are now that the long overdue shake-up will soon be with us in Britain. In Australia the Dawkins Green Paper and Alan Bond's University have set the issue alight.

# Graffito 60

# Buckingham Bond

Today's University of Buckingham remains Britain's only private university. When I was first invited to become IMCB's Principal in 1982, it was still seeking its own Royal Charter as University College Buckingham, a period that perhaps should be called BC. I began by writing to the Principal of the University College, asking whether we could work together. It seemed sensible and the discussions went well. So well that we resolved to locate IMCB in the town of Buckingham itself, as I have recounted in Graffito 55, Into the Vale of Aylesbury Rode the 200.

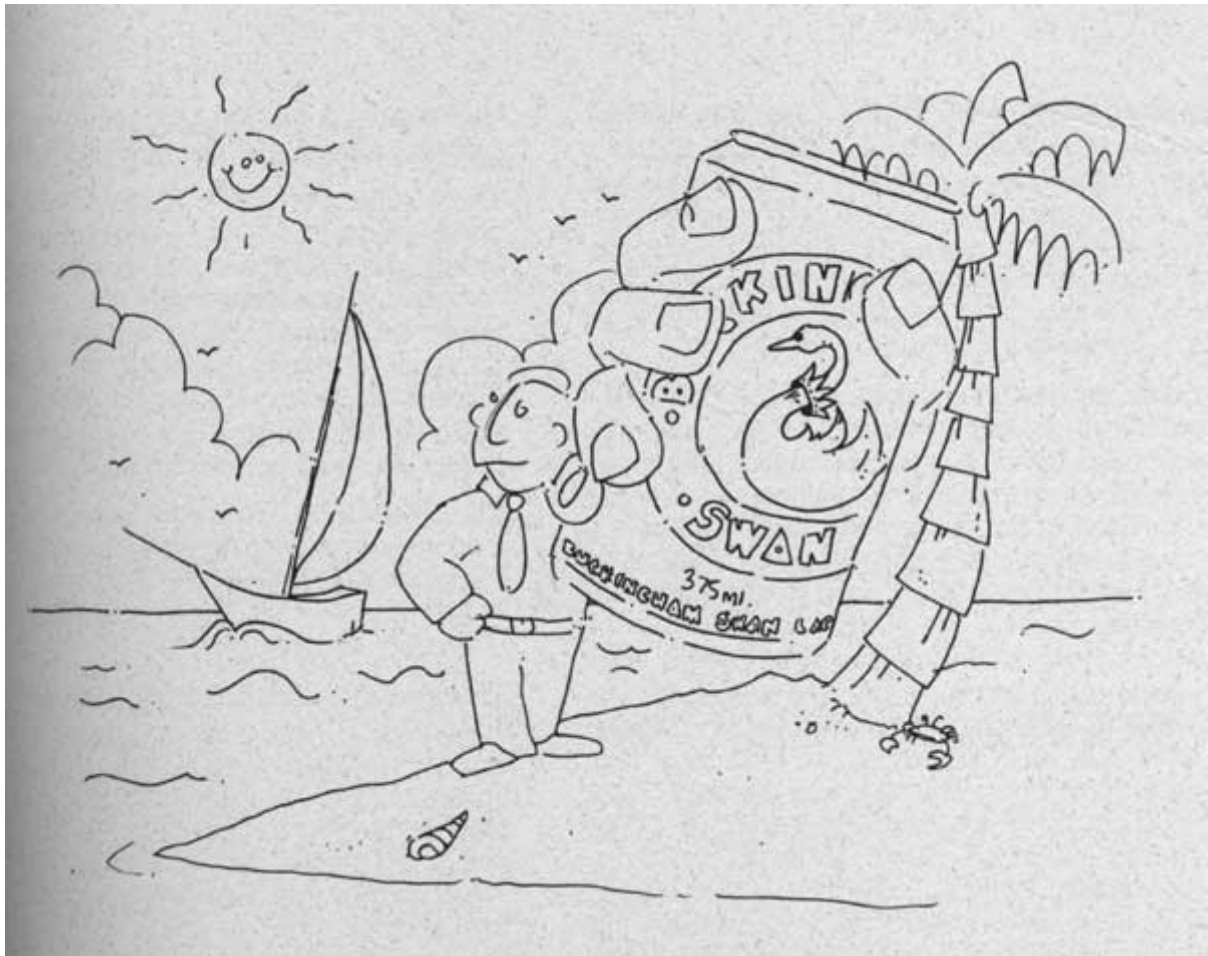
However, rightly so, University College Buckingham's Senate resolved that nothing at all should be done to jeopardise their Charter chances. The official response given in January 1983 was accordingly that it was appropriate to encourage IMCB to run its action learning programmes and see how they worked before any formal association was considered.

I had little difficulty then and even less difficulty today in understanding how they came to the decision to play it safe as opposed to becoming the broadscale flag-bearers for independent tertiary education in Britain. They had never claimed they would or wanted to be. Their starting proposition in the late sixties was based on the right-wing view that state involvement in education was distorting undergraduate priorities from their proper path, which alas still remains undefined. I do not agree. The State quite properly allocates taxpayers' funds in directions that it believes to be in the best interest of the electorate.

That's their job. I can certainly not approve of handing over hundreds of millions of pounds to academics to do simply as they see fit with the lot. For me, problem with state-funded undergraduate education is the rationing it implies in the total marketplace as taxpayers' funds are allocated among competing ends such as hospitals or pensions or nuclear submarines or EEC contributions to farm support in Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland. For me a pluralist system should be created not because the state is bad but because options to spend one's remaining untaxed income should not be restricted to holidays and cars but include education as well. And the more that is required by the market, the more suppliers will enter until an equilibrium is found that is required is a regulatory environment.

The University of Buckingham has not gone that way. It has abandoned any real strategy to provide tertiary education on the basis I understand as independent in a not too successful quest to join the cartel of state university institutions. Its source of capital is not the free market at all but benefactions and a modest surplus on fees. However, its fees for UK-based students are Local Authority grants just like any state institution. Accordingly, it is starved of capital resources and, after nearly 20 years since its first proposal, has reached barely 700 students. Even there, because of its posture as the smallest

university in the country, with the least capital resources available, it is fighting an uphill battle to get good quality students, if that is to be measured by A level standards of entry. Talk is now of extending participation in the state system by joining with UCCA, the University Council for Central Admissions.



The experiment must really, I believe, be deemed to have failed, as reflected in its growth targets to the end of the century. If independent tertiary education is to succeed, a wholly new pattern is required and Buckingham University has no intention of providing it.

Nevertheless, I was emboldened in 1987 to make one last attempt to get together with the University which quite literally is based but 500 yards from IMCB's headquarters. Our size as I write is rising fast, as is our widespread acceptance within industry and our numbers will shortly overhaul the University. Already our postgraduate population is eight times that of the university. However, yet again the University was unable to talk. It was not prepared to consider whether or not our action learning approach these past five years had succeeded or otherwise, despite its earlier observations in 1983.

Now, there is no reason why the University should necessarily want to have anything to do with a close neighbour, but I have been consistently saddened at its lack of natural or even intellectual curiosity.

Furthermore, the industrialists who sit on the Council of the University seem to take little interest in the underlying strategy of the University believing, as one told me, that guidance on all academic matters must properly come from the faculty; and growth and development is presumably an academic matter.

In retrospect, there was never any real chance that the University and IMCB could work together. The University, which began as do all new enterprises with a flourish and high hopes, was exhausted early on. It was uncertain of its independence and not willing to meet the social or political risks of being independent. It ran for cover at the outset, looking to the CNAA for validation, which was not to be forthcoming. It adopted the French degree nomenclature, Licence, instead, although it could have called the award Bachelor with much greater marketplace appeal.

No matter what decision it made, however, it should have held to its independence which made it different. It could not. Its leadership became distracted not by the quest for customers but by the quest for respectability from Royal Charter, mistakenly believing that it would transform its success in the marketplace. Innovative works are the way that new institutions break into cartelised markets, not by being look-alike. Buckingham's original design of a two-year first degree programme, with 44 weeks of study each year, was radical and long-overdue thinking. It makes sense for the student and for the use of the capital resources of a university. After that, however, the innovative vision evaporated. Financial disarray compounded matters.

I stay with my harsh judgement that the University of Buckingham as an independent tertiary initiative in the UK has failed. It would be better advised to apply to the Department of Education and Science to be included in the list of institutions looking for state funds, as Henley did earlier on when it launched its work for qualifications. It could perhaps become a subsidiary college of Cranfield Institute of Technology, Reading or Warwick Universities or even take over or merge with Nene College in Northampton. This last opportunity would compare well with the New University at Coleraine that merged with the Ulster Polytechnic under the Chilver Plan. Without that it will languish, starved of capital for development, and remain near the bottom of the student league. Unless ... unless it is prepared to be invested in as a vehicle for a thorough-going independent university. Senate, however, would not like that.

Sad I was, but no more. Early in 1988 I visited the newest independent university in the Commonwealth, in Queensland on the Gold Coast. Bond University it's called, established *ab initio* by Act of the Queensland Parliament and with \$A260 million as the initial investment on which a proper return is expected for depreciation of fixed assets and for the servicing of capital injected into the enterprise by a host of co-venturers on the campus.

The inspiration behind Bond University is none other than Alan Bond, the multinational entrepreneur and a major figure in the beer industry in the UK and Australia, where his brands include XXXX and Swan. His greatest moment of international publicity was when his team won the Americas Cup for Australia, albeit to lose it again later at Fremantle.

The 3,000-acre site of the University is accessible from the thriving Gold Coast by dredged seaway. Conference accommodation from the outset will be available in two four-star hotel towers on the waterfront as will a major shopping mall. The academic and tutorial facilities will be interspersed with coffee shops and eating houses. Ten thousand students at \$A36,000 for the 6 x 14 week semesters, minimum two full years like Buckinglaam, will be on campus by the turn of the century and the initial wave by 1991 will have 3,000. Like any good property investment, it is vital that the doors open earliest moment and they will do so in March 1989.

The student population is planned for a 60/40 of Australian and Asia Pacific students. Marketing throughout SE Asia and Japan is already well advanced. One-third will live in self-residential accommodation on the campus among the 45 acres of water, including an Olympic rowing course; the rest will have the pick of the out-of-season residential accommodation on the Gold Coast about 2 km away, in Australia's premier tourist resort.

The research park for industrialists and the showcase for computer manufacturers is already off the

board and under construction. The first phase opens in July 1988 - the first operational units on University campus.

The vision of how to introduce private capital into education as the world's largest industry, after defence and health care, that Bond University is bringing to the Commonwealth has, of course, been present in North America for some considerable time, most spectacularly at Stanford. There is nothing vulgar about it, just the sensible application of management principles and financial engineering approaches for which Australians this past decade have become leaders on the world stage. It is interesting to observe the Australian multinational movement in pop music, TV and films, newspapers, road freight and parcel services, tennis, swimming, financial engineering and tourism. Do not look too closely, however, at the industrial relations scene or manufacturing, where the Thatcher touch and the concomitant managerial revolution are still awaited. Hope springs eternal that the deregulation of trade will solve their dilemma. But there's little room to escape the conclusion that the next government after Hawke will have to tough it out with the unions and break their power to immobilise the economy, pulling out the petrol tanker drivers or the baggage handlers at Sydney Airport for the 1,000th time. Perhaps that is what has taken so many of the great Australian entrepreneur multinationals, not only the limited size of the country's markets.

The Bond University vision stretches further. Once the campus there is built, one very real scenario they have is to forsake a classic model and follow the British Open University but with a very considerable difference. The plan would be to use interactive satellite communication systems to deliver faculty participation throughout the Asia Pacific Region with local campuses and local tutorial support. Any businessman would think this way and this is how IMCB operates, of course. Like Bond thus far, we have not got to the satellite communications level.

We fly the faculty worldwide to provide the face to face interaction that is vital for top-level management development as we practise it.

I ended up inspired after seeing the Bond proposals. We need that quality of imagination in Britain for independent education and Buckingham has not provided, and now cannot be expected to provide it. We need a fresh initiative, within striking distance of London with ample out-of-season accommodation, perhaps on the south-west coast; a University of Devon, well served by the M5 and by British Rail, could do the trick or a European University at Dover when the Channel Tunnel opens.

## **Graffito 61**

# **Librarians in Action**

Libraries have fascinated me ever since I was made library monitor at school at the tender age of 14. I recall that library well because it was also our war memorial and, after the school chapel, the most distinguished and pleasant room to be in. Because of its rule of silence, it was also for the youngster at boarding school a haven. I have gravitated towards libraries ever since - in the Royal Air Force, at Bradford University and at Cranfield.

At Bradford, our University Librarian joined with the Professor of Economics and me in establishing the Bradford University Press, but I was much closer to librarians at the Management Centre. One of these, a New Zealander, eventually became our first Literary Editor at MCB University Press, when our journal business boomed in the early 1970s. Many of her colleagues also did part-time work with us as proofreaders.

However, it was at Cranfield that I became Chairman of Libraries for the whole university and a firm friend of our distinguished University Librarian, Cyril Cleverden. The Cranfield Conference each year for librarians worldwide was one of the great leading edge events. He had pioneered for many years work on retrieval and precision therein while most others were fled on collection building. It had been a natural reaction for Cyril because he presided in the sixties and seventies over a small institution with no more than 1,000 scholars and students who nonetheless wanted access to state-of-the-art information since it was exclusively postgraduate.

So the luxurious habit of browsing stock so common at that time in universities was not for Cranfield. Most required materials would be obtained on inter-library loans and precision in asking for the right items and key wording for micro-searching were vital.

As such, I personally, but not all my colleagues, was comfortable when IMCB went into action with no library of its own at all. Our Buckingham strategy of taking our action learning programmes where our customers might be had two implications for library support services. I have dealt with the first which was the creation of our coursewares in Graffito 56. It led on the MBA programme for example to the issuance of eight ring binders and 21 text books to all participating managers. This resources pack was, of course, predetermined and, as the managers moved into their open project-driven studies, could not hope to suffice. We did have an unusual outcome of the issue of such books though in Vanuatu, where each of the MBA candidates owned more books on management than the National Library!

The second implication was the urgent need everywhere we went to establish contact with the localised literature access points. How could managers in Nairobi, Kuala Lumpur, Port Vila, Stevenage or Brisbane get proper access to the body of knowledge? The challenge was of the same type as Cyril Cleverden had wrestled with at Cranfield when I was his Chairman of Libraries.

Many of our managers worked for sophisticated enterprises with their own information officers and even librarians. In such cases it was an obvious step to involve them directly in the programme. It created no end of new relationships within organisations as a cadre of managers began using their internal services proactively, and in some cases for the first time even Elsewhere, such as Kenya, Brunei or Vanuatu, we were in poor shape indeed and key words were transmitted overseas to better endowed information environments. Vanuatu looks to Queensland for several literature searches but also finds a lot can be gained from FAO and other international aid agency services. Placing the onus on the managers for tracking down the best sources became a key element of our action learning approach in all locations.

We were particularly determined from the outset of our programmes in 1982 to make a senior staff appointment with responsibility for information transfer. We found a great talent almost at once who was not only a qualified librarian, but also an information transfer scientist, and one gifted as a tutor. She designed and led countless sessions with managers, first on what the sources of management information are, which left too many of them shell-shocked. Second, she showed them how to spot key words and mount the search from the computer data bases available.

Without hesitation, she was elected very early on as one of IMCB's Master Teachers by the Academic Board. She took a topic which most believed to be as dry as dust and made it enjoyable ... the proof of her success lay in the ease with which so many of our managers achieved the totally novel, for them, assignment of undertaking a successful literature search as a key element of their dissertation or project work.

She accomplished for IMCB with consummate ease as the major multinational action learning business school what was one of our most vital needs. We had to be certain that, in the zest to ask questions, we avoided the folly of rediscovering the wheel again and again simply for its own sake.



Apart from such tutorial delivery, when we initiated our doctoral programme in 1986 a much more substantial challenge emerged. We offer the DBA currently in the UK, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong. It is only open to those with Master's degrees already but nonetheless the thesis requirements are most significant, especially in their literature searching and review dimensions. We have not forsaken the action learning approach nor do we fail to issue a plenitude of prescribed texts. But, as the thesis develops, hundreds of references have to be checked for their appropriateness for the action area espoused.

Both in Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur, there are well established libraries to be approached and used. We do this, of course, with the guidance of the local doctoral supervisors, who are frequently faculty members of the local universities anyway. We went further nevertheless. We made it a requirement of the doctoral programme members early on that they must produce for their own country a guide to the local resources available. The purpose was not only to ensure effective induction and awareness but also to provide IMCB faculty with a similar focus, especially when travelling internationally.

Such was our success in this area that we also conducted a joint venture in Canada with associates at Northland Open University in Montreal and the Canadian School of Management in Toronto. Their Visiting Tutor for Literature Searching Review was from York University and she, together with our expert, produced an Anglo/Canadian publication that became the key element of our regular courseware.

The notions Cyril Cleverden had developed so long before at Cranfield and for the library and information world are also fundamental to the processes of management by action learning. The action learning proposition is that one retrieves what is needed against key issues of management significance. The confidence it takes to hold to that proposition in the face of the lexicon approach or the full service/full stock library is great. Almost all visiting committees from outer space approaching IMCB say "Where is the library?" They demonstrate thereby for themselves a most considerable lack of understanding of where it is all at today. The key query is how well have those who are working all over the world learnt to track down and retrieve what they need. It is more important, I submit, for Brunei or Kenyan scholars to know how to track down information in their country and its environment than it is to be content that, when they take a programme in England or Australia, there is ready to hand a library service where all they have to do is master the shelving codes or stacks.

None of which is to gainsay the sheer enjoyment a good browse along well-stocked library shelves. Am I simply old or does the touch and the feel of a book, dust and all, not remain more enjoyable than a computer routine and a print-out? We have been pleased in the UK to make arrangements for faculty who so wish to use the University of Buckingham Library. MCB University Press donates its journals and many review copies of the most recent management and economics books to the University Library as well.

Librarians as a profession, however, have some considerable way to go to adjust to today's and tomorrow's world. The information scientist and technologist is more likely to be in the lead a decade from now unless the preoccupation with the stock rather than the benefit delivered is altered. You will recall I discussed these themes earlier on in Graffito 48 when I researched library use from a marketing perspective.

Several librarians are on the move nevertheless, not least the Association of Special Libraries (ASLIB) with whom IMCB has just launched a joint venture MBA programme. The MBA curriculum, of course, includes attention to the operations management of libraries and information services but it does much more than that. It looks at their strategic purposes, organisational design, marketing, team development and presentation skills. The lessons of management information

systems design and delivery are being learnt anew.

# Graffito 62

# Bizarritz

As our involvement internationally grows, so the locations where we work become more and more bizarre and ritzy. I have long been a canal narrowboater so I take groups of managers out as often as possible. One team of bankers managed to disappear one afternoon on the Northampton arm of the Grand Union Canal and they have still never given a satisfactory explanation of where they put the narrowboat, 46 feet long and solid steel.

I also closed the sale for a major senior management development programme in 1984 at Teddington Lock. I was on two weeks' Easter holiday at the time and our client's directors had a nearby factory.

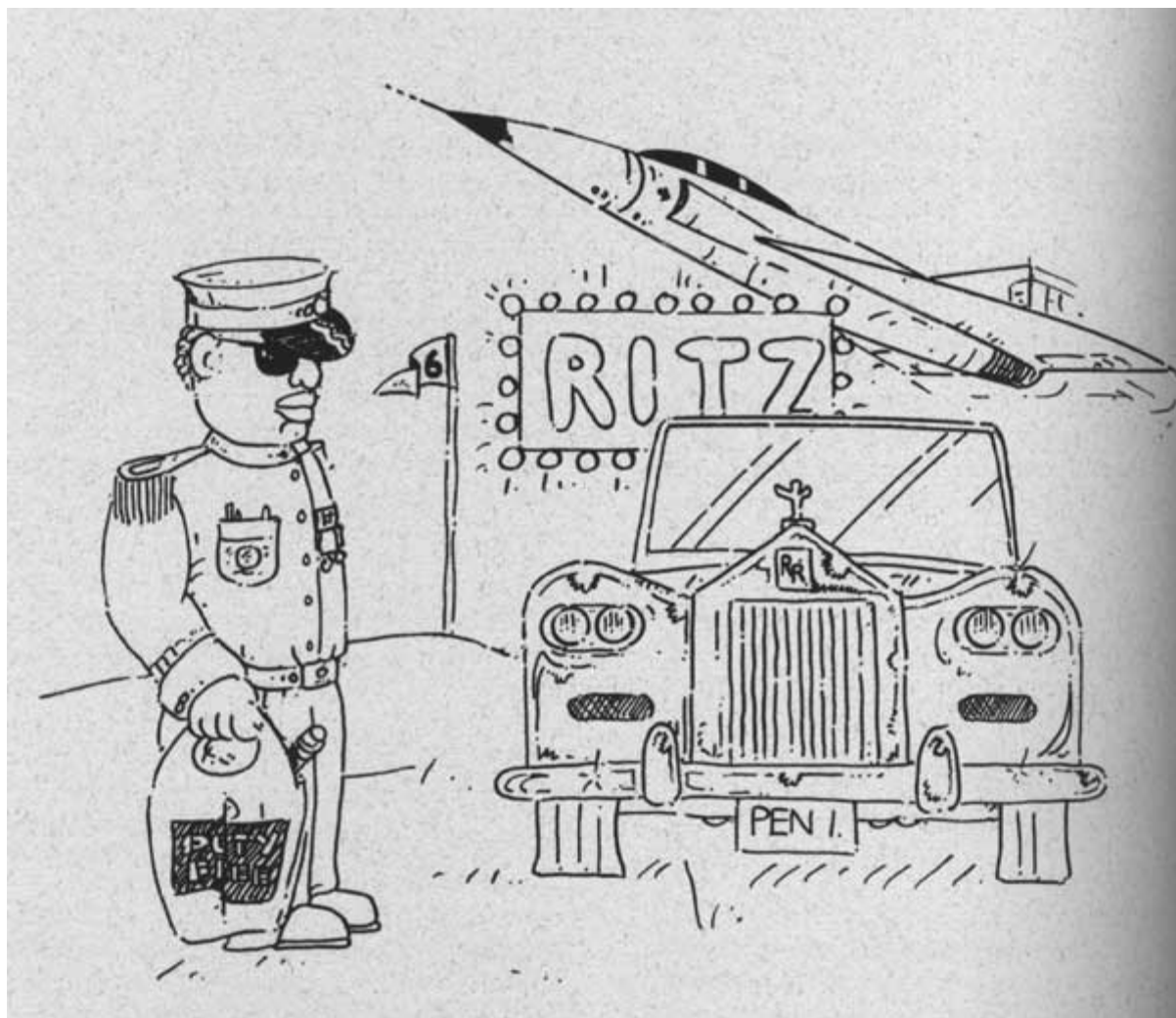
Our first IMCB programme was convened at the country home of the Hanging Judge Jeffreys of old, now the study centre for Spillers and harassed by low-flying F111s from the nearby US Air Force base at Heyford. Arthur Bell Distillers owns the Gleneagles Hotel and was thoughtful enough to convene its Top Team Workshops there.

The Ritz has become a regular breakfast haunt and so has the Savoy. It is excellent value for money once you have decided to eat out for a meeting with an otherwise unreachable merchant banker, or senior manager completing his dissertation with early morning tutorials. The service at both is wholly understanding of the customers' needs. Late arrivals and early staggered departures are both taken in the stride. Whilst I do not say I relish catching a train from Wellingborough to London at 07.00 to be at breakfast for 08.15, the reality is that it is possible.

However, the more fascinating venues must be outside the UK, even if only because of their guide-book magic and reflective pleasure. I have been involved with a typhoon and a cyclone. The first in Hong Kong left me walking the streets to make my appointments when the taxis had stopped running.

The second came the day after I left. It was the devastating Typhoon Uma that hit Port Vila in Vanuatu in early February 1987. Wags suggested that after my start-up there of the MBA, a very deep depression set in. Perhaps. Enormous damage was done but, since I left the country the day before, I was able to complete my itinerary to Jakarta and Singapore en route back to the UK

Port Vila is a delightful if not prosperous capital city for Vanuatu. The Republic was better known as the New Hebrides in the days of colonial rule when, would you believe, a condominium of French and British looked after affairs, taking it in turns to be governor each year. The British Servicemen's Club is still there, with expats aplenty in evidence. Despite predictions to the contrary at independence, the Ni Vanuatu have done exceedingly well and taken command of the country. It is a tax haven and tourist destination, with considerable investment from Australia. The Japanese are now beginning to visit as well.



One particularly memorable teaching tour took me, with my wife to carry the bags, to Kenya, where there was time for sightseeing in the Great Rift valley and a visit to Lake Niavache. Next we flew Air Madagascar to Mauritius via Moroni in the People's Republic of the Comoros. The President was himself returning home on the flight with duty frees and we were treated to his formal inspection on the tarmac of his Guard of Honour, with his aides carrying them in the rear. In Mauritius we were dogged by a hired Moke that continually refused to start, then up to Singapore on route to Denpasar, the airport for Bali. We, like so many, had always wanted to go there and the Oberoi Bali Hotel flaunts the subtitle "Bali like you hoped it would be". Much of Bali is certainly not. Apart from the Regent of Fiji, which was a different stop-over when the Prime Minister of New Zealand was also staying and entertainments were at their very best, we have not visited a more delightful hotel than the Oberoi Bali. The dancers, the food, the peace of the place and yet the opportunity never to be missed to write which I took, combined with hand carvings to order for name plates which now grace my door and the Senior Tutor's at Buckingham, are all deeply etched and, of course, photographed

Since I am in the mouth-watering catalogue of great spots we have stayed at over the past five years I must not overlook the Rocks in Sydney Harbour where the original harsh settlements were. They are a tourist paradise and the departure by ferry to Manly and its beach or simply for the Sydney Harbour cruise which is without doubt one of the wonders of the world. This year, Australia Day 1988, I was tempted to organise a competing event, Burns Night. My wife and I had little success either at tracking down a haggis or distracting our friends from Bicentennial Australia Day. In 1987 on 26 January I was in Perth, with no thought of haggis however, as I watched the magnificent Swan River

firework display and the radio-controlled flashing of torches by householders on the several sides of the city. We ate an excellent Chinese supper with friends from the University of Western Australia where I had taught for six months in 1980, and new friends of IMCB.

Australia has been so full of privileges and bizarre events for me that I can scarcely cease counting them. At an inland conference centre called Koralbyn, I met on a University of Queensland programme in 1984 a former police inspector with whom I went to school in England in 1956. He had subsequently lived in the same village as I near Northampton for four years in the 1970s - quite unknown to me until Koralbyn. At Hamilton Island, just off the Great Barrier Reef, I worked for a week with an ex Cranfield colleague to launch the best-selling "Effective Logistics Management" resource that has been adopted in Australia and the UK by the professional bodies concerned. All designed but not of course completed by the pool, pina colada in hand.

Further north, in SE Asia, my candidate for the best-run hotel in the world is the Shangri-La in Kuala Lumpur. There we held one of IMCB's Admissions Ceremonies for the Head of the Civil Service, Tan Sri Osman Cassim, a long-standing friend of action learning; met Dato Barudin, the hotel's architect, and Peter Cameron, General Manager of Standard Chartered Malaysia (now Australia). He proffered the enticing proposition that we should fly to Kota Kinabalu in Sabah to visit bank branches, and design a programme of action learning management development. I went. The whole visit was undertaken in a private plane and motorcade interspersed by the memorably succulent pineapple, I recall. I also recall the splendour of the expatriate mansion in which the Regional Manager lived.

Our Malaysian managers in IMCB who, incidentally, come out top consistently in their overall performance on assignments worldwide, have the enormous sense of fun and enjoyment as they work. Our programmes are a reasonable mix of Bumiputras, Chinese and Indian Malaysians, each contributing to the set in their own way. They took me for one residential weekend on Team Development to the Genting Highlands, cool and peaceful away from the heat of Kuala Lumpur. Golf and walking competed strongly with the action learning work. We were starting up our first Malaysian Doctoral programme at the same time with Master's graduates from the Asian Management Institute in Manila, together with some of IMCB's MBA graduates.

On the far side of the world beyond Australia, in the Antipodes, our programmes are just launched from windy city of Wellington. My visits to New Zealand are strong reminders of the UK in many ways, apart from the propensity for earthquakes. The major focus of operations and my visits have been Auckland, Hamilton on the Waikato and Wellington itself. The awareness of and interest in action learning is high, most especially because Reg Revans had been consuming his 80th birthday present from IMCB, his trip to SE Asia and the Pacific on an extended lecture tour. He drew big crowds in New Zealand and Australia.

Some would say our most bizarre location is our own academic headquarters in Buckingham itself, where we restored the former millinery shop that had become a bicycle repair store into a main reception centre. But I believe they would be wrong. My prize is equally divided between Gleneagles and the Peninsular Hotel in Hong Kong.

Gleneagles is indelibly in my mind from my earliest exploratory visit to Arthur Bell. I was due to arrive with my wife at midnight, having driven up from Carlisle after speaking before dinner there to a Divisional Board meeting of Metal Box. The Metal Box meeting was delayed for an hour and my wife and I finally got to Gleneagles at 12.30 a.m. We were checked in and ceremonially ushered to a single room, with a complimentary bottle of champagne and two glasses. When I alerted the desk to the error, i.e. our need for the double room we had reserved and checked only that morning by phone, I was told that the computer indicated the room to which we had been allocated was indeed shown as a double room. Ah well, I said, let's have a Z-bed, hotel jargon for a folding bed. It took 45 minutes to find one.

The Peninsular in Hong Kong offers a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce service from the airport for a mere HK\$ 250. Its afternoon tea is legendary and the quartet reminiscent of my childhood on the south coast of England. However; the reception had problems with my booking. Five hours later we traced the error I had been logged under our telex answer back MCBUNI, and was known as Professor McBuni, probably from Scotland. The other elegant touch was the knock at my door and the arrival of a trolley, groaning with soaps and essences from which to choose the ones I preferred, as opposed to the insufferable habit, I suppose, that so many hotels have of assuming I wish to smell of musk or lavender or eau de cologne.

Bizarre or ritzy, I am a frequent traveller. I wonder if the itinerant scholar of old or the journeyman had my luck?

## Graffito 63

# Kuasingjak and Kota Kinabalu

I have told something of the locations we inhabit in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Jakarta and Kota Kinabalu but nothing of the events that took place to build our activities. I must put that right. Each of the four centres serves to indicate the nature of entrepreneurial start-ups and taught us important lessons.

The Director of the Institution of Industrial Management in Britain approached MCB University Press for discussions in 1982 about his professional journal. Nothing ever came of that but the Director was an old DCO and had immediate rapport with our declared aspirations to take IMCB into international markets rather than bringing foreign students to Britain. He introduced us to two of his most successful foreign branches of the IIM, led by Yan Poh Soon as Chairman in Singapore, and the Production Management Institute (PMI) in Johannesburg led by Frank Carlisle.

As chance would have it, the Singaporean was travelling to the UK for discussions in any event and ended up at my home in Milton Malsor for luncheon. The outcome was a firm decision to link our MBA action learning studies to the Singapore-based branch of the IIM at the post-Diploma level. Reg Revans had long before influenced IIM in the times of the GEC programme that action learning should be used for the postgraduation studies of production managers. The first group of managers met in 1983/4 and have since been followed by a further MBA programme. However, the major breakthrough, for which Yan Poh Soon was elected Academic Partner of the Year in 1987, was an introduction of the fourth and final year Bachelor of Management Programme for IIM Diplomates. To date, over 100 have followed this programme and some 60 more in Hong Kong.

The programme had long ago been discussed among colleagues at Cranfield, where we only offered Master's level work. Candidates with HND/HNC or its equivalent were admitted to the Master of Science over two years, whereas those with a Bachelor degree already could proceed in one. We never make the leap from Cranfield and accord Bachelor status for the first year but that was clearly what was involved.

Our success with the IIM in Singapore not only spread to Hong Kong. It also became an important basis for our constituent college arrangement with the London College of Advanced Transport Studies in 1987. Their Advanced Diploma level has already been recognised by a number of British Universities as the equivalent of a Bachelor award and we for arranged for IMCB's Bachelor of Transport Management to be awarded with further progress to MBA and DPhil.

Singapore's marketplace was one where we had hoped to be able to work in partnership with the Singapore Institute of Management. Its Director had strong links with the UK but finally resolved to go with the institution which emerged in the Far East as our major competitor, Henley. A further complication for our first five years was the grant in support of professional education provided by the Economic Development Board's Skills Development Fund of up to 40 per cent. We had to offer scholarships to the extent the SDF grant would have been provided in order to progress at MBA level. Our Associates were good and their work rate very satisfactory. However, they were placed in the shade in performance terms by the Malaysian managers.

Our entrance to Malaysia, where we predominantly worked from Kuala Lumpur, was via the good offices of a Chinese Malaysian who had been educated as an accountant in the United Kingdom. On his return he set up an accountants' training programme and also programmes for the non-financial manager. His guest lecturers from the UK suggested he should talk to us and he did. KL has now offered more MBA programmes than any other city in the world - we reach KL9 as I write and the latest set includes a Government Minister. The output has been, as I have remarked elsewhere, of the highest standard worldwide.

Our academic partners in Malaysia include in their core tutorial group a bank marketer, who did his doctorate as well as his Master's degree at Bradford University and also a distinguished Malaysian Sikh, who completed his Master's and doctorate at the University of Manchester in the time Reg Revans was there. The most powerful team was created. Launch plans were laid and presentations given at the British Council offices. On one occasion, the graduates of a programme went into the marketplace themselves to recruit a next set. They constantly travelled to Britain for Graduation Congregation ceremonies, becoming the life and soul of most celebrations. As was noted earlier, along with the UK, they were in front with the launch of the DBA programme in KL for those already in possession of a Master's degree.

Our Jakarta academic partners are the Indonesian School of Economics, a private university in Indonesia with its own authority to award Bachelor degrees. As chance would have it, I was in Jakarta on a British Management Training Export Council Mission when Director of the School of Economics noticed an advertisement for an MBA programme from IMCB in one of our journals. He contacted Bradford in the United Kingdom who telexed through to me that I should make their acquaintance. They called next day at the Hotel Sahid Jaya and whisked me away for detailed discussions. Within six months, not one but two MBA programmes had begun. It was the first country where we had real language problems and caused us to consider carefully then agree that assignments could be submitted in languages other than English. Several of our national tutors had a time of it, but the work produced was important and created a faculty resource for the Indonesian School to develop their own programmes.

It was also the first major opportunity for us to use the excellent Malaysian faculty elsewhere in the Far East region because Malaysia and Indonesia have very closely related languages. It proved indispensable for the external examinations we conducted.

Malaysian faculty also had a further key contribution to make. They were the first country to introduce into IMCB the successful student loan scheme. Wholly their own initiative, they negotiated with Standard Chartered Bank and, at the launch ceremony, the first two borrowers and IMCB's

Regional staff met with the General Manager Malaysia of the bank. And as was their wont, they proposed he ought to organise his own in-company programme bearing in mind IMCB 's considerable strength in banking and financial services management. He agreed to meet me on my next visit and thus began the tale of Kota Kinabalu and Sabah.

The General Manager was not a university graduate himself. He believed in hands-on learning but had not heard of the structured approach we could offer. He had already introduced the "In Search of Excellence" programmes and was a great supporter of management development for all his staff.

IMCB was invited to create an in-company programme of development to move onwards from what had been accomplished. I agreed to attend a total immersion in the bank, with branch visits in Kuala Lumpur and then the in-depth evaluation in Sabah. It included a visit to a branch that only a year before had been robbed by speedboat pirates from Indonesia, with most tragic deaths among staff and customers.

There was a snag. The General Manager was leaving Malaysia to go to Australia where the bank had just been granted a licence in the overall pattern of deregulation. Our report landed on the desk of his successor and, sad to tell, has not been proceeded with just yet awhile. However, Australia provided good ground for further contact with such a supportive senior manager and I was able to re-establish contact exactly one year later, albeit interrupted not by Cyclone Uma but by Cyclone Charlie, which dumped so much rain on Townsville, Queensland, at the beginning of March 1988 that he was called back to Adelaide head office.

Our Far Eastern activities described here omit our Malaysian colleagues' opening-up of Brunei in 1986, but they give ample scope for appreciating the variety and hassle of our academic partner model. Not for nothing was the Council Ordinance covering relationships given the number 13! In 1986, we asked our Far East co-ordinator to open a full-time office in Singapore. The doors were finally flung wide on 1 January 1987. Registry and courseware stockholding support was located there and a major programme of tutor training in the special needs of action learning launched throughout the Region.

We had, of course, attempted the impossible and survived, even prospered. Our best associates materialised in KL and it became the city of the most sets. No visitor there, whether it was Emeritus President Reg Revans, President Caroline the Baroness Cox or our friendly Member of Parliament Michael Morris, who is Chairman of the All-party Committee on Malaysia and Singapore at Westminster, could escape the infectious enthusiasm of the local academic partner, our graduate members and associates.

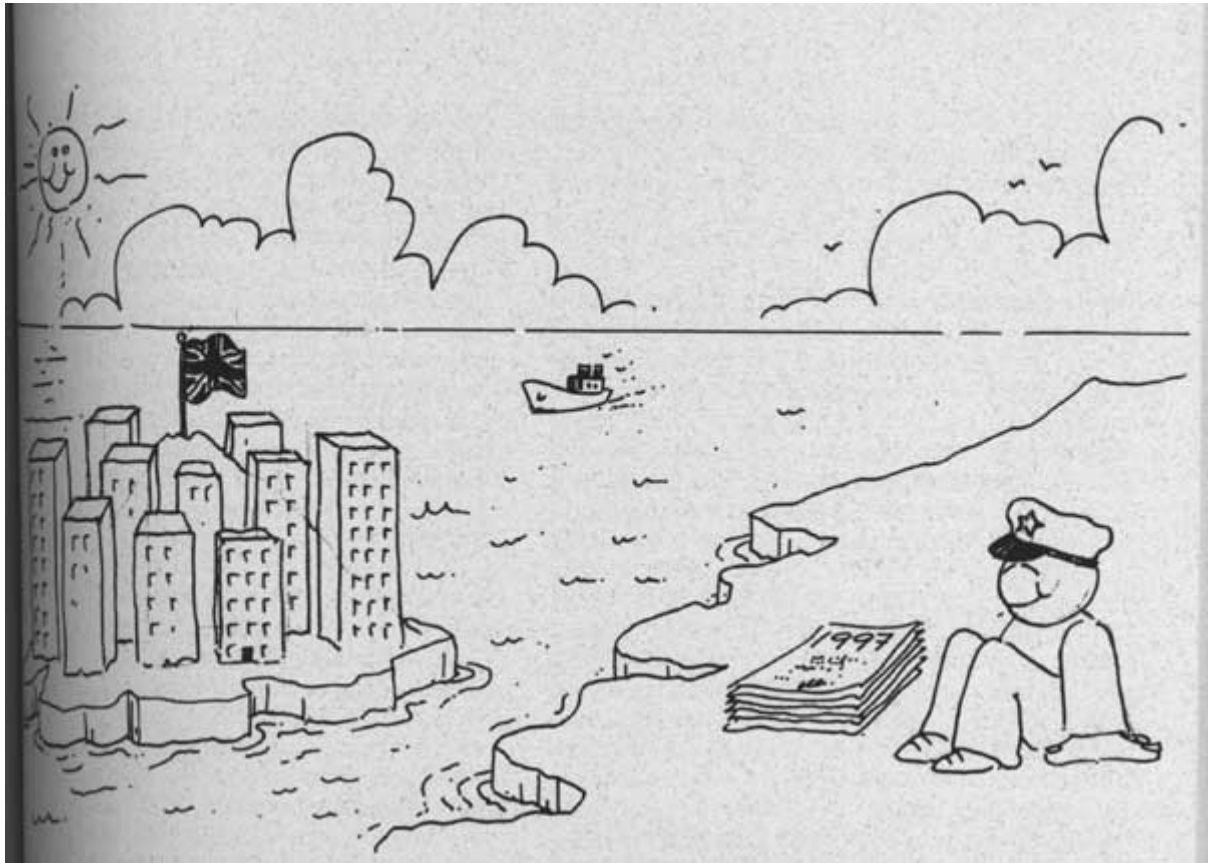
Partnership has succeeded wherever we have been able to find an individual or institution that was already in touch with our marketplace. The synergy of the existing membership base of the IIM in Singapore and the Indonesian School of Economics was most important. It has driven our strategy ever since. No longer do we champion the individual who simply thinks he understands what is needed and would like to seek to recruit his first set. We do not prohibit any such initiative but we build our academic partnership arrangements today on relationships that can call on qualification programmes already in place in the Far East with existing activists. We have transferred this street wisdom back to Europe too with our ventures into Spain and Finland and Belgium.

The next phase in the Far East Region, however, calls for much more substantive support from IMCB avoiding any undermining of the entrepreneurial marketing flair that our partners have shown so well. It has already begun.

# Graffito 64

## 1997 and All That

Starting up in Hong Kong was just as reliant on introductions as it had been in Singapore and Malaysia. This time, the contact came from one of our UK customers whose management in Hong Kong included a most highly educated corporate planner. Our initial target was an In-company programme with Fung Ping Fan. Although it did not eventuate, the links were strong enough to enable our first MBA programme to commence. Legal requirements insist that no set has more than 19 managers but that has posed no difficulties. As can be readily imagined, Hong Kong is in ferment with 1997 and its return to the People's Republic of China (PRC); a very real planning discontinuity. The best-selling book for a year or more was rumoured to be *How to Get a Second Passport*, but that does not do justice to the optimism we found. A decade, we were told, was long enough to make your fortune twice. After that decisions could be made.



To gain widespread publicity for our action learning programmes, we sought the assistance of the publisher of *Hong Kong Business Today*, who incidentally also had the franchise to print Hong Kong and Singapore *Tatler* with great success. He was an Indian with a strong background in Asia Pacific publishing before he launched his business journal and, because of our own publishing interests, we had much to talk about. A total deal was struck for him to carry reciprocal advertising in his magazine for our MBA in return for our making books available for sale and organising printing work through his enterprise. One of our best-selling titles, *How to Assess Managerial Style*, was used as a promotional title for new subscribers to *Hong Kong Business Today* with considerable success.



Under our corporate planner's leadership, we flourished in HK in competition with an intriguing array of alternative suppliers. The Colony's own three Universities and a Polytechnic which adopted Henley's programme in due course, make a massive contribution but so too in management education does the University of East Asia in Macao. It's a hydrofoil trip away for the management student but the programmes are flexibly offered and very popular. Prices in Macao were lower than ours and we were unable to compete with them until 1987 on that dimension. However, we encountered an even greater problem in Hong Kong and to a lesser extent throughout the Far East. Such is the Chinese reverence for knowledge that to suggest Q is more important than P, i.e. that acquiring knowledge *per se* was not the highest priority, gave our partner a difficult assignment. Indeed it was some considerable while before our tutor training programme in Hong Kong was able to establish the appropriate pattern of support.

Hong Kong reminded us, however, of an important lesson that we had learnt increasingly throughout the Far East and in a joint programme offered in Bournemouth mainly for SE Asian managers. In our quest for action learning designs that were good for the UK and for Australia, as it transpired, we forgot the realities of customer orientation. Cultural weaning was necessary before managers and employers alike would adopt the high intensity of action learning we included in our MBA programme. After lengthy and heated debate, we resolved that a uniform worldwide balance of P and Q within any MBA programme is both not appropriate nor necessarily what we should be doing. A route to IMCB's degree of membership that was 50 per cent P as opposed to 25 per cent emerged and offered in Hong Kong and Indonesia.

Because of the profound British influence in Hong Kong, language was not a problem in tutorial support although culture had been. So it was not surprising that the initiative to study and be examined in Chinese did not arise in Hong Kong. It surfaced first in Brussels and then in Singapore and finally, Malaysia. The EEC made funds available in the middle of the 1980s for the establishment of a European-led business school in Beijing in the PRC. In line with our interest in the Far East in general, we made enquiries about it to discover what was required was access to European knowledge in the Chinese language but not on the basis of the PRC wanting to pay for it. They wanted, by and large, an educational aid programme such as the EEC provided rather than our privatised school.

If we wished, as we did and still do, to reach into the PRC, it is most likely we shall be able to accomplish it via partnerships built from Hong Kong itself, as it seeks to influence and perhaps lead the Southern Provinces. Technology from Cable & Wireless has already moved across the borders in this way and PRC capital has flooded South into property development and much other activity. The future of HK as the entrepot for the Southern Provinces of the PRC is good indeed.

We did not proceed with Brussels, which was directed in any event by the major European Schools with faculty on sabbatical leave. They were doing the required task very well indeed. We took up instead an enquiry from a former Singapore Institute of Management tutor who had launched and run the SIM's Chinese language Diploma in Management Studies. He had moved on and was enthusiastic to offer our full MBA in Chinese on an enhancement basis from that SIM Diploma. He also wished to offer the same programme in Taiwan. This latter proposition, as well as its Malaysian/Chinese extension, fascinated us. We knew little of Taiwan but had excluded it from our plans along with the Philippines, Thailand and Korea because they were believed to be in the US zone of educational influence rather than the British.

Nothing has yet happened beyond those plans at this juncture in China, but for quite different reasons we are seriously contemplating offering programmes in Korea. The 1988 Olympics have, of course, put Korea even more in the limelight than hitherto but it is a spectacular economic miracle of similar proportions to Singapore's. Ravished by the battles between North Korean communists and the UN in the early 1950s, while I was still at school, by 1964 it had a GNP per capita in its agrarian economy of

US\$100. In 1987, it had the highest rate of real growth in the world's industrialised countries at 12.8 per cent and had exceeded Portugal in GNP terms per capita, with the UK and Italy forecast to be overtaken by the year 2000. Our interest in Korea was triggered by faculty connections from the University of Queensland and from colleagues in the London College of Advanced Transport Studies that became a constituent school of IMCB in 1987 and already had academic agents in Seoul.

I have already alluded to some of the All That in title of this Graffito. Our publishing activities from MCB University Press, however, soon extended well beyond printing and promotional collaboration with *Hong Kong Business Today* (and *Tatler*). We resolved to work from Hong Kong to develop our subscription sales and eventually incorporated our first wholly owned overseas subsidiary, International Subscription Development Services. It was able to gain better access to marketing lists. Then we went further and initiated indigenous Asia Pacific journals in the areas of business logistics, marketing, management development and business research, together with financial engineering.

## Graffito 65

# Jack James and Peter

Despite the tales of the Orient and the South Seas with which I have regaled you in an earlier Graffiti, the major area of action learning for IMCB is still Europe

Jack was head of Marketing for an American multinational in silicones, based on Brussels. In 1982, he and his Board colleagues resolved that the marketplace circumstances of the European Division demanded reorganisation. Instead of focusing on the technologies such as elastomers, the future focus would be industries such as health care, paints and construction. The approach was designed to create greater customer and marketing orientation. The development challenge was how to transform chemical engineers leading technology departments into marketers. He and his training manager thought an in-company course might be a good idea but the lot fell on me to respond.

Jack was a lawyer by profession so he had respect for the facts of the case. But he was also a lapsed lawyer. So he responded well to the notion that he should endeavour to get people to behave in a customer-oriented way rather than simply to learn what it meant. He agreed that we should take a company-specific, hands-on project approach. He over-ruled the objection, often heard but seldom resisted that the reorganisation made people too busy to spare the time to learn marketing. Rather that the reorganisation was just the right moment. Everyone was disoriented and was wondering what was expected. It was exactly the the opportunity needed to set the pattern, to set the mould, to orient them.

We shuttled back and forth from the UK to Brussels, creating specific silicon industry cases from their own files to be studied on the tutorial programme. There was no risk of rejection because the programme was not relevant. We could not, however; rewrite the textbook on this occasion to be company-specific, a route since taken more than ten times with major customers. Rather, we required rapporteurs from each session to take responsibility for preparing and we then published the applications meanings of each chapter for the company as they emerged in the debates.

There were some 35 managers in all to be developed and they were divided into two start-up orientation groups, each working for two weeks in downtown Brussels late into the night in the Sheraton. As well as their own organisation cases and in-depth study of marketing, they were put into eight small groups at a time to begin work that was to last 12 months on significant projects for the new structure. Each industry department was in the process of preparing its plans, of course, but there were issues that spanned the whole enterprise in ten European countries such as logistics, new product development, the development of a marketing/sales intelligence system and channels of distribution. Workshops were held in these areas also and fresh approaches were developed and acted upon.

A year later, we all dutifully assembled in a splendid hotel in the Ardennes for a series of reports to the European board and their feedback on them. The Board was aware of what was coming but, nonetheless, worked overnight to prepare a carefully considered response and in, certain cases, action was agreed upon directly.

It was the first time that I had seen an action learning approach act as an organisational development device so directly. Everyone agreed how smoothly the changes had gone through and how speedily they had been able to discern what it was that was expected of them in their new context. We received some very considerable compliments and were rewarded by Jack, and his successor, John, with a continuing sequence of taskforce internal involvement on an action learning basis for the following three years.

While Jack was at work in Brussels, James was taking up his first major field command as Chief Executive in East Anglia. He was a hugely successful marketing planner and senior executive, with a reputation acquired both internationally and in the UK head office. He held an MBA and doctorate already and, naturally enough, expected his fellow managers to have or speedily acquire at least MBA level of professional competence. Amen to that. I was invited to Christmas lunch in the boardroom, after an hour with the Directors. The introduction had come from a mutual Irish professional friend, who did more referencing to IMCB than any other man in our first five years.

I endeavoured to identify the goals of James's enterprise that could be made more tangible than "we all need to be professionally educated", not because I don't believe we should but because it's an input not an output statement. The answer *ab initio* was equally unhelpful. The profit was expected to grow from £5 million to £20 million in four years. Everyone in the company who had been there before the new broom arrived agreed it could not be done, although of course it was - and in less than four years.

James concluded that what was needed was to encourage those who wanted to join the professional profit-seeking crusade to show themselves. We ran up the standard of IMCB's MBA programme, all promises and no track record. We circulated a well-printed brochure and aptitude tested some 24 managers, of whom 17 were suitably ready but for various reasons only 13 could begin straightaway. Over the next three years a further 10 followed. This was in comparison with two individuals with an MBA at the start.

As the programme progressed, James himself took a closer and closer interest in the work of IMCB and became so strongly convinced he eventually became Chairman of our Council in the UK. The impact on non-MBA seeking managers was also profound. An investment in the programme at today's prices of £250,000 produced benefits well in excess of £3,000,000 within two years, as arm's-length trading, more competitive supply negotiations, distribution rationalisation and sales force effectiveness were all affected. The centrepiece of the programme in tutorial terms was the handing over by the Directors in draft format to the MBA managers of the emerging corporate plan for the following year, inviting them to be devil's advocate within its framework. Straight from a strategy and policy input on the core programme, the opportunity for critical appraisal was at a maximum, and the excitement and difficulties of acting on it were readily apparent.

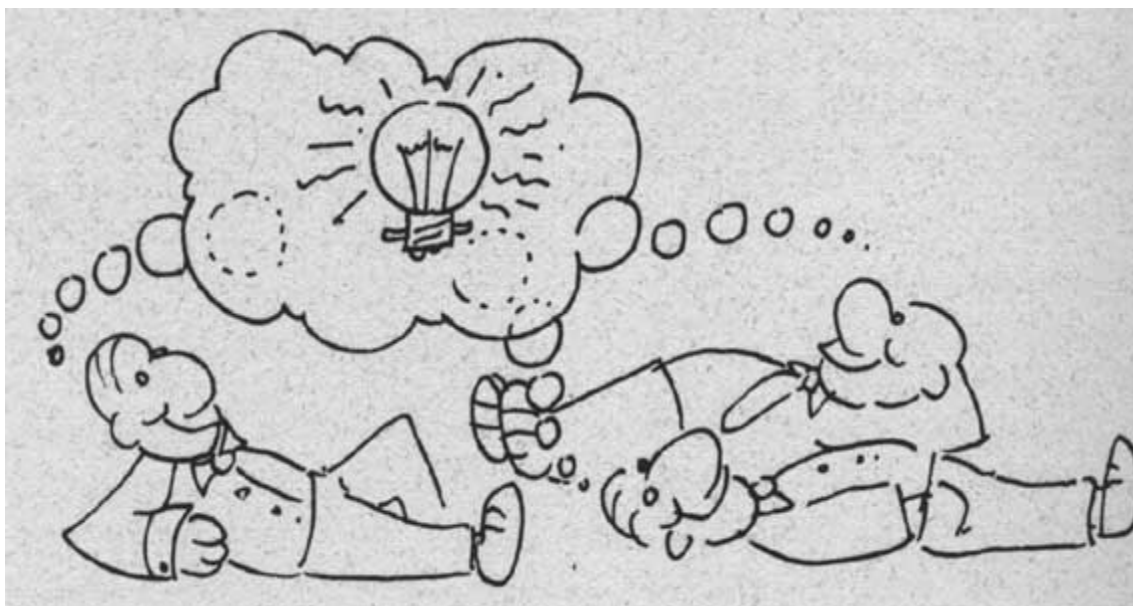
Peter's involvement was altogether different. Two years' work with Bowaters in Stevenage led me to ask the satisfied Chairman if he could invite local managing directors around to his boardroom for lunch one day so that I could introduce our services. He kindly did so but Peter's Managing Director could not attend. He apologised and I followed up with a letter saying I was sorry and could I go and see him anyway: he said yes. When I arrived, we reviewed the corporate scene, not talking management development but hopes for the next two to five years. One area *par excellence* was humming under Peter's leadership despite an onslaught from electronics in a marketplace to which Peter supplied photographic systems.

Peter was putting the finishing touches to his plans and wanted to develop his full team of 28 managers to carry them through. Respectfully I suggested he took one short step back and table the plans for full-scale discussion by the managers concerned rather than circulating them as a *fait accompli*. And so we began. Off to Meon Valley Golf Club we went, near Southampton, for a week's programme that included team building focused on the future the plans contained and debate on the plans in great detail.

Very considerable enjoyment was had by all but some major gaps showed in the professional competences and skills of the 28. Once again, rather than addressing that with a programme, we adopted the Brussels strategy reported from Jack above. We worked together in a series of three project groups - on channels, logistics and customer account profitability analysis. For six months, the group worked with tutorial inputs that culminated in a full-scale presentation of the outcomes one to another and to senior colleagues beyond Peter's team.

Now their appetites were whetted and subsequent tutorial sessions rolled forward with an opportunity to be examined at Certificate level, which 15 managers took up. On those outcomes, 14 went forward to complete the full MBA programme some two-and-a-half years later.

Jack, James and Peter are the heroes of our works at IMCB but they came from two perspectives to participate. Jack and Peter were reorganising internally to meet a marketplace challenge but Peter followed through well beyond Jack to carry almost his whole departmental structure to MBA level. He achieved what Jack had by way of organisational development and enhanced competence right across the scene. As customer account profitability analysis was introduced, financial managers became deeply involved. The team development work was transferred into the Personnel Department, which took it upon behalf of the whole company in the UK well beyond Peter's particular division. Ironically in 1987, Peter's own company reorganised worldwide, as Jack's had done, away from technology patterns to a business focus.



James, however, was already the convinced professional. He wanted to work with as many a professionally educated and developed managers on his team as possible. From the outset, he wanted MBAs and went for them. For me, the moral of the story once more has to be that we educators must start where the customer is and work from there towards the full-scale education of managers we wholeheartedly believe in.