

Bridging Boundaries



Chris Marsden

Memoirs from my working life

Preface

During 2017, I wrote my memoirs (a more or less chronological account of my life) aimed chiefly at my grandchildren for one day when they may be interested in what grandpa did. On reading them through, it occurred to me and my mentor, Eric Midwinter, that the sections on my professional experience may be of interest to a wider audience. What follows is an anecdotal and reflective account of a career that began as a school teacher, then changed track to working in education and community affairs roles with the oil company, BP, and finally and – perhaps most productively – a largely unpaid and voluntary period working on business and human rights and teaching MBA courses. Of particular interest I hope will be the pioneering work I did in promoting links between schools and industry between 1977 and 1990, and reflections on my involvement in the development of corporate social responsibility and business and human rights during the subsequent 27 years.

I have entitled my memoirs 'Bridging Boundaries'. If there is one theme that connects my varied career it is that I have worked at the boundary between education, local communities, and industry. Over the years, my mission became one of helping organisations with very different cultures and perspectives on the world to understand each other better and work together for mutual benefit to themselves and the wider society.

In the first chapter, I describe some aspects of my early life which had a significant influence on me and my future career. The following chapters cover the three stages of my working life: in schools, with BP and in the field of business and human rights. I end with some concluding thoughts.

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1: The formative years (1945 – 68)

Childhood

My childhood was both sheltered and secure. My father, Peter Marsden, was a schoolmaster; a geography teacher, a boarding housemaster and grammar school headmaster. My mother, Constance (Connie), was a full time carer of other people, including her family, and a long time servant of the Society of Friends, Quakers. I have two younger sisters, Elisabeth and Franceys. For many years, we lived in the grandeur of a large Victorian house and garden, which my father found and developed as a boarding house for Ipswich School. I enjoyed going on geography field trips to Scotland and the Yorkshire Dales and primitive camping holidays in France during the 1950s.

My parents were devout Quakers. I attended meeting for worship most Sundays for the first 18 years of my life, including five years at the Quaker boarding school, Bootham in York. Although I now have great doubts about the existence of any kind of creator and lack any religious faith, I have great respect for the Quaker tradition. I appreciate the idea of sitting in silence together with others and offering the occasional spoken contribution if moved to do so. I also enjoy the spiritual experience of sitting in a large church, especially the Chapel at King's (my university college), and listening to the organ and uplifting choral anthems, while gazing at the rafters. In my life, I have tried, if not always successfully, to follow the Quaker teaching of 'looking for that of God in every person'. I tend to substitute 'good' for 'God', which works for me.

The combination of my father's enthusiastic and all-inclusive approach to being a schoolmaster, my mother's seeming ability to charm everyone she met and our involvement in the Society of Friends contributed to my sense of security and developing self-confidence. We met people from all walks of life and my parents seemed equally at ease in the company of apparently posh people as they did with those from poorer backgrounds. I am sure that this contributed as much as anything to my own sense of ease with my position in society. While I have been ambitious to better myself in my professional endeavours and, I must admit, to earn a decent salary, I have never once worried about what class I belong to and whether I can get myself to the next level. I have been fortunate enough to take whatever I am for granted.

Being Quakers helped us both socially and in practical terms. The Society of Friends serves also as a great social support system. After I failed the 11+, a Quaker friend paid part of my fees to go to Bootham, which my parents could never have afforded on their own. Both this friend, Lettuce Jowett, and another, Alderman Lesley Lewis,

who was on Ipswich Council's education committee, regularly taught me at Sunday school. My case was brought up as an example of the failings of the 11+ system. These indomitable ladies had seen potential in me that the 11+ exam could not possibly do. Although neither of them lived long enough to witness their foresight well justified, I am truly grateful to them and hope they would have been proud of some of the things I have achieved. Later on, thanks to my mother's increasing active involvement with and contacts through the Society of Friends, I had the opportunity to teach in Kenya under the Quaker Overseas Voluntary Service scheme between leaving school and going up to university, which was another major influence on my early life.

I was a late developer both physically and educationally and had some difficult times in my early years at school. I suppose that the security of my early childhood, being the apple of my grandparents' eye and a natural self-confidence was not the best preparation for being introduced to a new school environment where one has to earn one's place, rather than it being given to you on a plate. On arrival at Bootham, aged 13 (most others having been there since age 11) I made mistakes, including making claims about myself that I couldn't live up to. This led to a lot of hurtful teasing over my first two years, which I did not deal with well. My squeaky voice was a particular problem!

By the time I was in the fifth form doing 'O' levels, my voice at last broke. I began to do quite well in class, well enough anyway to get into the sixth form, which I thoroughly enjoyed. My first day in the lower sixth was interesting. In the morning, I attended 'A' level lessons in Maths, Physics and Chemistry. During the previous holiday, my father had persuaded me that the sciences would provide me with the most employment options, particularly as I was good at Maths. However, one lesson of Chemistry (I had not done it for 'O' level) was enough to persuade me otherwise and I changed to the 'Arts' side at lunch time and never regretted it. I did moderately well with my three 'A' levels, eventually getting 'B' in Economics and History and 'C' in English. I stayed on for a seventh term in the sixth form in order to try for King's College, Cambridge, largely thanks to the encouragement of my father because he had gone there. I don't think my teachers expected me to get in and I was happy with offers from Bristol and Keele on the basis of my 'A' level results. However, I did the exams and went up for an interview. There I met Robin Marris, a confirmed humanist, and I at that time a confirmed Quaker, and we had a lengthy argument about religious faith, which clearly impressed him. He was an economist and persuaded me on the spot to change my application from history to economics, which eventually resulted in an offer of a place.

Teacher training in Kenya

These days it wouldn't be allowed for someone so young and unqualified, but on January 1st 1964, I travelled to Kenya to teach English under the Quaker Overseas

Voluntary Service scheme. I flew to Nairobi and then was driven five hours by car to Kaimosi, near Kisumu and Lake Victoria. Kaimosi teacher training college was part of an American Quaker mission station, which included a hospital, primary school and a mechanical engineering facility.

My first assignment at Kaimosi was to observe students on their teaching practice. There I was, an 18 year old fresh from school supervising primary school student teachers some of them double my age. Somehow, I convinced myself that as a recent recipient of teaching I knew a thing or two about how to do it. It was an amazing experience visiting the local schools, nearly all mud walled, straw-roofed buildings, open above head height so that you could hear everything going on in adjacent classrooms. After teaching practice it was time for me to do some teaching myself. It is hard to believe that I was much good but I did my best to help the students with their reading, writing and speaking in English. For many of them English was their third language. Most enjoyable of all I remember spending time chatting with the students, many of whom were my own age, and comparing our lives and views on things generally. Coaching and playing football with them also helped.

All didn't go smoothly at the college. The students had a high opinion of themselves, boosted by recent independence (Uhuru) and government incentives to become teachers, and didn't take kindly to criticism of their work, especially from white teachers (Msungus). Misunderstandings were rife and these eventually led to a student strike and some quite nasty intimidating behaviour focused chiefly on the American Quaker missionary houses. On reflection, it was a fascinating opportunity to experience the teething struggles of a newly independent country coming to terms with its own identity and to observe some of those previously in charge struggling to adapt.

My Kenyan experience left me wondering about the impact of British colonial rule and the role of missionaries. I had been brought up in the immediate post war period to take pride in all the parts of the world coloured in red on the map; I naively assumed that British rule had on the whole been a good thing and that the devoted work of missionaries in providing education and medical support was benign. It is hard to judge past behaviour in the light of today's knowledge and attitudes but even with the best will in the world the assumed superiority of the old colonialists and missionaries to their 'native' workers and attempted converts was clearly as much wrong then as it is obviously wrong now. I don't think I ever felt that it was right to try to convert non-believers to your own brand of religion. I do, however, think it is right to challenge the more barbaric of primitive practices such as use of witch doctors, dangerously unhygienic male circumcision ceremonies and female genital mutilation rites. As my own agnosticism, not to say atheism, developed, I have become suspicious of missionaries of all descriptions however well intentioned. I don't want to challenge those with faith in whatever belief system they may

profess but I suggest that it would be better all round if they keep their faith to themselves and learn to live and get on with others of different belief systems.

King's College, Cambridge

I went up to King's Cambridge in October 1964. I diligently attended most of the lectures which on the whole were poorly delivered, often read from notes and with virtually no student interaction. There were some famous names around like Joan Robinson, Richard Khan, Nicholas Kaldor, Kenneth Berrill and James Meade. My main contacts, though, were with the supervision tutors in college. The Cambridge system is that you attend lectures given by the university in your particular faculty but are actually taught in supervisions by Fellows in your own college. I was very fortunate at King's to be given supervisions by a number of well-known and interesting academics, including Kenneth Berrill, Ajit Singh (a lovely man who took a great interest in all his students was to become arguably the most renowned Indian-born economist) and John Goldthorpe (a pioneer in the then relatively new discipline of Sociology) and the inspirational Robin Marris.

Contrary to popular assumptions, I spent most of my time at Kings working. I found the requirement to write three essays a week for each of the supervisions hard going. I also did not work very intelligently: I took copious lecture notes and read books and articles without really understanding stuff thoroughly. However, there were moments of inspiration. I once wrote a paper for Marris on 'arbitrage', which somehow I understood and got a rare 'A' for, which I think helped to confirm in his mind that he had been right to give me a place. As luck would have it, a very similar question came up in my finals at the end of the third year. I remember that I rattled off the answer in 45 minutes to get that exam off to a great start.

My old 'A' level approach to studying meant that when it came to Part Ones at the end of the first year and in the Prelims at the end of the second year I only got 2.2s. Then one evening early in my third year, having had a lot to drink, I returned to my rooms and found the only way to prevent my head spinning and avoid being ill was to lie on my bed and stare at the light bulb in the middle of the ceiling. As I did this I began to think about the basic principles of economics and somehow they all became much clearer and make more sense as a whole way of thinking about things. The next morning I amazingly retained this insight and from then on studying became much easier and exam preparation much more structured. For instance I found that if I reduced each topic to, say, five key points and memorised them, I would automatically be able to recall and work out the explanations and analysis required to develop them. This clearly worked as in my finals I received a 2.1 and very nearly a first.

I was particularly interested in development economics and wanted to work in the field, partly because of my experience in Kenya. I applied for a post with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and was called for interview in London early

in 1967. This seemed to go pretty well but I heard nothing further during my last year at King's. That October I began my teacher training course at Oxford and applied for an economics post at the City of London School starting on September 1968. This was successful and I was offered the job and accepted it. A few days later I received a letter from the ODI offering me a job that would have involved my going immediately to work in Africa. I was much torn but felt obliged to stick with my agreement with the City of London School. I often wonder what a different life I might have led had that offer come just one week earlier. Given the lack of success that the application of the economic theories of the day had on development planning in subsequent years, perhaps I was fortunate not to become a practicing economist but to teach economics instead.

Although quite good at maths, I never took to the more mathematical approaches to economics. I instinctively distrusted economic models that were based on rigid assumptions that seemed to deny the possibility of human irrationality or at least inconsistent behaviour. I have been pleased with the belated growth in interest in behavioural economics in recent years. I only wish it had had more prominence when I was studying the subject. As a good Kingsman, I became a convinced Keynesian and a strong supporter of government intervention to manage the economy, for instance by running budget deficits to boost demand and therefore employment. This was the time of the first Wilson Labour government and long before the inflationary problems of the 1970s and subsequent backlash against Keynes' ideas under Mrs Thatcher.

I was also struck by a question raised in J.R. Hicks's otherwise rather tedious book on national income accounting: what happens to the national income when a man marries his housekeeper? The answer is that it clearly goes down as she is no longer paid and therefore her income is no longer recorded in the national accounts. But what happens to the overall level of wellbeing? Presumably the housekeeping services are continued and hopefully wedded bliss enhances their enjoyment of life. This insight into the limitations of national income or GDP as a measure of national wellbeing has stuck with me ever since and proved an excellent source of discussion in my economics lessons over the following years.

On reflection, what a privileged life my fellow students and I lived at King's. I had a full grant, an additional bursary thanks to my father's relatively modest income, and accommodation overlooking the river Cam. Today's students would be paying tuition and maintenance, probably financed by a loan that must be paid back as soon as future earnings rose above a certain level. They would also be required to take all their belongings out of their rooms at the end of each term as they would be being used for conferences, whereas we could keep our stuff in our rooms for the whole year. On top of that, just when today's students might be beginning to repay their loan, my wife Sybil and I were buying our first flat on a mortgage with tax relief on the interest. Given that throughout our careers, we suffered no external shocks

that interfered with our lives, as the wars had done to my grandfather and father respectively, and many of us benefitted from final salary pension schemes, no wonder ours has been called 'the lucky generation'.

Institute of Education, Oxford

During my final year at King's I applied and was accepted to study for what was then called the Diploma of Education, at the Institute of Education at Oxford. Although I was unsure about where my career might take me, it was clear that a post graduate qualification in teaching was a good insurance policy. Norfolk County Council (bless them!) provided a further year's grant. After the Cambridge degree, the work involved for the Diploma of Education was very tame. It was also accompanied by the knowledge that practically no one ever failed the course. Education theory was about Skinner and his pigeons, Pavlov and his dogs and suchlike and completely failed to inspire. It all seemed so far removed from the practicality of the classroom, including the need to keep discipline, which most of us were concerned about. I did have an interesting tutor who was working on a study of first-generation sixth formers. He got some of us helping with his research and I wrote an essay on the subject. The sixties was a time of considerable upward mobility and many parents who left school at 14 to 16 years old were experiencing their first generation of children staying on for A Levels and going to university. The issues involved in advising teachers to help both the students and their parents in these situations were considerable.

My main contribution at the Institute was to be elected chairman of the Mulcaster Society. I don't know who Mulcaster was, although limited research on the Web suggests there was a Richard Mulcaster in the 16th century who pioneered the education of women. The society was essentially the student union of the Institute. There was some representation of our concerns to the management involved but mainly it was about organising social occasions. This was possibly the early origins of my developing skills in group leadership and organisation. I seemed to do the job well and people were happy with my efforts.

The high spot of the year was undoubtedly the teaching practice, which took place for the whole of the Spring term. I had asked to be placed in a comprehensive school, which were still quite rare at the time. I was sent to Great Barr Comprehensive School in Birmingham, which proved both a culture shock and a valuable experience. Economics was a relatively new subject at the school, being taught at 'A' level by a Mr Laycock, who had previously worked in a bank. There was also a business studies group at 'O' level. Mr Laycock immediately said that as I knew so much more about economics than he did, did I mind if he sat at the back of the class and take notes, which he did! I enjoyed the teaching and the kids. I was assigned one of the junior football teams to coach and I got to know the boys well. They were all great football fans, either of Aston Villa or Birmingham City. I

accompanied some of them to both grounds and was impressed by the passion of the support for both teams.

Thus ended my formal education; I had been extraordinarily lucky - generously supported by family, friends, teachers and the government all the way through - and had landed solidly on my feet. My decision to become a teacher was undoubtedly influenced by the role model of my father and I had every intention of emulating him one day by becoming a headteacher. My Quaker upbringing had imbued me with a social conscience and, with the benefit of hindsight, I think there were stirrings by the age of 23 of me wanting to do my bit in trying to make the world a better place.

The wider world had rarely impinged upon my consciousness until about 1960. I was aware of rationing, which by 1951-52 was coming to an end, principally because my sisters and I played shopkeepers with the old ration books. If there were shortages, I did not notice. Our weekly treat at that time, maybe paid for by a Quaker friend on the way home from Sunday Meeting, was a block of Wall's ice cream, which we ate in slices between two wafers. The welfare state was getting going and I remember regular visits from the doctor whenever one of us went down with measles, mumps, chicken pox or whatever disease was going round at the time. The idea in those days was to get child diseases over with as soon as possible and develop immunity, so we tended to catch them off each other. How often do doctors visit private homes these days I wonder?

I was vaguely aware of the Korean War (1950 – 53) and the Suez crisis in 1956. I remember being worried about the possibility of having to do national service when I was 18 and much relieved when it was ended in 1960, when I was 15. My first political memory was of Harold Macmillan and the 1959 election when he proclaimed that “most of our people have never had it so good”. That included the Marsden family. We were, however, becoming increasingly concerned about the threat of the nuclear bomb. I remember being sympathetic to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the Aldermaston Easter ‘Ban the Bomb’ marches. We were frightened about the real likelihood of nuclear war, especially during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. At the time I remember reading Nevil Shute’s novel ‘On the Beach’, which describes life in Australia following nuclear Armageddon in the Northern hemisphere as the radiation gradually spreads south with the inevitable harrowing conclusion. It seemed a real possibility. Like everyone else, I also remember where I was when John Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 – in the sixth form common room at Bootham.

I don’t know what influenced my left wing views but they developed strongly through the 1960s, although I mellowed into middle of the road liberalism later in my life. I’ve never been a political activist but I campaigned for Labour in the 1964 and 1966 elections and rejoiced at Harold Wilson’s success. I have always had an instinctive dislike of the Tory party, although in my BP years I had regular dealings

with senior Tory ministers and it was under the Thatcher government that I was awarded the OBE. Given my later interest in politics, the state of the nation and world events, I often wonder what might have happened if I had been more politically active at University and had joined a political party, made contacts, etc., etc. but that wasn't to be. I have learnt over the years how hard it is to be in government and tend to temper my criticisms with an understanding of the pressures of dealing with "events, dear boy, events" as Macmillan described the main fear of a prime minister.

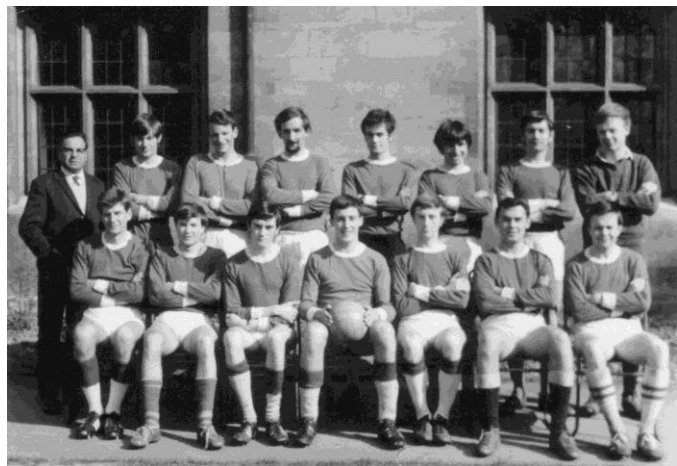


1952 - with my parents, Peter and Connie Marsden and two sisters, Elisabeth and Franceys



1964 – At Kaimosi teacher training college, Kenya

1966 – At King's College Cambridge (college football team)



2: Teaching (1968 – 80)

City of London School

The City of London School could not have been more different from Great Barr Comprehensive. I am not sure why, as a young man with left wing ideas, I chose to begin my teaching career in a prestigious public day school. I suppose that it was because it was the first school to offer me a job and I was flattered. However, as a teacher of 'A' level economics, it proved just the start I needed.

The assumption at Great Barr that I knew what I was talking about and the general acquiescence of those I taught was reversed at City of London. Most of the boys had commuted from all over London and beyond since a young age and were fiercely independent and mature for their age. Many of them were also very clever, several, as I was to discover, much cleverer than me. From the start, my 'A' level students questioned what I was teaching and demanded answers that found me wanting. I was relying far too much on teaching from written lesson planning notes and not engaging enough in open discussion. I had a hard time at first and felt inadequate at times as I simply didn't have a thorough enough understanding of what it was I was teaching. Some of the boys took great delight in embarrassing me. It was a tough but most effective baptism.

I spent many evening hours relearning the economics subject matter. I also learned fast that it was better to admit that I didn't know the answer to a question and would try to find out by next time, rather than to try to bluster my way through. Clever students will respect that, especially if you challenge them to think through for themselves the answers to their own questions. So, in a way, we learned together. What it meant was that in my first two years teaching I gained such a firm understanding and ability to explain all the intricacies of the 'A' level economics syllabus that I never had to prepare an 'A' level lesson again. As with my drunken 'light bulb' insight moment, I knew that I only needed to know in the topic of the next set of lessons and I could teach it convincingly. Suddenly, teaching was fun! I could relax and enjoy challenging discussions with my classes.

The economics department at City of London had two staff, myself and the department head, Chris Jelly. We shared all the 'O' and 'A' level classes equally and arranged it that we each taught the whole syllabus over the two years. He was a very bright and ambitious man, clearly destined for a career beyond teaching. This began with him introducing the 'Esso business game', based on running petrol stations, into our teaching. The game, pioneered by someone he knew from Esso, impressed on me that education-related jobs existed outside teaching and may have sowed seeds that later bore fruit. I certainly enjoyed helping iron out some of the

teething problems of the game, which was underpinned by a complex mathematical formula you had to work through after each student play. Today it would all be done by computer. Chris was also a member of the Economics Association, a professional organisation for teachers of economics, and he encouraged me to join too. That also was a key development for my future career.

Meanwhile, the headmaster was keeping a beady eye on me. As soon as he felt I was emerging from my induction to teaching, he found additional activities for me involving games and charity work. The school played rugby but there was a demand to play football as well. So I was asked to run a football team and develop a fixture list. This I did with some success, which again helped me in my relationship with some of the senior boys. It meant a long trek to Grove Park in South London, where the school games fields were located, each Wednesday afternoon and again on Saturdays. Thank goodness that by then I was the proud owner of an old mini, SVG 7, which I drove each day from Putney into central London, parking in the school playground. In the summer, I was asked to take on the Colts cricket team (under 16s). The charity fund-raising chiefly involved organising a sponsored walk each year. We chose War on Want as a suitable charity and I had to liaise with them about the event and plan the route, which was along the Thames tow path. This gave me an excuse to get out of school at various times, which again began to open my eyes to the possibility of work outside the classroom. Both the walks that I organised were much enjoyed and raised considerable amounts of money.

Looking back, working at the City of London school was a most enjoyable experience. The collegiality of the staffroom was very strong and something I never encountered in the same way again. It was perhaps a result of staff members only knowing each other in the school setting as, at the end of each day, we would all disappear to which ever part of London or the commuter belt we came from. It was certainly a very supportive atmosphere for a young teacher. Once I had mastered my teaching material and gained confidence in my ability to stand in front of a class and perform, I also enjoyed the sophistication and intelligence of the boys. The location of the school was another positive factor. Driving into the centre of London every day from Putney and later from Blackheath meant that I not only honed my driving skills but also got to know many London roads well, a knowledge that I have retained to this day. As I got on top of the workload, it also proved an excellent place from which to go out on the town after school. When it came to Sybil and me choosing a church and reception location for our wedding, St Brides on Fleet Street, just behind the school, was an obvious choice and the magnificent school entrance hall with its front doors looking across the Thames proved an excellent place for the reception.

It is interesting to reflect on what was going on in the wider world as I was developing my teaching career. It was the time of the so called 'Swinging Sixties', sexual liberation, hippies, flower power, drugs and the rest; not that I noticed much

of this. Certainly, I enjoyed the popular music revolution with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones leading the way. It was special and it is interesting to note how much of the pop music of the sixties has stood the test of time. The nearest I got to drugs was when I tried a spliff at a couple of parties. And I was certainly not sexually liberated.

On the economic and political front, however, it was a good time to be a student and teacher of economics as there was a lot going on. Harold Macmillan had won the 1959 election but then ran out of ideas. Towards the end of his term he resigned in ill health and handed over to Sir Alec Douglas Home. Nice man though he undoubtedly was, he hadn't a clue either and the country clearly wanted a change. It took them two goes. Harold Wilson became Prime Minister in 1964 when Labour won a narrow majority, which was reinforced when he went to the polls again in 1966, when he gained a majority of over 100. I quite admired Wilson and was in favour of what he was trying to do, although he and his immediate successors, both Labour and Tory, were not very effective. Unlike Germany, which had benefitted hugely from the US backed Marshall Plan, enabling much new modern investment and industrial re-organisation, the UK was struggling along with old infrastructure and machinery and a destructive us versus them, management versus unions, industrial climate. Although there was near full employment, The UK's productivity levels were very low, inflation was rising, our trade with the rest of the world was in continual decline and the balance of payments was a constant worry.

The new Labour government's approach to these problems was to try to take more control of the economy. They introduced a National Plan for industrial modernisation and expansion, which was abandoned three years later. They also introduced a prices and incomes policy and a severe credit squeeze which included a £50 limit on the amount of currency you could take abroad on holiday. After a big run on the pound (exchange rates were fixed in those days) the government was forced to devalue the pound from \$2.80 to \$2.40 – compare that to \$1.40 today. Wilson was much derided in the press for his famous comment that the pound in your pocket had not been devalued. Charles de Gaulle again ruled out the prospect of Britain joining the European Union, claiming it was too weak. The unions didn't like the restriction on wage rises and strike levels were rising. Barbara Castle, Secretary of State for Employment, produced the paper 'In Place of Strife' proposing reductions in the power of the unions, which was withdrawn shortly afterwards because of union protests. Roy Jenkins introduced a tough tax-rising budget in 1968 which helped to stabilise things but effectively lost the 1970 election, which saw Edward Heath take over Downing Street.

Heath was responsible for negotiating Britain's entry into the European Union. However, the economy and industrial relations went from bad to worse. Inflation, which had been rising steadily from 3% to 6% during the sixties was now 10% and went on to peak at 25% in 1975. Discontent amongst the unions, especially the mine

workers, boiled over as wages declined in real terms and wild cat strikes were common place. Heath introduced the 'Three Day Week' to conserve energy stocks, pubs closed early and TV shut down at 10.30 pm. There were power cuts and everyone bought in a supply of candles. I remember having conversations with my fellow economics teachers about what might be the best hedge against inflation in case paper money effectively became worthless: miniature bottles of spirits were considered to be the best as they would retain value and were sufficiently small to be used for bartering purposes and – if the worst came to worst – you could drink them and drown your sorrows!

In January 1974, the miners voted to strike having rejected a 16.5% pay rise offer. The strike began on February 5th and, two days later, Heath called a general election on a "who governs Britain?" plea to the electorate. Heath got a majority of the votes but no overall control of seats. Labour took over a minority government, gave the miners a 35% rise and gained a small majority in a second election later that year. Harold Wilson resigned and Jim Callaghan took over as Prime Minister. He immediately gave the miners another 35% rise and all was quiet for a short while. The 1975 referendum to confirm Britain's membership of the EU was won comfortably. However, soon afterwards, more public sector industrial disputes and widespread strikes led to the 'Winter of Discontent' in 1978/9 (the coldest winter since 1962/3), the emergence of Margaret Thatcher as the leader of the Conservative party and winner of the 1979 General Election. It was certainly a good time to be a teacher of economics and current affairs. There was never any shortage of discussion topics during sixth form classes.

Roundhay School, Leeds

During my fourth year at City of London, with the support of the headmaster, I began looking for suitable head of department posts. The first one that appealed to me was at Roundhay School in Leeds and after interview I was offered the job. Roundhay was in effect still a large and very successful grammar school. The year I arrived, it was amalgamating with the girls school next door and 'going comprehensive'. This involved keeping the grammar streams as they worked through the school but with a new, mixed ability intake starting at what is now called year 7.

For an economics teacher, who was ambitious with plenty of ideas, a school in transition provided an ideal opportunity. Firstly the combined school created a huge sixth form. Economics was a popular 'A' level subject (I 'sold' it enthusiastically at options time) and later on we had at least three sets in each of the lower and upper sixth. With the new intake of all ability pupils we soon needed to offer 'economic literacy' classes to all abilities in year 9, not just 'O' Level. Over the next two years, three additional teachers were appointed and I found myself running one of the

biggest and most successful economics and business studies departments in the country.

I attribute my success at Roundhay down to three things the baptism of fire I received during my first year at City of London School; my keen membership of the Economics Association (effectively a self-help network of economics teachers from a wide range of schools); and my appointment as an examiner for 'A' level economics. Soon after joining the Economics Association, I expressed interest in the work of its 'External Affairs Committee' and was recruited. The role of the committee was to promote the teaching of economics through building relationships with outside groups such as universities, the Department of Education, Local Education Authorities, and Industry bodies like the CBI and TUC. The committee comprised some of the liveliest leaders of the Association. They encouraged me to attend the annual conference and the collegueship and in-service training I gained from this made up for the lack of it in one's own small department. Soon after I arrived in Leeds I was asked to take on the job of Secretary of the Association's Yorkshire Branch, which again meant that I got to know most of the other economics teachers in the area. We organised talks, including one from the chairman of the 'A' level exam board; hence my invitation to become an examiner. Attending the examiners briefing sessions was an education in itself and a huge help towards more effective 'A' level teaching.

The External Affairs Committee helped to get me away from the classroom. Reform of 'O' and 'A' levels was in the air and I was invited to join an 'N' and 'F' level working group. We met over weekends – mainly at Atlantic College in South Wales, and worked very hard. I became the Committee's secretary, writing up in some detail what each meeting had agreed. I learnt the power of being in charge of writing up the record as however impartially you did it you inevitably wrote things according to what you considered right. Like so many worthy efforts to design change, our work came to naught as the 'gold' standard of 'A' levels in particular proved politically to be sacrosanct. Again, however, the process taught me a lot.

I was particularly keen on teaching the fundamentals of economics to everybody. I have long believed that the fundamental ideas of scarcity and choice, the market, supply and demand, balanced budgets, banks and money, etc. are easily understood if taught properly. There's no need for lay people to bother with more complex economic theory and models, much of which has been discredited recently anyway. To this end, I was approached by Video Arts to work with Antony Jay (who later gained huge fame through being the principal author of the TV series 'Yes Minister') on creating an animated film series aimed at making basic economics understandable to everybody. I worked on the script while others did the graphics. The narrative was based round a subsistence family which gradually became more social as they became part of a village and then started trading with other villages. I was pleased with the result but some of my more left wing colleagues in the

Economics Association didn't like the capitalist market approach I had taken. I was in the process of leaving teaching and joining BP as the film was completed, which may have been another reason why my erstwhile colleagues were suspicious. I lost touch with it after that and don't know how successful it was. Regardless, for me, it was a fascinating learning process and introduction to people outside school teaching.

My main external relations experience was becoming the Economics Association's representative on the Understanding British Industry (UBI) project run by the Confederation of British Industries (CBI). The CBI bosses were concerned that Industry was receiving a bad press and was generally misunderstood by much of society. They felt that it was important that people understood how the nation earned its living, the role of industry in that process and what Industry needed in terms of effective recruits. I was appointed to the UBI board when it started in 1977 during my last year at Roundhay. It involved taking the occasional day off school to travel to London and attend a formal meeting in the CBI head office at Centre Point. For an economic teacher, this was a dizzying experience and I liked it! I think I was the only schoolteacher on the board. There was at least one university professor. Most importantly for me, there were two or three company representatives, including Jim Ball of BP and Bob Finch of ICI, and my relationship with them was to have a profound influence on my career.

Beaumont School, St Albans

After four years at Roundhay, I was ready for my next move, and I started applying for deputy headships. The first interview I got was at Heathfield High School, one of the much praised Leicestershire community schools. I was very struck by the concept of community schools and really fancied the job. I got on well with the headmaster, Roger Seckington, and although he ultimately decided to give the job to an internal candidate, we had a very helpful debrief afterwards. As with the Overseas Development Institute, I sometimes wonder how my career might have developed if I had got that job. Roger Seckington was an inspirational leader and I doubt whether I would have left teaching under his guidance.

Shortly after that, I was called for interview at Beaumont School, St Albans. I actually had to look up on a map to see where St Albans was. Like Roundhay, Beaumont was in the process of 'going comprehensive' but the other way round. It had until a few years before been a secondary modern school. Its old headmaster had just retired and the young deputy head, Colin Isted (just one year older than me) had been appointed head. This time I was offered the job and I remember ringing Sybil immediately afterwards to tell her that I wanted to accept and would she mind us uprooting ourselves and moving South. Fortunately, although we both liked Leeds very much, Sybil is a southerner at heart and liked the prospect of living near London again.

As the new deputy head, the first thing I had to do was to memorise the names of all the staff and the two letters that they were known by on notice boards (e.g. my reference was 'ma'). As soon as we gathered for our pre-term staff meeting I rapidly tried to put names to faces. I remember sitting in the bath that evening going through as many names and faces as I could remember. It took me two days to get them all right. This was important as the first job I had to do was organise the substitutions for absentees. One of the things teachers like least is having to fill in for absent staff, which means missing much valued free periods. What they dislike even more is sensing that they are unfairly being asked to do more than others. So it is up to the deputy head to be and be seen to be scrupulously fair. This was my first job each morning before school started. It also meant that I had to go down to the staff room to pin up the list, which was actually a helpful way of making sure that I was in the mix and available to address any issues anyone wanted to raise. I increased my popularity by finding two or three part time teachers who were prepared to come in and take the classes of teachers who were absent for more than a day or so, thus reducing the need for substitutions considerably.

Incredibly, the combined ages of the senior management team at Beaumont was below 100: Headmaster Colin Isted (aged 33); and Deputy Heads Chris Marsden (aged 32) and Celia Allen (aged 34). Our credibility was at stake as indeed, we discovered, was the future of the school. It was rumoured that the authorities had a sink or swim attitude to our inexperienced leadership and were looking to rationalise by closing a school; Beaumont was close to the top of the list. We three were determined not to let this happen, which involved making sure we were fully subscribed each year. This was not a foregone conclusion as there was surplus capacity in the seventies and, indeed, a few years later, a neighbouring school in Wheathamstead, was closed. This closure seemed sensible at the time but was much regretted later when surplus turned into not enough capacity. Long term planning was never a strength of the education service and the politicians who controlled it.

Colin Isted was a strong leader but slightly distant man. He never seemed completely relaxed. I suppose that being in his position so young he probably felt he had to create an appearance of authority and not get too close to staff. He was never going to be much of a mentor for me. Celia and I, however, became close and learnt from and helped each other a great deal. We were in a different position to Colin, had more outgoing personalities and in some ways acted as intermediaries for him. We would interpret his ideas to staff and feed back to him what was going on underneath the surface. Some of this was done during the journey to work, which I often shared with Colin as we both lived in Harpenden.

I soon learnt that one responsibility of being a deputy head meant that you were in charge of the furniture, for instance arranging the chairs for staff meetings, governors meetings and the like. You could make quite a difference to the effectiveness of a meeting by the way you arranged the chairs. Another of my jobs

was to ensure that the non-teaching staff were happy and doing their jobs properly. This included the dinner ladies. I made good friends with the chief cook and she spoilt me by ensuring that I got a large portion of whatever was going each day, which was always of very good standard. I taught half a timetable and had plenty of administration to do as well but, whenever I could, I left our office and walked around the school. All the classrooms had windows onto the corridors so you could be seen observing what was going on, which was an added discipline support. Particularly important were my visits to the science, home economics (cooking) and craft departments which were located outside the main school block. There was a tendency for these teachers to become separated from the rest and they needed a bit more cosseting. The relationship with the head of science, in particular, was challenging as he had hoped to become deputy head and felt that he deserved a greater role in running the school. He and Colin had a clear personality clash and it was up to Celia and me to help smooth things over.

Perhaps my most important contribution to the school was encouraging its links with local industry. I was by now a regular member of the UBI consultative panel and supportive of the need for schools and industry to get to know each other better. 'Industry' in the minds of many teachers was at best a blank page and at worst something to be treated with disdain. The school curriculum was like a secret garden, something the teachers controlled and non-negotiable. In fact, control came in the form of 'O' and 'A' level examinations, which were mainly designed to select the more academically gifted for entrance to university. The idea that industry might have a say in what was taught was not even considered. So when I phoned Marconi Instruments, which was located just across the road from the school, and asked to talk to the managing director, Colin Gaskell, my colleagues wondered what I was doing and Marconi did not really know what to make of me. Colin Gaskell agreed to see me and had his head of personnel Jack Copeland and his assistant Bill Goode with him. I explained that, as neighbours, we really ought to get to know each other and, slightly amused at the idea, Colin agreed and suggested I talk further with Jack and Bill.

Jack Copeland was a wily old bird, well respected in the company and not standing for any nonsense from this upstart from the school across the road. He weighed in immediately with a demolition of the school system's obsession with 'O' and 'A' levels which he regarded as very poor predictors of prospective employees' performance. I did my best to defend our system but it fell on deaf ears. Jack explained that Marconi's used the Morrisby test to judge the suitability of recruits. I had not come across personality tests before and I was sceptical. Jack said that it would be pointless having further dialogue with Beaumont teachers unless we did the test ourselves to see what it was all about. Basically, the Morrisby test tries to measure a range of skills and attributes, much broader than our traditional academic exams do. The Morrisby test produces a profile of the following: reasoning, verbal ability, numerical ability, perceptual ability, spatial ability, mechanical ability, manual

skill and speed, awareness, flexibility, inner conviction, decisiveness and confidence. Skilled careers guidance professionals, like Jack, can then interpret the results and help guide people towards the kind of work most suited to them. So I returned to the school and persuaded a few colleagues, including Celia but not Colin, to take the test. This we did and it led to some very interesting conversations about ability. It also led to a continuing dialogue between teachers at the school and some Marconi staff. The two Colins even got together.

This was my first direct experience of schools industry liaison, and probably one of the first such relationships in the country. It was pioneering stuff. Shortly afterwards and having had a number of discussions at the UBI meetings I proposed running a small seminar in Hertfordshire for teachers and industry people under the heading "What Industry really wants". I wrote a short paper under that title as background reading for the conference and it was adapted several times subsequently. It is now cited as an article in the journal 'Industrial and Commercial Training (1984)'.

In summary, the paper argues that:

"Beyond narrow and short-term recruitment it is difficult to get a view from Industry on its needs for education. It is part of education's role to prepare young people appropriately for their future. To do this adequately it is important that industry and education realise that they are interdependent and should work together."

I had read an article saying similar things by Charles Handy and somehow I persuaded him to give the keynote talk to the conference on a pro bono basis (I guess he was not quite so famous and as expensive a speaker in 1979 as he later became.) Bob Finch from ICI and Jim Ball from BP came along with a good spread of people from education and industry and we had a very interesting range of discussion, even though we struggled to answer the question.

This event set me on a path that eventually led me out of the teaching profession and into industry. Jim Ball was interested in economics and I persuaded him to come to the Economics Association annual conference first in 1979 and then again in 1980. Jim announced that he was retiring at the end of 1980 and Bob Finch approached me and encouraged me to apply for the job. He said that he thought that BP did not know what they really wanted and that with his help I stood a good chance of getting the position. Bob was quite right. I managed to persuade Jim's boss, Peter Coaker, and the BP personnel man, Phil Rock (who later became my boss when he moved to public affairs), that I was what they wanted and I was offered the job ahead of 400 others who had applied. My idea at the time was that this would be a fascinating experience and I would return to teaching older and wiser, presumably as a headmaster, after a few years. As it turned out, the job was indeed fascinating but developed and went on developing in such interesting and challenging ways that I never thought again about going back to teaching.

I was offered the job in June 1980, too late to submit my resignation in time to leave at the end of the term. So I had to carry on for the Autumn term in 1980 before taking up the BP job full time in January 1981. In the meantime, it was agreed that I could go into BP for two half days a week to familiarise myself with the new environment and work requirements. So, twice a week at lunch time I caught the train from St Albans and found my way into a completely different culture on the 25th floor of Britannic House in Moorgate. Jim Ball would pass me masses of paper to wade through about the work of BP's Education Committee, appeals for BP's support for various educational projects and the schools link scheme. I rarely left for home until after 7 pm. Jim was one of the most fastidious men I have ever met, meticulous over detail and doing things correctly and had allowed himself to become buried in paper. I was determined to change all that but I had to wait for the end of my induction period.

On reflection, I left teaching at a good moment for me. At the time, I thought I was taking on the BP job as a kind of industrial secondment. Up till then, I had been affected very little by external forces. As an economics teacher no one external to the school interfered with what I wanted to teach and how I went about it. As part of the senior management team at Beaumont, the bureaucracy of Hertfordshire Education Authority was not intrusive and it was left to us to set our goals and how to pursue them. In other words, we were trusted professionals and apart from the occasional inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), we were left alone to get on with our job. Not long after I left teaching, Mrs Thatcher's distrust of what she regarded as professional 'closed shops' began what has since been an unending and increasing level of central government bureaucratic interference in schools with attempts to define exactly what should be taught, with tests at all ages to monitor progress.

Perhaps some shake up of complacency in school education was necessary. There was certainly a minority of the teaching profession who were at best coasting. However, the vast majority of teachers I met were dedicated professionals who wanted the best for the kids in their charge and worked long hours to achieve this. I believe that the over bureaucratic and ill thought through attempts to deal with the weaknesses in the school system have undermined trust in this professionalism and made the jobs of these dedicated teachers much more restrictive and less rewarding. I, for one, was certainly better off from 1981 onwards to be on the outside of schools looking in rather than on the inside working in an increasingly restrictive environment. As it turned out, I was to enjoy an amazing amount of freedom working with BP (I liked to think of it as 'with' rather than 'for'), much more than I would have had if I had stayed working in schools.



1971 – with the City of London School 1st XI



1974 – Roundhay School staff (I am located on the bottom row, far left)



1979 - Beaumont School staff (I am located bottom centre, with Colin Isted and Celia Allen to my right in the photo)

3: BP (1981 – 96)

Adapting to BP culture

On January 1st 1981, I took delivery of a brand new Vauxhall Carlton estate car. It was spectacular compared to anything I had driven before and the first material benefit from my change of career path. On January 2nd, early in the morning, I commuted by train to Moorgate for the first time, entered the huge tower block of Britannic House, passed security, and rode one of the three lifts to the 25th floor.

As a manager grade 12, I was entitled to my own room. It was the smallest individual room, with two large window panes looking out over the City, East London and beyond. I had a desk, which I pushed against the wall to make more space, two chairs and a small meeting table. I had a secretary who shared an office with two others. Those on higher grades than me had three or four window panes until you got to the General Manager who got a corner office with at least four panes on each side. Above the General Manager were the directors who lived on the 32nd floor and had large oak panelled offices with annexes for their personal assistants (PAs). The 32nd floor had its own staircase to the 33rd floor where the board room and other meeting rooms were situated together with the directors' dining facilities, commonly known as the 'golden trough'.

Managers of my grade and above were entitled to dine in the Senior Mess, where you got a first class waitress served lunch for the princely sum of 10p (wine optional extra). I was told that this was to encourage managers from different departments to mingle. So for my first few days I boldly sat at the fourth seat of tables already occupied by three people, only to find I received a polite but not very welcoming reception from colleagues who clearly wanted just to be together. So much for the theory. So on most days after that, when I was in, I dined in the junior mess with my immediate colleagues, where it was cafeteria style for a cost of 5p. The food was still excellent. My grade was also entitled to coffee or tea in a pot and biscuits on a tray at 11 am and again in the afternoon at 4 pm. Those beneath my grade had to put up with just a mug. As I was often out of the office, when the tea lady came down the corridor and passed where my colleagues sat, she would cry out "is the tray man in today?"

In the early 1980s, BP's head office was still organised very much on military or old colonialist lines with dining rooms called messes and a long line of differentiated grades. It was as though people in their late 50s had been brought in from the field and if they had done a good job they were rewarded with a sinecure in head office to see out their days before compulsory retirement at 60 and an excellent pension. As the Manager Educational Liaison I reported to the Manager Educational Affairs,

Peter Coaker. Peter was a delightful man who spent most of his time sitting in his office not initiating very much, but always willing to discuss things. He made occasional visits to universities and wrote the odd memo. He was technically responsible for my team and that of David Barnett, who ran BP's Educational Service, producing booklets and other teaching materials for schools. Peter had a lot of BP experience and was able to give me useful advice but basically he let me get on with doing whatever I wanted to do. Above him was the Manager Community Affairs, Chris Willy, who was a natural bureaucrat, calling weekly meetings of the managers of the various teams he oversaw. As I was often away visiting BP sites or educational establishments, I probably only attended one in four of these meetings but he never seemed to mind and would always say what a good job he heard that I was doing.

Chris Willy reported to Mike Willis, who was the Assistant General Manager of Public Affairs. Mike had done lots of interesting things in BP, was well respected and clearly had influence up the chain. I got on well with Mike. He made the effort to appreciate what I was trying to do and helped to give me the freedom I needed. He was also influential in the result of a senior management assessment I went on a few years later but more of that in due course. Mike reported to Robin Gourlay who was General Manager Government and Public Affairs (GPA). Robin Gourlay reported, I think, to the director David Sarre, whose portfolio included public affairs and human resources. I think David may have reported to another director before going through to the chairman David Steele, soon to be replaced by Peter Walters. If you can add all that up, it meant that there were seven bosses between me and the ultimate boss, the Chairman. By the time I left for my secondment to Warwick University, 16 years later, there was only one boss between me and the Chairman and he was a senior director, Rodney Chase. During this time my grade had been raised by just two levels. All the others had gone.

Another feature of the lunchtime culture was the guest dining rooms. When I was not out and about, I often had people coming to see me and lunch was a convenient time to meet. It was necessary to order the first course in advance and my secretary would invariably order smoked salmon with a glass of dry sherry (they go very well together). That was waiting in front of you as you arrived and you then ordered your main course from a varied menu together with a bottle of wine. It took me some time to get used to the social niceties of 'doing business' in the private sector. Initially, I had assumed that people would be so busy that you got down to whatever you needed to discuss immediately and did not have time for chit chat. Not a bit of it. Every meeting or telephone conversation would start with polite 'how do you dos' and some general chat about something of mutual interest before getting to the point. At lunch, it was quite common to get through the main course before talking specifically about the reason for the meeting. I quickly learnt how to manage this in spite of drinking a glass of sherry and, when there were only two of us for lunch, probably half a bottle of wine.

Then there were the private dining rooms. These were oak panelled closets next to the visitors' dining room and available only to managers with grades somewhat higher than mine. On arrival, you would be offered a drink while you chatted informally. Then the host would suggest we all sat down while he pressed a remote control button. The three or four course meal would then be served with a white wine for the first course and a red wine for the second. I would only participate when a senior manager felt my specialist knowledge would be of interest to whichever bigwig was being entertained. Usually being the most junior BP person present, I would be expected to take notes and produce a written memo of the lunch afterwards. On one occasion in my first year I was asked to have lunch with a director of BP Nutrition, one of the many subsidiary companies BP owned during the 1980s before the big rationalisation of 1990. It turned out that he wanted to talk about a special favour for his 'Link School', Felsted in Essex, where his son went. Instead of just asking me, he insisted on me having lunch with him and someone from the school in one of the private dining rooms. We met at 1 pm and, at 4.30 pm, having consumed at least two bottles of wine and a couple of glasses of port, we said our 'goodbyes' and left to resume work. This was an exception but was indicative of the pre-Big Bang 1987 shake up of the City of London when large numbers of people basically only worked the mornings, after which they would indulge in lengthy lunches ostensibly designed to make and or cement personal relationships.

I enjoyed first class rail travel as it was an escape from phone calls and outside pressure. I always used the privilege well by doing much of my writing on the train. Later, I found international air travel similarly relaxing and often wonder how that must have changed with the advent of Wi-Fi and phones on trains and planes. Modern day managers are always contactable which must contribute to stress. My writing was all by hand of course; there were no laptops. Although my secretary enjoyed my being away a lot, I think she dreaded my return as there was always a lot of typing to do.

There was a clear BP head office secretarial sub-culture and information swapping system whereby all managers were discussed and compared. Secretaries were always on the phone arranging to have their 5p lunches together. They were very status conscious and in awe of the Queen Bee, the Chairman's PA, who determined promotions. I think I got rather a poor reputation as a tough, even unreasonable, taskmaster. Before the advent of computers and mobile phones, secretaries were very powerful as you were totally reliant on them to get your letters and memos done and to take and give messages accurately. Their power was ultimately defeated by technology, of course, as managers became more and more independent as our use of computers grew, first as word processors and later with email. Later, I specifically asked for more experienced secretarial support and got much better service and interest in our work. Ramilla Shah was, of course, the best

and also my last secretary at BP: totally reliable, interested in our mission and wanting to take on more of the work of the unit, which she went on to do after I left.

I think I was always well regarded by the directors who mattered. In my sort of non-profit making job, it is important to have top level support which can defend you from the bean counters and cost cutters. Peter Walters, who became Chairman shortly after I arrived, took an interest in my work, as later on did Robert Horton and David Simon. Although I only saw him now and again, I remember Peter Walters saying to me “don’t think I’m not keeping an eye on you”. He also said that I was an important part of BP’s effort to earn and maintain its ‘licence to operate’, which was quite forward thinking in 1981 and a concept I used a lot in my writing and talks.

At one point, I got into trouble by defying the Minister for Education, Angela Rumbold. At a CBI meeting, both Bob Finch of ICI and I told Mrs Rumbold in no uncertain terms that our companies would not be supporting the Government’s latest idea that we should take ownership of and help to run one of their flagship City Technology Colleges. We tried to explain that our approach to schools industry liaison was one of building bridges with the education service and our relationship with local education authorities was crucial to this. What the government was trying to do with this new scheme was part of its wider policy to bypass and undermine local authorities. Mrs Rumbold and her team assumed we would be interested and when we turned them down they immediately got onto our respective Chairmen and complained. The next morning I was called to Robert Malpas’s office and asked to explain myself. I explained why this new scheme would undermine our community relationships with schools and local authorities and fortunately he was persuaded. He went and talked to the Chairman and it was agreed that I was right and they supported my decision. Malpas did say to me afterwards, however, that next time I wanted to offend the government, could I have a word with him first as BP had rather more important issues with the government that were crucial to the company’s success. It was probably the nearest I ever got in BP to losing my job.

After a few years I was selected to take part in a two-week high flyers management programme. This involved a whole series of tests, group sessions and role plays and ended up with one-on-one interviews with the three senior managers, including Mike Willis, who were observing the process. Several of my colleagues on the programme were very nervous regarding this, probably quite rightly, as a make or break career opportunity. I, on the other hand, was quite relaxed, regarding the whole thing as a learning experience as I had no ambition to pursue a conventional BP high flyers career. Even had I wanted to, having joined the company some twelve years after my contemporaries, I lacked their experience and would always have been at a disadvantage. What they did not have was my external perspective on BP and my ability to facilitate relationships between the company and its various communities, particularly education. Apparently I did very well in the tests, including one on the logistics of routing oil tanker trucks from a depot to filling stations. In the

group sessions and role plays I demonstrated my usual skills and in the final interviews I remember Mike Willis smiling and saying that I had manipulated the whole event to show that I was a round peg in a round hole. I had not done this consciously but it was clear to me that my best chance of developing a successful career with the company was to stay where I was and look for opportunities to develop the job. And so it proved to be.

Before I get on to describing my work with BP, it is worth reflecting a bit on the nature of large business organisations or at least the one I experienced. The first thing to say is that BP was (less so now) huge. Its turnover, profits, number of employees, the size of its plants, its engineering capability and its international reach were as impressive as they were mind boggling in their sheer scale. I always struggled to understand how the whole edifice was managed apparently so effectively. The company had a matrix organisation with its main focus being three business streams - Exploration, Oil and Chemicals, each with their many sub divisions and operating sites, connected through a central head office function plus a network of Associate Presidents who looked after the broader national interests of the company in each operating country.

There was always a tension between the non-profit earning part of the company, of which I was part, and the businesses. The idea was that head office retained certain 'reserved powers' which helped set the culture, vision and values of the company. The businesses were subject to tough financial targets and quarterly performance reviews by the executive committees (EXCOs). The effectiveness of the head office functions depended on the persuasiveness of the respective heads of each activity. Inevitably, the size of these less-tightly-controlled departments tended to grow over time so, to address this, the company would go through periodic purges (usually with the help of external consultants). I remember at least four taking place during my 16 years and somehow managed to survive them all, although I may have anticipated the last one and got out while the going was good.

Many managers, particularly in the businesses, were under great pressure to deliver their performance targets. Not surprisingly, when push came to shove, less easily measured, non-financial targets would get side-lined. For all of Head Office's reserved powers and policies, including my own limited field of building educational and community relationships, it was clear what really drove the company. Everyone was in awe of the director who chaired their particular EXCO and, in turn, these directors were in awe of the CEO. The management structure was very hierarchical with the chief executive at the top, who assumes almost regal power. Although the CEO was theoretically controlled by the Board, they really exercised this control (the forced departure of Robert Horton, which took place after much painful deliberation being a rare exception). I was fortunate to work with five CEOs and get to know two of them, Peter Walters and David Simon, quite well. Both Walters and Simon were very approachable and responsive to the issues one raised. What surprised me,

however, was the awe in which they were viewed by many of my BP colleagues who were amazed that I got the chance to meet them. The great danger, which also applies to prime ministers, is that the BP life support system and inevitable sycophancy surrounding the CEO can cut them off from reality and lead them to believe in their own omnipotence. I believe that happened to Robert Horton and probably affected John Browne as well.

Another curiosity I had was trying to fathom out what drove the top directors. It could not be just about money because they all had more money (and pension) than they could possibly need to afford a luxurious lifestyle for the rest of their days. How much you earned was of course an apparent measure of your worth and how you rated against your peers, which may have one motivation. Another was probably a competitive urge to get to the top; to win. Another motivation, for the better ones at least, was presumably the interest, excitement and challenge of running an important organisation; keeping your finger on the pulse of the business and making decisions that really do affect many people's lives.

These people rarely seem to retire 'early' to enjoy the material fruits of their labours. They go on to other directorships, seemingly caught up in the infectious buzz of running large companies. For example, Peter Walters left BP after 36 years, aged 60, having been chairman and chief executive from 1981 to 1990. Many people would have thought that was enough hard work for one lifetime; not for Peter Walters. He then went on to be chairman of Midland Bank from 1991-94 and then chairman of SmithKline Beecham 1994-2000. Meanwhile, Robert Malpas was known to be a very wealthy man with a huge property in the Algarve which he rarely made the time to visit. He was a passionate engineer (vice-chairman of the Engineering Council 1984-88) and revelled in the excitement of BP's pioneering underwater oil exploration and production technology. When he left BP in 1989, aged 62, among several other things, he became co-chairman of Eurotunnel, responsible for building the Channel Tunnel.

One thing that the directors of BP and most colleagues I met, from all levels and all parts of the world, had in common was a great loyalty to and pride in the company. BP was a national institution with a proud history, dating back to its foundation as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1909 and the government taking a majority shareholding in 1914, which it largely held onto until 1987. By the late 1980s, things were changing fast but this sense of history and belonging to something worthwhile still existed among many staff. They felt BP was a good company, somehow different from others that were beginning to get a bad name for lack of environmental and social responsibility. By the 1990s, BP had become a very successful company and was later to challenge even the mighty EXXON for top spot among the Oil Majors. Of course things began to go very wrong for the company later on with disasters in Alaska, Texas City and the Gulf of Mexico. I am aware through contacts I retained with BP of how much this hurt many of the ordinary people who worked in BP,

including those in my old department of government and public affairs, who no longer felt able to hold their head up in their community and say with pride 'I work for BP'. Such is one of the big costs to a company from cutting corners and neglecting its wider responsibilities to society. This was one of the many lessons I was to learn during my time with BP and a message I was to proselytise with MBA students for many years afterwards.

BP Educational Liaison

It was extraordinary that the minute I stopped being a deputy head teacher at an ordinary secondary school and became the education representative of a major UK company, how I suddenly became thought of as an expert by industry people on education and by education people on industry. My career change coincided with the start of Margaret Thatcher's government. Looking back, although I was opposed to much of what her government stood for, its approach to schools and the public sector more generally probably contributed to creating a favourable environment for me to develop my work. Until then what went on in schools was very much left to the teaching profession and focused on the needs of university admissions.

As a largely academic teacher I had very much enjoyed this professional freedom and, I like to think, responsibility. All this was about to change as Mrs Thatcher set about challenging the power of the public sector unions, including those of the professions like teaching. The government was determined that the education system's output should be much more closely aligned to the needs of the economy. Over the next thirty years, teaching was to become a much more regulated activity with restrictive targets and accompanying bureaucratic interference and workload. In retrospect I was well out of it. However it did enable me to develop my role as a 'boundary worker'. 'What industry wanted from education', the subject of my earlier paper, was now high on the agenda and I was seen as someone who both knew the answer and how to translate it into terms that the education profession could take on board.

The most extraordinary example of this was at a lunch on education industry matters presided over by the then Secretary of State for Education, Sir Keith Joseph. He had just given a talk on how important it was that young people were taught about industry and wealth creation. I was sitting about five places to his right on a long top table. After the main course, he got up, picked up his chair, carried it round the end of the table, plonked it down in front of me, sat down and said, "Now Mr Marsden, how are we going to teach all the children in our schools about the importance of making profits." I cannot remember how I replied but our conversation led to a visit later to his office and correspondence about economic literacy, of which I was of course a great advocate. I had to point out to him that the matter needed to be handled with delicacy as economics teachers were not necessarily inclined to promote capitalism as an unquestioned ideology. I had by this

time been told by my old colleagues in the Economics Association that I was no longer eligible to be a member of their national committee (although somewhat later I was invited back to become their honorary President). In fact, several of my old economics teacher friends cold-shouldered me for quite a while after what they saw as my 'desertion' from the profession,. Although he was an out and out right winger, I have to say that I much enjoyed my conversations with Keith Joseph. He was a most courteous and thoughtful man. Our last meeting was not long before he died, when he invited me to lunch in the House of Lords.

Before all that, I had to learn about my job at BP. Jim Ball, my predecessor, was the son of one of the original founders of BP Chemicals. He had effectively been made redundant from mainstream BP Chemicals work but had persuaded the company to allow him to be located in the head office to develop a schools link scheme and promote science education generally. BP had, for many years, produced educational materials for schools and this activity was run by a small team of public relations minded people in head office. When Jim joined the public affairs department he created a separate entity as he wanted to distinguish relationship building from the PR approach. He recruited John Ashford, a scientist from the BP Research Centre in Sunbury, to join him.

There were three main areas that Jim was developing: the schools link scheme, the teachers in Industry scheme; and supporting educational research projects. The link scheme, which had been going since the mid-seventies, involved a BP employee and a teacher being nominated as link officers. It was their job to encourage joint activities between the company and the school. The scheme operated between any parts of the company in the UK but worked best where BP had a specific, visible operation, such as a refinery or chemical factory. The Teachers into Industry scheme was just starting and became the first project I was to make my own. This involved BP paying the salary of a teacher while he or she spent up to one full school term working in part of the company.

The supporting educational research projects were backed by a not inconsiderable budget and overseen by an Education Committee set up by Jim, and made up of the several layers of senior management, representatives of the three main BP companies, two university science professors and an HMI, Mike Tomlinson. The committee met periodically and was presented with a set of funding proposals, which Jim would write up at some length and distribute before the meeting in a folder. Everything would either be written in long hand or dictated, typed up by your secretary, corrected, re-typed, signed and then copied and put together before distribution. Committee members, chaired by the General Manager, would then question Jim in some detail about each case and, following discussion, would either agree or turn down the various proposals. Meetings would last whole afternoons and followed the principle that while decisions on oil industry investment proposals costing many millions of pounds would often be made in an instant, much longer

deliberation was required to authorise education projects costing a few thousand pounds. After the meetings, detailed minutes would be produced and circulated. Those behind the funding proposals would be written to with either the good or bad news. The successful projects would then be followed up and future work monitored. It was all incredibly bureaucratic but it was a system that I persevered with during my first year or so because I assumed that that was the way things were done.

Jim had negotiated a three month handover so he could introduce me to as many of his contacts as possible. This began early in January with the conference of the Association for Science Education (ASE), a huge affair held in different universities each year. Attending this was an annual ritual for the educational liaison people from all the large companies, such as BP, Shell, Esso, ICI, Unilever and IBM. These companies all wanting to show interest in the development of science education, 'sell' their education materials and build relationships. The BP education service had a stand showing off its many education aids relevant to the oil industry but Jim was more interested in introducing me to various professors and teachers involved in projects that BP was funding.

We made some memorable visits to BP's UK sites during this induction period. Shetland was very interesting with its new terminal at Sullum Voe serving the developing exploration and oil production in the North Sea. I remember being impressed with the local secondary school as it was full of modern equipment and designed for bad weather. The corridors were wide and there was plenty of internal space for the children's recreation. This was evidence of the excellent financial deal the Shetland Islands Council had struck with BP. Three other BP sites that I particularly enjoyed visiting were the chemicals factories at Hedon near Hull and Baglan Bay near Swansea, and BP's major refinery at Grangemouth in Scotland. I found Grangemouth exciting as it was such a large site, situated with the Ochil Hills in the background. It looked particularly splendid at night with all the stacks and pipes lit up and the flares going full blast. I also liked the people who worked at these places; all genuine enthusiasts for their plant, their jobs and very loyal to BP. They had developed strong links with local schools, which although it was never the outward intent, clearly helped them with their local community relationships. This was particularly important in Baglan Bay where the factory was close to a large housing estate and there were issues about the factory's possible contribution to a cancer cluster in the area.

When I had got to know most of my counterparts in the other big companies we agreed to meet once a month over a sandwich lunch in order to exchange information and discuss issues. Bob Finch in his inimitable style christened the group GOSSIP (Group Opinion Sharing on Schools Industry Projects). We met at each other's head offices in turn. We would put any issue we wanted to discuss onto a flip chart and then work through the list. It was a very useful occasion both as an

intelligence sharing session and as a way of letting potential funding seekers know that we could not be picked off one-by-one. This was my first experience of the power of collective action between companies prepared to work together. This later would become a key ingredient of any initiative that promoted business engagement in social issues, including human rights.

My first job was to put the teachers in industry idea into practice. My first secondee was Brian Stevens, Director of languages at Godalming Sixth Form College, who had applied to the UBI project, on whose committee I still served, for a secondment. BP was asked to provide a place for Brian. At the time, I naively wondered how a languages teacher would be useful to us (this was before I had broadened my thinking regarding the scope of education industry links). In the event, Brian rapidly became a valued member of our team. He did useful work on the language and cultural needs of senior BP staff being stationed abroad and also helped to evaluate some of our educational projects. A year later, Mike Tomlinson, our HMI Education Committee member said he had a junior colleague, Simon Clements, who was interested in getting experience of working in industry and would we take him on. Simon was also an enthusiastic colleague and, together with me and Brian, who although by then attached to the London University Institute of Education was still able to work with us, created a sort of industry/education think tank. This provided much of the early intellectual thinking behind the work that all three of us subsequently did both together and separately.

Following discussions with various local education authorities and schools, we had a succession of teachers gaining experience of working in BP, from Dyce in Scotland, Hull, Baglan Bay, Harlow, Whitham, Sunbury and London. I was a keen supporter of the work of the Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools (CSCS). CSCS was based at York University and run by a series of seconded head teachers to exchange ideas and promote good work in what was then and still is the most common form of secondary school. They ran some excellent conferences and for me it was a good opportunity both to learn from leading practitioners and to make contacts. One such contact was Keith Foreman, the headteacher of Comberton Village College just outside Cambridge and possibly my favourite school amongst all of the many I visited. Keith was universally loved and clearly ran a most successful school. : it was a genuine community, with a delightful, supportive staff and pupils.

At some point, I suggested to Keith that he might become our first headteacher in industry. We discussed this with the chief education officer and it was agreed. Keith asked to be attached to senior people on the political side of the Government and Public Affairs department so that he could examine with them a number of issues facing multinational companies and their role in society. I know this was considered a mutually valuable exercise.

During Keith's secondment, I was called to the Chairman's office. He explained that his son's physics teacher at Felsted School had asked him at a parents evening if he

could visit a North Sea Oil platform. Peter Walters asked me to arrange for this to happen and I suggested that Keith Foreman should accompany us. This was a huge privilege and Keith was as thrilled as I was; North Sea Oil platforms didn't normally do tourist visits, only VIP ones. We flew to Aberdeen and stayed at the Skean Dhu hotel, where we were briefed at length about what we were going to see. The next morning we were given a thorough safety briefing. Then we put on our orange jump suits, life jackets and ear muffs, and flew by helicopter to BP's Forties Field where we landed on the tiny helicopter pad. We spent several hours on the platform, including a substantial lunch (platform workers are looked after well during their two week stints), and were given a full tour. Luckily, it was a brilliant sunny day and there wasn't much wind so we saw things at their best and took some memorable photographs. The visit reinforced my increasing admiration for BP's engineering and those who made it all work. It saddens me greatly that much later, after BP's merger with Amoco, the BP refinery at Texas City and then the Deepwater Horizon platform in the Gulf of Mexico somehow failed to follow safety guidelines and were the source of such dreadful loss of life and damage to the environment. I do not believe that the BP I knew and came to admire in the eighties and nineties would have made those mistakes.

Following the success of Keith's secondment to BP, we persuaded two heads from Academies near BP's operation at Dyce near Aberdeen to spend time working in the company. These secondments were also successful and resulted in two influential local people having very favourable impressions of BP. Who said that my kind of relationship building wasn't also good PR?

We ran an annual conference for our past and present Teachers in Industry along with guests from the BP sites, which were great fun as well as producing good learning. We made very good use of BP's excellent new residential conference facilities at Durdent Court, near Denham. Although most of our secondees returned to their schools and became ambassadors for BP and industry in general, two of them enjoyed BP so much that they ended up working there. Jane Measures, a physics teacher from my old school, Beaumont, never went back and joined BP Chemicals. That was not the intention of the scheme and a loss to science teaching but it was good for Jane. Similarly, we were asked by the Department of Education to provide experience of working with us for one of their Further Education team, Jeremy Nicholls. He was particularly interested in encouraging more young people to stay on after school leaving age. He designed a project, 'Aiming for a College Education', BP's first £1 million education project, and stayed on in my team after his secondment to help deliver it. Jeremy became a close colleague and helped me deliver the Company's first International Community report in 1995. He then produced the next one after I had gone to Warwick. We often discussed the company and our role in it and in one of his lighter moments he described me as the equivalent of the Shakespearian 'licensed fool', which if you think about it is an interesting comparison. At my farewell dinner in 1998, which was attended

exceptionally by two main board directors, Rodney Chase and Brian Sanderson of BP Chemicals, I was described by them as always the teacher, who had managed to teach the company a thing or two.

During the 1980s, I would regularly visit the main UK BP sites and areas where BP had a significant presence. I travelled up and down and across the country sometimes by car but mainly by train. I would meet with the school link coordinator and usually the site General Manager in order to impress on him (it was always a him) the significance of the work with local schools and how valuable it was for staff to be given time off to do the job. I also got to know the chief education officers and their advisers in the relevant education authorities. In those days, public sector schools were run exclusively by local education authorities and chief education officers were significant powers in the land. I needed to work through them to get permission to second teachers to BP under our Teachers in Industry scheme and to run other education projects that supported, for instance, science, technology and economics education.

One county I had particular success with was Essex. BP had a big office in Harlow and a Nutrition factory in Witham as well as link schools with BP link officers working in the London head offices. I became good friends with Mike Sharpe, Chief Education Officer of Essex, and his careers adviser Peter Evans. Together with Janet Jones, who had been a BP research fellow on education industry links and now was running a small consultancy business, Mike, Peter and I invented a curriculum development project called 'Learning for a Changing World'. The idea was to focus a significant proportion of BP's educational support budget on developing the curriculum in ways that we thought most important, namely the project's three strands: careers/work skills, technology and economic literacy. We pulled together expertise in the three areas and with the support of existing link officers and teachers were able to offer additional resources backed up with expert adviser support. We then rolled out the project in selected pilot schools in some of the education authorities with which we had close links. The project got going first in Essex and both Mike and Peter later said that its focus and impact was better than the government's subsequent much larger and more expensive Technological and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), which unknown to me at the time was being planned by the Manpower Services Commission.

In order to develop our 'Learning for a changing world' project in South Glamorgan, the county's wily old Chief Education Officer said that I would need to obtain permission from the Schools Sub Committee. He introduced me to the Chair of the committee, a formidable, large lady who had great presence. After a one-on-one grilling, we established mutual respect and she took me into the council chamber, where I was confronted by 44, mainly Labour, councillors with deep suspicions of big industry. After my brief presentation explaining the intended project, the meeting was opened up for questions. The first ones I got were, "Why is BP trying to recruit

all our best people?” and “What is in this for BP?” These were perfectly fair, if bluntly put, questions and I answered them as best I could. Our project was agreed and the wisdom of the Chief Education Officer in making me do this and so gaining for him and me an easy ride thereafter was apparent. It also convinced me of the importance of always presenting our education activities as a win/win for both sides, seeking mutual advantage and not as an act of benevolence or charity. So-called acts of charity by big companies are often treated with deep suspicion.

About this time, I was asked by a senior member of the Government and Public Affairs team on the political side, one of the people who had been hosting Keith Foreman, to accompany him to a select conference being run by the Catholic Church on the responsibilities of big business. He was a lay preacher himself and wanted me to explain my ideas about the mutuality of benefit of industry/community relationships. It was held at an exclusive retreat near Lake Constance in Switzerland. The opportunity for me to have my say duly arose and caused quite a stir. Many of the traditionalists there, I suppose following in the Catholic Church’s tradition, were all for charitable giving with no ostensible expectation of getting anything in return. There were several quite important people there, including the recent prime minister of the Netherlands, with whom I had an interesting conversation over dinner afterwards. My BP colleague was pleased with my efforts and it helped to convince me that I was on the right lines. It also gave me the courage to challenge the way companies did and were expected to do corporate philanthropy in the USA, when I started visiting there later in my BP career.

I was regularly asked to give talks. I suppose the high spot was being asked to address the Annual Conference of the Secondary Heads Association; a big occasion and a big audience. Mike Payne, with whom I had worked at Roundhay and now a headmaster in Blackpool, did me the honour of asking me to speak at his school’s prize day. I was also asked to do the same at Ballymena High School in Northern Ireland. It was still the time of ‘The Troubles’ and I was a bit wary. Ballymena is in the heart of Protestant country. My address was preceded by the local vicar who literally preached fire and brimstone for any sinners who strayed from the straight and narrow path. How to follow that?

I decided to take a risk and start with the story, sometimes attributed to Tolstoy, of the poor peasant who trudging home in the snow one evening saw in front of him a small bird lying there dying of the cold. Being a kind hearted fellow, the peasant picked up the bird and placed him against his chest inside his coat in order to warm him. Presently the peasant saw a large moose ahead of him doing what even mooses have to do. When the moose had walked away the peasant saw in front of him a steaming turd. He found a stick and made a hollow in the centre of the turd. Then he laid the bird in the hollow and went on his way knowing that he had done all he could for the poor thing. In a little while the bird began to recover and feeling better started to sing. Hearing the singing, a wolf came out of the forest, spied the

bird and very carefully lifted it off the turd and swallowed it whole. (Pause for 'aaagh' from the audience.) Now the moral of this tale is as follows: It's not just your enemies who stick you in it. And it's not just your friends who pull you out of it. But if you are in it up to your neck, keep your mouth shut!

It must be the way I told it because the audience reaction was rapturous. It was the only time in my life that I felt how a stand-up comedian must feel when an audience collapses with laughter at his or her joke. I literally had to wait for about half a minute between each part of the moral conclusion before things were quiet enough for me to continue. I think the concept of friends and enemies strikes a chord in Northern Ireland. The point of my telling the story was to infer that I had been stuck in it by the headmaster (enemy or friend?) and that I had better keep my talk short or else. What I said after that I can't remember but I do remember afterwards the fire and brimstone preacher coming up to me and asking if I would mind if he borrowed the story and used it in his sermons.

In the Queen's birthday honours of 1989 I was awarded an OBE. It was partly a matter of 'Other Buggers' Efforts' of course but it also reflected the best part of a decade of proselytising why and how business should work with education and vice versa. I learnt afterwards from a contact in the Department of Education that it and the Department of Industry wanted to give recognition to the burgeoning education industry movement, which they had both been backing, and I was the obvious candidate for an award. For the four years prior to the award I had been seconded part time to work with the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). I had spent my first four years with BP increasingly being asked to give talks at conferences, make presentations at meetings and write articles. The theme was always the same, it just got a bit more articulate as time went by.

A preamble to, I think, my best paper which was published by BP in 1988 reads:

"At the heart of education business links lies the need for two different cultures to understand one another. Traditionally separate and rather wrapped up in themselves, many schools, colleges and business organisations have only recently begun to realise the importance of the attitudes of others towards them. That each has turned to the other, with quite such a remarkable growth of interest in the last few years, reflects a recognition of this mutual need."

There was an element of wishful thinking regarding the recognition of mutual need but, although its strength has not been maintained since, the development of schools industry activities in the eighties was considerable and ground breaking. Schools, particularly all ability, comprehensive schools, needed better understanding and support from wider society, and I saw the building of closer relationships with local business and industry as a way of achieving this. Just as BP's educational liaison work was part of the Company's strategy of building its licence to operate in the

community so schools needed be aware of their need of similar 'licence', something which perhaps many teachers and head teachers took for granted. That successive governments since have been allowed by an ill-informed public that still hankers after grammar schools to interfere in schools so disruptively is partly an indication of schools' failure to nurture their licence to operate.

In order to reinforce my message, I designed what I called Business and Schools output matrices. The business matrix showed vertical arrows leading down to the 'bottom line' (profits), while the schools arrows led to their 'bottom line' (exam results). The horizontal arrows of the business matrix led to longer term, less easily measured outputs, such as environmental impact, community impact, staff development and training, and equal opportunities. The horizontal arrows of the schools matrix also led to less easily measured outputs, such as communication skills, economic awareness, industrial understanding, technological capability and work attitudes. The point being made was that both organisations needed to manage both sets of outputs and that each side could help the other in doing so. Although industry might want to help education to understand the importance of profits, education was likely to be more interested in the non-monetary outputs. Similarly, while education might want to emphasise its focus on achieving good exam results, industry was likely to be more interested in the less examined outputs of education. Through closer links, in other words, each side could help the other in achieving a more balanced approach to what they were about and lead to greater support from the wider community.

Some years later, Alan Smithers, now with Buckingham University, during his secondment to BP, took my ideas further and produced a very clever but simple measurement system that could show the value of schools industry projects. The system recognised that to be justifiable to both sides, projects had to be of mutual value. So it was up to both sides when they got together to think through what the objectives were that each were seeking from the proposed activities. They then needed to score these objectives according to their importance. Once this was done and both sides recognised what the other wanted to get from the relationship, they could then score how well existing and potential projects delivered these objectives. This proved a very useful management tool and I have met people since from different parts of the world who have used variants of it successfully.

Sometime in 1983-84, I came to the notice of John Woolhouse who had been appointed by Lord Young to head up the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). Lord Young was head of the Manpower Services Commission and was one of Margaret Thatcher's favourite people (she said that 'he always came to her with solutions not problems'). John and I met several times, including over a BP lunch, and he asked me to come and work with him. There was no way I was going to leave BP at that point and commit myself to an unknown new venture (I had my pension to consider). However, John persevered and eventually persuaded me and

my then boss, Phil Rock, that I could be seconded part time to TVEI with the government paying BP for half my salary. Thus began a wonderful period where I was released to travel the country passing on my message to a wide range of on-the-whole receptive audiences. This dovetailed very well with what BP wanted from me anyway so everyone was happy.

This period included 'Industry Year' in 1986 which was designed to promote understanding of the role and importance of industry among the population at large. It was run out of the rather grand premises of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). Sir Geoffrey Chandler led the whole initiative and was ably supported by Janet Jones in Industry Year's education section. I was on the education advisory group and it was my first introduction to Geoffrey and his extraordinary plummy voice but wonderful eloquence and irrepressible enthusiasm. I was to be reintroduced to this phenomenon at closer quarters some twelve years later with significant impact on my life after BP.

Meanwhile, the BP job gradually evolved. Robin Gourlay was promoted to run BP Nutrition and later BP Australia. Our new General Manager was David Walton, a most articulate and intellectual man. One of the first things he did was to produce a chart of what he called BP's audiences, every conceivable section of society with which BP needed to communicate, including education. It was noticeable, however, that he called them 'audiences', suggesting one way communication. The concept of 'stakeholders', who should be listened to as well as told things was still several years away. I like to think I was somewhat ahead of my time with this idea and perhaps influenced things.

David Walton also introduced the acronym CODBISA (Cost Of Doing Business In South Africa). I was uncertain about working for a company that had decided to remain in South Africa and took some convincing that it was the right thing to do, especially when put like this. The cost referred to was in the form of sizeable grants to projects supporting housing and other social projects in poor, black areas. I kept my counsel at the time and later was pleased that I did. When I visited BP's business in South Africa in the nineties, I was able to see first hand the impact of these projects and learn how the company had systematically undermined apartheid through its employment policies. I was also impressed talking to Fred Phswana, when he was appointed head of BP South Africa, and his community relations manager, Mary Jane Morifi, two most impressive black South Africans, who convinced me that BP had done more good by remaining in the country than it would have done by leaving.

David Walton was less of a bureaucrat and cut out several layers of management at this time. We reduced the bureaucracy of the education committee so that I was much more directly in charge of expenditure. I had already cut down on our support for random projects put forward by those with past access to BP, which no longer fitted with what by then were our main objectives. Apart from backing projects

related to the Links and Teachers in Industry schemes, the projects I wanted to fund were those we generated in partnership with education authorities or university departments not ideas coming independently from outside. More and more I was simply presenting a programme of work that our team wanted funded and the 'committee' gave me its support. During this time, Mike Tomlinson, who later became chief HMI, played a significant role in both advising me as well as the committee. He was very persuasive and the BP people listened.

Going international

In 1990, Peter Walters retired and Bob Horton became Chairman. It had been a runoff between him and David Simon and the more outwardly charismatic character was chosen. Probably the most arrogant man I ever met, Bob Horton had obviously had a brilliant career in BP but simply could not cope with the fruits of his own success. He openly said how much cleverer he was than most other people. When I organised my first international BP education conference in Brussels, which Bob agreed to address, I was told by his support team that he was to have the best suite in the hotel and a bottle of champagne on ice was to be ready for him when he got back to his room after the evening session. For me, however, Bob Horton, was very useful. He had publicly committed the company to its support for education and agreed to come to my Brussels conference and through this smoothed my way in building good relationships with many of BP's activities across the world. He also asked me to visit his hugely expensive house in a gated community near Wentworth where his wife was entertaining a local ladies group and had expressed interest in BP's work with education. I have to say his wife was charming and my talk was well received, which probably did my reputation with the Chairman no harm. It was also an insight into how the really rich live.

BP was undergoing one of its periodic reorganisations. It was selling off most of its non-directly oil related businesses, such as nutrition, coal, shipping and solar. From now on, it was going to focus purely on Exploration (drilling and production), Oil (refining and retail) and Chemicals (mainly ethylene for producing plastics). The head office functions were also being restructured into independent teams reporting straight to directors with no intervening layers of management. I found myself at last in charge of a reduced but complete education team covering educational resources as well as liaison. This was all part of Bob Horton's Project 1990 and his "BP Vision". Underlying Project 1990 was a new values statement, which actually was a highly enlightened stakeholder analysis (graphically represented in a darts board style diagram with employers, customers, suppliers and community around the edge and shareholders as the bulls eye). The problem was that no one believed that the sentiments it expressed would ever be carried out in practice, especially the employees part which stated "*We encourage our employees to strike a balance between their responsibilities in BP and to their home life*". In spite of widespread ridicule and a falling share price, Bob Horton continued to behave like an anointed

king and he was subsequently brought down to earth in a Boardroom coup which saw David Simon take over as Chief Executive.

At the end of 1989 and beginning of 1990, Charles Nicholson, a veteran of the Government and Public Affairs, who was kept on as an eminence grise throughout the 1990s well beyond the official retirement age, took an interest in me and encouraged me to develop an international perspective to my work. Until then, I had been exclusively focused on the UK and I had not realised that there was a whole world out there waiting for me. I arranged my first international trip to Australia and New Zealand, taking in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta on the way. This proved successful as I met people in charge of public affairs for these countries who on the whole appreciated hearing about the company's policy of support for education and how I might help them develop such practices in their parts of the world. I also met with BP people in many European countries, including Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey. This all led to inviting them to the Brussels conference, which Janet Jones helped me construct. With Bob Horton's support, this clearly established BP's education policy and in effect gave me my licence to operate internationally.

Head of Community Affairs

When Bob Horton left, there was another restructuring designed especially to cut overhead costs. The role of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, previously combined, was now split and David Simon became CEO. The head office functions were again streamlined. The community and education teams were much reduced in size and combined under my leadership. I was now in effect head of community affairs, although I don't think I was ever given a formal title. I briefly reported to Russel Seal, who was also Director of BP Oil, whom I felt never really understood what I was about. This lasted about a year before Rodney Chase became my director, who promptly gave me a ticket to travel the world, about which more shortly.

After David Simon's appointment, I was soon called to his office to discuss what I was to do about part of Bob Horton's extravagant legacy. One issue in particular that concerned him was our support for the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum (PWBLF). In 1990, Bob Horton had attended the launch of this initiative by the Prince in Charleston, USA and, swept along by the occasion, had committed BP to an annual membership subscription of \$100,000. David Simon wanted to know what if anything we got out of this expenditure and if it was not value for money how we could get out of it. So I got an appointment with PWBLF's director, Robert Davies, and we had a long heart-to-heart conversation. It was, I think, the first time that Robert had had one of his members asking hard questions about what the return was for the company. He had just assumed in some kind of elitist way that rich companies like BP would naturally support a good cause that the Prince had put his

name to without asking hard questions. I convinced Robert that unless I could demonstrate that BP got value from this relationship, we would pull out. I said that I would show him how we might get that value. PWBLF could, for instance, get good news stories about the company's work with education and communities where it operated into the media much more easily than BP could. Robert agreed and we developed a good working relationship, which led later to him accompanying me on part of my visit to Colombia and to Prince Charles writing a forward to our first International Community Affairs Report, which was the first such produced by a large multinational company. The report also received an award from Worldaware which was presented to me by Princess Anne. I managed to convince David Simon that our support for PWBLF was worthwhile and indeed he was subsequently most supportive of the relationship.

Over my time with BP, I had several encounters with members of the Royal Family. I was presented with the OBE by the Queen. I received the award I have just described from Princess Anne, whom I also met at a Buckingham Palace reception. On another occasion, I was introduced to the Duke of Edinburgh who was suitably rude in the observations he made in response to my brief and clearly unsuccessful attempt to explain what I did for BP. I met Prince Charles on numerous occasions so that by my last visit to Highgrove, when I was accompanied by Sybil, he actually recognised me. It always amazes me how much pull the Prince has. It had clearly worked on Bob Horton with his Charleston visit. It also worked on my director, Rodney Chase. When Robert Davies and I had invited Alonzo Ortiz, our pioneering community man in Colombia, to present his work to a meeting the Prince had called at Highgrove, I suggested that Rodney might like to go but I understood how busy he was. Not a bit of it; he immediately cleared his diary and hightailed it down to Highgrove to hobnob with the Prince.

My efforts also helped the PWBLF position itself more effectively with other companies. It certainly provided a learning base for some very good people who have contributed a lot to industry community relations since. These include Jane Nelson, Ros Tennyson and Frances House.

I never had much time for PWBLF's sister organisation, Business in the Community (BITC). BITC was run by the inimitable and indefatigable Julia Cleverdon, perhaps the most establishment-connected person I ever met. Although BITC too had some excellent people working for it, including my later colleague at Cranfield and friend David Grayson, its whole ethos was in my view wrong. It perpetuated the charitable giving side of big business with its 'Percent club', which encouraged its members to donate 1% of their profits to good community causes. This was and still is a very American business approach to so called social responsibility and has little if anything to do with how you run your business or relate to your community stakeholders. I had several heated discussions with Julia on this but I never got anywhere. Nevertheless, we remained on good terms.

Since 1990, I increasingly felt that the sustainability of the corporate social responsibility function, which I represented, could only be maintained if the Businesses (i.e. Exploration, Oil and Chemicals), owned the principle. I set about trying to engage with them more and offering to delegate much of our quite large central budget. I was strongly advised not to do this by some colleagues who saw the size of one's budget being a measure of power. I was also unpopular with past recipients of grants from my budget who would no longer be receiving funds. However, I persisted as I felt that the role of our corporate team and growing international network of people with community responsibilities should become more one of advising the businesses on how to build better community relations rather than trying to do it for them. BP Chemicals responded enthusiastically, although not necessarily in ways I approved but that was the risk I took. BP Oil also engaged. However, I never really made any inroads into Exploration. It was run as an autocracy by BP's future CEO, John Browne, who did his own thing. I still think I was right to try but BP was not ready for it and, after I left, under increasing American influence, reverted to having a large central charity budget to spend on 'good things'.

Rodney Chase, however, both understood and supported my philosophy and told me to go out there in BP and spread the word about how important community relationships were and to build a network of BP people who were in charge of community relations functions. The only caveat was that I was under no circumstances to say to senior BP managers around the world that I was doing this under the orders of Rodney Chase. I was on my own and had to make the case on its own merits. I was in effect being given a ticket to travel the world; 'to go forth and multiply'. I had a number of great trips, always telling Sybil that I was in effect researching places to take her when I retired – and I have since mostly delivered. Johari Hussain in Kuala Lumpur and Toby Littlewood in Singapore, were keen for me to spread the word in their countries as well as in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. With the exception of Vietnam, these were mostly BP Oil businesses and had a marketing focus. On one occasion, I remember we went on a charity fun run, sponsored by BP with the King of Malaysia. We all wore bright green and yellow shell suits but never exceeded walking pace.

My visit to Vietnam was interesting because the BP business there was mainly off shore Exploration and there was a strong need to build relationships with the community where most of the BP people and their equipment were based. They had a very good project nearby which supported research into child nutrition among the peasant farming communities. They noticed that a small number of children were much stronger than the others. When they researched this they found that the mothers added the small freshwater shrimps and crabs, found in the rice fields, to the children's rice diet. This made all the difference and when I was there they were celebrating the positive results of spreading this knowledge and behaviour among other groups of mothers. There was this one good project but also one dodgy one. I

discovered that when he was negotiating access to Vietnam's potential oil fields, John Browne had offered, as part of the package, £500,000 towards the president's wife's favourite charity; a hospital at the other end of the country from where BP would be operating. In other words it had nothing at all to do with community relations and everything to do with oiling the wheels of business/government decision making. This was totally against the BP community relations policy I had been advocating and of highly dubious ethics. I have to say that I did not feel strong enough to challenge John Browne either then or later and neither did anyone else to whom I related the story. It did nevertheless colour my attitude towards BP's future CEO. I never trusted him and, as it turned out, I left shortly after he took command.

BP Australia and New Zealand gave me the warmest welcomes. Their cultures are similar to the UK and they wanted to learn about school industry links especially. Both Ian Fliedner in Melbourne and Beppie Holme in Wellington encouraged me to give talks to some of their key audiences, and these were well received. As well as doing several talks to industry groups in Melbourne, Ian introduced me to politicians in Canberra, to academics in Sydney and accompanied me to BP's refineries near Brisbane and Perth.

I also made several visits to BP's head office in America, which was the dominant building in downtown Cleveland, Ohio. I always had difficulties with my American colleagues as they were committed to their form of corporate philanthropy, where they considered that the reputation of the company was determined by what proportion of its profits was spent on good causes backed up by the personal attendance of a senior executive at the program's launch. I hardly endeared myself to them when in a speech I suggested that corporate philanthropy unconnected with the Company's business was in effect taking money from shareholders in order to make the senior executives feel good.

I did have success, however, with the nearby refinery and chemicals factory complex, where I was invited to run a workshop on our new value assessment process. The event was well attended by BP staff and local teachers and education officials, and I have been told it produced some long-lasting learning. Perhaps the main insight was that the assumptions prior to the event about what each side wanted from the relationship were completely wrong. The teachers assumed that all BP was interested in was recruitment and the BP people assumed that all schools were interested in were financial grants. In fact, what BP wanted most was good relations with the local community and good news stories in the local paper. Meanwhile, the schools wanted work experience placements and curriculum development materials to enhance the children's learning. The participants discovered that they both had the capacity to help deliver each other's objectives. Local newspapers, for instance, were much more inclined to print a good news story sent to them by a school about their work with BP rather than straight from BP.

Perhaps my most memorable country visit was to Colombia. BP had found what they hoped to be a major oil field in Casanare, a wild 'cowboy' territory on the Eastern slopes of the mountains some 200 miles from Bogota, with no decent roads in between. I arrived in Bogota and visited BP's headquarters there, always accompanied by a bodyguard. In fact, when I was being driven there was always a car with armed people in it in front and behind mine. I was not particularly welcome as I was seen as being a bit of a nuisance. BP Exploration people in Colombia were an independent lot and took the view that they had nothing to learn from me and nothing to teach anyone else. I did my best to discuss the principles of community relations with the local Public Affairs people but they were really more interested in making sure they were in with national government ministers and the like.

Only one man knew what I was on about and that was Alonzo Ortiz, who almost single handed was trying to support the developing community in Bhopal, where BP's drilling operations were located. As far as I could make out, the public affairs team rather despised Alonzo and had little knowledge of what he was doing. We were joined by Robert Davies and flew over the mountains to Bhopal, where we were introduced to some amazing community projects which Alonzo and his team of local helpers were running. These included supporting education and local business development but most importantly trying to educate and prepare local leaders for the responsibility of managing the funds that would shortly come their way as part of the revenue from the oil production.

The work was excellent and well worth Alonzo's trip to Highgrove to tell the Prince of Wales all about it. But because Alonzo was left to himself, there was no direct connection with the local BP operations either in the minds of those running the projects or those benefitting from them. This was made worse by the fact that the BP site was surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards provided by the Colombian army, and the site workers lived in a compound equally protected. This was all very understandable, of course, as the FARC guerrillas had declared war on the oil industry. They were regularly blowing up bits of the main pipeline and would do the same for the drilling site if they could get at it. Robert and I had dinner with the head of BP's operations when we returned to Bogota and pointed out that in spite of much good work being done, BP was not making much progress in building relationships and mutual understanding.

How far this message got through I do not know. What I do know is that not long afterwards the BBC produced a damning documentary on BP's operation in Casanare, accusing the company of collaborating with the army and their linked paramilitary forces who were indiscriminately killing any local peasants thought to be collaborating with the FARC. This led to some reputation damaging headlines in the UK accusing BP of killing innocent people, demonstrations outside BP's London headquarters and the NUT passing a motion to withdraw any school its members taught at from the BP Link scheme. BP Exploration in Colombia was caught by

surprise. It simply had not realised that something it did or did not do in Colombia could cost the Company reputation damage and loss of business elsewhere in the world. Over a year later, following an enquiry, BP was exonerated from any wrong doing. It was a hard lesson, painfully learnt. So much for not having anything to learn from outside. I subsequently wrote all this up as an MBA case study and along with parts of the BBC film used it successfully in many of my MBA teaching sessions.

By this time, I had met David Logan, who was himself a leading guru on corporate citizenship. I needed someone who would understand what I was trying to do close to me so I persuaded David to accept a retainer such that I could use him as a kind of consultant colleague when I needed him. The relationship worked well and we soon became friends. David helped me to understand the bigger picture in which companies were gradually exploring their wider role in society. He accompanied me on a couple of trips to the States where he introduced me to some interesting people from companies and colleges working in this field. Until then, I had been preoccupied with education industry links. David introduced me to a much wider network of people in business and academia who were working in what became known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). I was also introduced to Simon Zadec who at that time was working for the New Economics Foundation, whose philosophy I found close to my own thinking, and to John Elkington, who was then running the think tank/ consultancy, SustainAbility. These extremely clever, articulate and committed people had a strong influence on me. I persuaded Simon to speak to an audience of BP managers in head office and in spite of his radical ideas which posed awkward questions for leaders of multinational companies he was listened to and well received. Simon also accompanied me on my final trip to South Africa, where he helped to make a success of a meeting I had arranged for key BP community affairs people from around the world. John Elkington later joined the Board of Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, which I chaired.

I also had several excellent staff supporting our work. John Ashford in the early years did much to cement link scheme relationships. He had been one of the first link officers at BP's research centre in Sunbury and knew all the ropes. When he left, I managed to persuade BP that we needed an expert from outside the company rather than a convenient shift of someone to see out their time before retirement. We appointed Andreas Priestland, who had cut his CSR teeth with the Schools Council Industry Project (SCIP). It was great to have someone with a similar mindset to me working with us. Brian Stevens and Simon Clements were also a great asset during their respective secondments. We lost Andreas after a while to BP Oil as a trainer and he was replaced by Brian Swanson who had been running our Scottish community affairs activities out of BP's small Edinburgh office. Brian was a bundle of energy and did a great deal to promote our work. Angela Gardner took over the Scottish work with great success, so much so that after another reorganisation she left BP and set up her own business providing information to Scottish industry about

what's going on in the world of education. This has proved so useful, partly thanks to the work of Brian Stevens who also ran a similar business in England.

Jan Lovett joined us from the ranks of company secretaries and proved to be a first class link scheme coordinator. She tells the story of her interview with me, when she asked if it was OK to work through a list of some twenty questions which she had prepared. I replied that she should start asking and we would see where we go to. In the end she asked all of them and later that day when I had seen the other candidates, I offered her the job. Later, she asked me why I had chosen her and I said that it was the questions which showed how keen she was to get the job that swayed the decision. And what a good decision it proved to be. She was responsible for organising the 25th anniversary celebrations of the schools' link scheme in Britannic House. Like Angela, when she finally left BP, Jan set up her own consultancy business on school industry links which has been a great success.

When we merged with what was left of the BP Educational Service, Tim Morris took over the production of our school materials, which were now much more focussed on BP's activities, including papers reflecting my thoughts on why industry and education should work together. He and I produced BP's first international community report. This again had royal connections as Prince Charles wrote a supportive introduction and his sister, Anne, presented us with the Worldaware award.

Jeremy Nicholls joined us from the Department of Education, as already described. Julie (now Nicholls) was my PA for a bit but then was promoted to special events. Finally Ramilla Shah agreed to become our PA and gradually worked her way into head office CSR activities, including running the ever popular employees matched giving scheme. Only Hazel Cadenhead was unhappy with the new arrangements. She had worked with Robin Heal on company donations and was not unnaturally upset to see major parts of our budget devolved to the businesses. She left about the same time as I did and I have not heard of her since.

In 1995, Jaque Delors, the President of the EU, announced the publication of what amounted to a manifesto called 'European Declaration of Business against Exclusion'. Robin Heal, who had left BP but did some consultancy work for us, had participated in an informal group of representatives of businesses and business groups which helped prepare the paper. A list of the companies were printed on the back of the document. I had not taken much notice of it beforehand but when it was published I was called 'upstairs' to explain why BP was associated with a document that could commit the company to what 'those upstairs' considered rather too left wing employee policies and redundancy processes. In fact, the document was entirely consistent with what the community affairs team had for years been encouraging through our support for new enterprise. However, it was clearly a different matter for us to say and do something for external players and commit the Company to doing it for itself.

This kind of double standard, which I christened 'management speak with forked tongue' was common place throughout my time with BP. Interest in the company's relationships with education and the wider community among many hard pressed managers out in the field who had to deliver tough quarterly financial targets, was often left to a Friday afternoon, if then. These were considered 'soft' issues and therefore did not have the priority of 'hard' issues. The fact that soft issues were in fact quite hard to measure and deliver on only added to their neglect. Professor Smithers' and my attempts to put 'hard' measures on our community programmes was aimed to address this but, although it had some success, most mainstream business managers never got round to understanding it.

Following my explanation to Rodney Chase and David Simon that the European Declaration was nothing more than an expression of BP's community relations policy, I was dispatched to participate in the implementation committee, with firm instructions to persuade the Eurocrats to remove the more 'leftie' ideas from the final 'Vade Mecum'. This resulted in some humdinger arguments in the committee with Jan Noterdaeme, a bright, young enthusiastic EU Commission staff member. Neither of us were prepared to budge and it resulted in BP not signing the 'Vade Mecum' of guidelines for action by business and not providing financial assistance for what became the European Network for Corporate Social Responsibility. However, shortly afterwards I was approached by Jan and Anne Vandehende to work with them personally on an offshoot of the programme addressing education specifically. This work began after I had effectively left BP and gone to Warwick.

In 1996, Tony Blair offered David Simon a peerage and a job in the government. So he left BP and John Browne was duly anointed 'King'. Like Bob Horton, John Browne had had an exceptionally brilliant career in BP and was clearly destined for the top job. He never stopped working. Part of his success was his strategy of surrounding himself with equally clever and committed young men, known as his 'turtles'. They were available 24/7 at his beck and call and, after their period of service, were promoted to senior jobs in the company. When he took over, his entourage took over as well. I had a few quite reasonable meetings with him but further access was increasingly discouraged by his gatekeepers. In another management shakeup, Rodney Chase became deputy CEO and was dispatched to the USA and I found myself again under Russel Seal but this time with one of Browne's young entourage, Richard Hookway, between me and the director. Richard was never going to understand what I did and I realised that it was time to leave.

About this time, I organised an event at the BP conference centre at Durdent Court on how to influence Business Schools to take business links with the community and CSR more seriously. David Grayson and David Logan helped me put the event together and produce the preparatory paper work and the subsequent report. It was well attended by business people and business school academics, including a few deans. I had hoped that we might be able to do something like the school links

scheme but it was clear that we had a huge uphill battle ahead of us if we were to make any inroads into the business school MBA curriculum. Like many businesses themselves, business schools were obsessed with their bottom line, which was a mixture of research star rating and ranking according to the salaries their students subsequently achieved.

I was determined to do something about this and saw an opportunity given the new situation that faced me at BP. I did some preparatory thinking and went to see John Woolhouse. John, by then, was a professor at Warwick University Department of Education running, with BP's support, the Centre for Education and Industry. I was on his steering committee and had got to know the University Vice Chancellor quite well. Following several lengthy sessions in his house, John agreed to help prepare the way for me to approach Warwick Business School with the idea of me being seconded there to set up a small unit to explore the concept of Corporate Citizenship.

When I got the chance on one of his visits back to Britannic House, I went to see Rodney Chase, told him about the situation and said that he had rather dumped me in it and owed me a favour. I presented my ideas about the Warwick unit and he agreed to talk to Russel Seal about it. Russel Seal was not all that happy but Rodney won the argument. I was then enabled to negotiate a two-year secondment at Warwick Business School on full BP pay with a £40,000 a year grant to support my work there. After two years at Warwick, I formally retired from BP at the ripe old age of 53, on an immediate pension of just over one-third of my salary, inflation protected, having gained an extra two years of pension, plus a redundancy package of two years' salary. As we had already paid off our mortgage, it was like winning the pools. As I have already described, I had a delightful farewell lunch in September 1998, with both directors I knew well attending, and left BP with my financial future secured and at least a third of my 'working' life ahead of me.

As I write this, I have been asking myself a question which I often thought about while I was at BP: 'How much was I an apologist for BP in particular and the oil industry and big business in general?' I have always argued that there is no such thing as a wholly good company and probably no such thing as a wholly bad company. BP was and is no exception. There are things about BP which are excellent and some things which are not so good. We need to encourage the good and do all we can to eliminate the bad. Big companies are necessary, particularly in sectors like oil, to manage the huge technological investment and accompanying risks. We need the products of oil, whether we like it or not, and therefore it is worthwhile doing whatever one can to help that process to be managed in as socially responsible a way as possible.

I liked to justify my position by saying that it was like two overlapping, circular Venn diagrams, me and BP. As long as there was enough overlap I was happy to work in that space, and to be fair I was given lots of space to work in. But was I in effect just

one of a number of BP staff who, while beavering away doing 'good' things, was in reality a PR agent for an organisation that was essentially anti-social and exploitative for its own selfish ends? Since leaving BP I have continued to champion corporate responsibility as a way of internalising the management of a company's impact on and role in society. In my view, it has got to come from within, led from the top as part of a company's value system, because there will never be sufficient enforceable legislation to force good behaviour. However I can easily appreciate how that can be seen as idealistic wishful thinking. The record of many companies recently, including that of BP, have continued to challenge my thinking. I still like to think that I made a small difference, at least during the time I worked with BP, but I cannot be sure. Perhaps the main benefit of my work in BP was that I was able to leave with both the experience of working at the interface of a large company and the community, with an enhanced understanding of both, and considerable financial independence, which enabled me to help establish two pioneering business and human rights organisations. That is the subject of the next chapter.



1982 Publicity shots for the BP in house magazine



BP site visit to Aberdeen and Forties Oil Field with Keith Foreman (bottom left)



**1995 – talking with
Prince Charles**



**1996 – receiving
'Worldaware' award
from Princess Anne**



**The winning entry in
BP's 'Build a car'
competition**

4: Working life after BP (1997 -)

Looking back on the 21 years since I left BP, it is amazing that of the three stages to my working career, the third, mainly voluntary one, has been the longest. I taught for over 12 years in three schools, not counting a term's teaching practice at Great Barr Comprehensive, starting in September 1968. I worked with BP for almost 17 years until September 1996, although I was on paid secondment for another two years. I finally relinquished my last formal chairmanship, that of the Institute for Human Rights and Business, in December 2017. I often think that my paid working career was essentially a preparation for the contribution I was able to make, largely unpaid, during my so-called early retirement years.

Business Schools

My first and not very successful venture was to set up a small Centre for Corporate Citizenship at Warwick University Business School (WBS). In my last year or so at BP, I had been working with David Grayson and David Logan on how to interest business schools in the issue of CSR and corporate citizenship and we were finding it very difficult. Firstly, there was no agreed terminology and definition of CSR, and secondly business schools were only interested two outcome measures: their position in league tables reflecting the earnings of their alumni and their research ratings. Those of us leading the field in CSR had long dismissed the idea that it was a voluntary business activity, largely involving giving away a percentage of a company's profits to good causes. We were encouraging companies to see CSR as integral to doing business in a responsible and sustainable way; hence the choice of the term 'corporate citizenship' in the title of my new centre. I had naively thought that I would be able to meet with business academics at WBS across the various disciplines to discuss how corporate citizenship ideas fitted into their models and MBA teaching. Not a bit of it. It did not help that the two professors who had welcomed me at the beginning left during my first year. The pressure on WBS academics to maintain the School's five star research rating meant that all research papers had to be targeted at the top specialist journals. A new cross curricular idea like corporate citizenship would not be viewed favourably by journal editors. As for MBA teaching, courses were established in advance and inflexible and I could not get a look in.

I remembered how hard it was at Beaumont School to get subject department heads interested in cross-curricular subjects, like economic literacy and citizenship. If I thought that was difficult, trying to do something similar in business schools was ten times harder. My new centre was located in a research department, which did not help. The expectation on me was clearly to do research when actually I wanted to

work with other people and do some teaching. The professor in charge said at one stage that I couldn't teach because I did not know anything as I had not done any research. So much for my idea of being valued as a reflective practitioner!

I did do some undergraduate teaching, which received good reviews, and I helped supervise two excellent PhD students, Jeorg Andriof and Anupama Mohan, who helped to keep me sane. I also organised two successful conferences on CSR, bringing together most of the leading practitioners in the UK and some from the States and elsewhere in Europe. These conferences, one of which was addressed brilliantly by Sir Geoffrey Chandler, temporarily gave Warwick a reputation as a leader in corporate citizenship work but the opportunity to build on it was missed. The conferences were attended by some Warwick professors and may have ultimately affected their thinking, but it didn't do me much good within the business school at the time. After my two years on BP pay, I officially left BP but gave WBS a further year unpaid in order to manage my succession. We managed to scrape together a funding package which enabled the appointment of Malcolm Mackintosh as a senior lecturer to run the centre. He decided for his own reasons that he did not want me around so I quite happily left him to it. It has to be said that nothing of great note regarding corporate citizenship came out of WBS subsequently.

The best thing that happened for me at WBS was when Professor John McGee, who taught a course at the Ecole National des Ponts et Chaussees (ENPC) in Paris, was asked if he knew anyone who could teach a course on CSR. He approached me to ask if I was interested. Of course I was. This led to Sybil and me going to Paris, initially for four days and later for a whole week, usually in May, for about twelve consecutive years. ENPC, a leading engineering school in France, had a school of management located just off Boulevard Saint Germain just 5 minutes' walk from the river Seine (it subsequently moved further from the centre). It had been led by an enlightened director, who had just died, and its mission included the promotion of socially responsible business. I initially taught a three day course on corporate citizenship, which was always enthusiastically received, later extended to a whole week to include a section on business ethics. (This new bit I had to learn the hard way i.e. by reading a few books). In preparation for the course, I wrote up a series of case studies; some based on my experience with BP and some adapted from management books. I began by taking a file full of overhead projector slides but after a few years, these were all transferred to 'Power Point' and by the end I had all my lecture slides on just one memory stick.

My 30 hour course was divided into six sections. The first posed the questions 'what is a company for?' and 'why is corporate social responsibility necessary?' We would discuss recent media stories as well as the well-rehearsed examples of McDonalds, Shell Brent Spar and Monsanto. I also showed excerpts from the film 'the Corporation'. The second section was on stakeholder engagement, partnership building and community relations backed up by with examples from my own

experience, including the case of BP in Colombia, which I wrote myself. Then there was a section on business ethics; dealing with issues and conflicts involved in cultural relativism, utilitarianism, the absolute rights approach, virtue ethics and the theory of justice, backed up with a number of dilemma cases. This was followed by two practical sections; the first on managing Human Rights issues, backed up with case studies on land rights in Kenya and the BP/Amnesty pipeline case, which I describe later. The second was on Environmental, health and safety issues backed up with the Exxon Valdez, BP Texas City and Deepwater Horizon case studies. The final section dealt with the governance of corporate responsibility, including corporate self-governance processes, soft and hard law and NGO activism.

After a couple of years doing this I discovered that ENPC franchised their IMBA programme elsewhere in the world and this led to my teaching a week's course for two years in Morocco, four years in Japan (split between Tokyo and Nagoya), two years in Abu Dhabi and two years in Belgium. The courses I taught in Belgium were to young Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) recruits. They were very bright and demanding students but the courses went well. Japan was also a great experience; the students were very friendly and receptive, and we had some enjoyable social times with them after the courses.

Less enjoyable were the visits to Casablanca in Morocco. The teaching was tough as there were over seventy in the class which made group discussions of case studies challenging. I got through well enough and the feedback was positive, but I did not enjoy the marking when all 70 project scripts finally arrived. It was the second visit a year later which was most problematic. Firstly, we were put in a hotel in the city centre, a long way from the beach where Sybil and I had previously enjoyed walking. Apparently they could no longer afford the hotel we stayed in before. This meant that Sybil was even more restricted and we had less to do during my free mornings. Secondly, the car that came to pick me up was a battered old rattletrap, with no seat belt, a nearside window that wouldn't close and consequently a wet seat. This contrasted with the new BMWs that many of the students turned up in straight from wherever they had been working during the day. I learnt during the week that the course administration was short of money because large chunks of what they had received from ENPC, plus the college SUV, had been 'used' elsewhere. Corruption was rife in Morocco and this was just one example of it. Afterwards I reported this to ENPC but they took no action in order to preserve good diplomatic relations. I refused to teach the course again. To make matters worse during my second course, I picked up a nasty stomach bug. This caused me to have to disappear to the loo several times during my teaching. I tried to combine these visits with group case study sessions but I was often in considerable discomfort as I taught the class.

Abu Dhabi was an interesting cultural experience. Modern high rise buildings dominated the skyline. The daytime temperature was so hot that Abu Dhabi lifestyle seemed to be centred round shopping in huge air conditioned malls, complete with

pretend 'outdoor' cafes and sitting areas. The young ladies clearly competed with carefully constructed black robes and head scarves with just enough showing to reveal that they had designer clothes underneath. Outside everyone drove around in huge, shiny gas guzzling SUVs. All water came from high energy usage desalination plants. The whole place reeked of decadent affluence enjoying what must be a totally unsustainable way of life (unless cheap solar energy really takes off). It will be interesting to see how places like Abu Dhabi and Dubai are viewed in years to come. Will they still be the glitzy oases of pleasure that they are seen as today?

Regarding teaching in Abu Dhabi, I had no idea what to expect but certainly not what actually happened on my first day. To get to the college, I was driven a considerable way out of town. On arrival, I was shown the way to the classroom. There in front of me was a class of about forty people, about twenty men on the right all dressed in white robes with red and white spotted headgear, about fifteen women on the left, all in black, two of them in complete burkhas covering their faces. There were five or six others in the middle, wearing conventional western casual dress. I had started my usual introduction when after ten minutes all the white robed men got up and left the room, saying they had to go and pray. The women then asked me to leave the room so that they could pray in private. They didn't have access to a special room. I waited patiently in the corridor. Some fifteen minutes later some of the men wandered back, several of them having taken the opportunity to have a smoke, and we finally got started again over half an hour after the class was due to begin. Then I had the trouble of forming groups for discussion of the cases. The men and women could not be mixed. Fortunately this did not apply to those not dressed in white or black so a small amount of mixing was possible, but not much. Thereafter, we sorted out the praying time more conveniently and the course went OK, if a bit differently from the others I had taught.

Some of the women were highly articulate and put their male counterparts in the shade, several of whom sat there like stuffed dummies expecting to be fed. One of the women in a complete burkha actually played 'mother' to the group bringing in lots of tasty home-made delicacies to keep us going through the evenings. One of the men actually came up to me and suggested an 'incentive' if I gave him a good grade. I did actually fail one of them when marking the scripts later on and this caused something of an incident with ENPC, who had received a complaint from the Abu Dhabi college. Clearly failing, however deserved, was not acceptable and we finally agreed the lowest possible pass mark. It was not long after this incident that my time with ENPC came to an end. I had had a good innings, my cases studies were beginning to date and it was time to stop anyway.

In 2007, David Grayson was appointed to the new chair at the Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility at Cranfield University. He invited me to join the faculty as a visiting fellow on a largely voluntary basis. There followed frequent visits to join faculty in strategic discussions, seminars, and contributing to teaching sessions on a

number of MBA programmes. I also wrote several issue papers, case studies and a short course on business and human rights. I gave my final lecture input in 2015 on business and human rights, letting David know that I felt the time had come to call it a day. So in the end, in spite of little impact at Warwick, I did manage to share and build on my BP experience through engaging with bright MBA students. The students were always challenging and my sessions were always very stimulating and enjoyable experiences. I am very grateful to John McGee who put me in touch with ENPC.

Although BP had effectively dropped out of the CSR Europe project, I became increasingly involved in it once I had left. The two directors, Jan and Anne, regarded me as a useful free consultant, and – as long as they paid for my travel to Brussels, put me up in a decent hotel and treated me to a nice dinner, I was happy to help guide the development of their work. Soon it became clear that the project required a separate education section that targeted business schools and university ethics departments in order to develop an intellectual framework behind the concept of CSR. I was asked to work on this with the help of a young and very intense intern, Eleanor Bonfiglioli, and under the noble patronage of Viscount Etienne Davignon. Eleanor and I did some research and came up with a plan that eventually led to the creation of the European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS), a network of European academic institutions and interested businesses.

I was asked take an initial leadership position at EABIS but I felt I lacked the academic gravitas and certainly the necessary language skills. So we found Gilbert Lenssen, a multi-talented intellectual and linguist, also ex-BP, to take on the role and following the appointment of a brilliant young executive, Peter Lacy, the academy blossomed under their joint leadership. Viscount Davignon, ex Belgium foreign minister, European Commissioner and then chairman of the bank Societe Generale de Belgique, went on to chair the main EABIS board. He would invariably arrive smoking his pipe, continuing to light up during meetings, totally ignoring the no smoking notices. Clearly such rules were not for aristocrats like him. At times he would appear to be fast asleep but at appropriate points in the meeting would always manage to sum up the arguments and propose sensible ways forward. Peter Lacy is now a senior director with Accenture, a champion of corporate responsibility issues. Eleanor remained with EABIS for a while but then was snapped up by Microsoft, where she now has a senior executive role. I remained on the board for many years, and Gilbert and I enjoyed many stimulating conversations and participated in lively meetings and seminars at leading academic venues across Europe.

The Amnesty Business Group

Sometime early in 2000, I was invited by Sir Geoffrey Chandler to join him and Peter Frankental for a cup of tea at the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and asked to invite Sybil

to come with me. I had been a member of Geoffrey's Amnesty Business Group since 1997. He was its founding chair and it transpired that he and Peter, who was employed by Amnesty UK but attached as secretary to the Business Group, had decided that I was to be Geoffrey's successor. The meeting was a lovely occasion of pure flattery and arm twisting with Sybil there to ensure that everyone understood that I was in effect being groomed for a three day a week unpaid job for the foreseeable future. With such powerful persuasion, how was I to refuse? I argued that I was no expert in human rights, as I continued to maintain throughout the following seventeen years, but apparently my time in BP gave me credibility and I was good at chairing meetings.

Geoffrey Chandler was a wonderful man and along with John Woolhouse earlier and Mary Robinson later hugely influential on my thinking and approach to work. I had the privilege of contributing my memories of him at his memorial event at St Martins in the Field in Trafalgar Square and also writing his biographical entry in the Oxford Dictionary of Biography. With his unlikely plummy voice you could easily make the mistake on first encounter of dismissing him as a verbose aristocrat, but after a few moments you realised that here was a great intellect and supreme master of the English language – and Greek too I imagine. He had great powers of persuasion based on irrefutable logic, which made him a powerful advocate of human rights with senior business people as well as a brilliant public speaker. I regard him as the founder of the business and human rights movement and everything I have done in this field as part of his legacy.

Geoffrey formally handed over the leadership of the Group to me at the end of the 2001 March meeting. I say 'handed over' but he kept a close eye on everything I did, which I encouraged by keeping him well informed, right up to the day he died in 2011. I spent the weeks before my first meeting in May talking to each Group member in turn to find out their interest in and expectations of the group and what they felt my role should be. They were an amazing lot, being the leading experts in the field in UK, and I soon found that as long as I chaired the meetings well, knowledgeable and stimulating discussion flowed. Everyone agreed that the meetings were among the best ways to keep informed and contribute ideas for further work. Our reputation grew and we were regularly visited by representatives from Amnesty national divisions from all over Europe and the USA. We held a number of conferences and did our best to provide advice and help for Amnesty.

Fundamentally, our role was to promote human rights as a key part of corporate social responsibility. Specifically it was to raise awareness of this within companies and integrate it into their policies, management and reporting and verification systems. Our task was complicated by the difficult relationship between AIUK, Amnesty's national UK organisation, and Amnesty's International Secretariat. Peter Frankental, our excellent Amnesty project manager, and myself reported for the Group to AIUK. We received great support from Kate Allen, AIUK's director, who

attended several of our meetings. Our strong reputation beyond the UK enabled us to have greater influence than the sum of our parts, but I think we were always slightly resented by those in the International Secretariat with responsibility for economic matters. They were sticklers for protocol and doing things the Amnesty way which meant painstaking, detailed research on specific cases and not committing to any public statement unless fully sanctioned, which grated with the more direct, opportunist approach of the Business group regarding talking to companies and campaigning on specific areas in which company behaviour should be improved.

I carried on where Geoffrey had left off with company visits, although I did not always manage to get as high up company hierarchies as he had. Between us, we had persuaded, among others, BT, ICI, AstraZeneca, CGU, Abbey National, Friends Provident, Rio Tinto, Shell and BP to adopt formal human rights policies by the end of 2001. A geography of corporate human rights risk was published early in 2002. We were also busy lobbying the DTI on reform of company law and the Export Guarantee Department to include human rights criteria in its assessment of projects. We also worked with financial institutions advising on human rights criteria for the new 'FTSE for Good' index. I would come into AIUK's old Rosebery Avenue office about three times a week and sit wherever there was a spare chair somewhere near Peter. He kept me busy with reading matter, writing papers and preparing for the many talks we were invited to give. Peter proved to be a great mentor and I learnt a lot from him about human rights and how Amnesty functioned.

Perhaps the most interesting case that took place during my time with Amnesty involved my old company BP, which had published its host government agreement with Turkey regarding the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. BP had gone to some lengths to ensure that its human rights and environmental policies were fully covered in the agreement and, to the company's credit, it was the first time such an agreement had been made available for public scrutiny. However, the pipeline ran through the Kurdish part of Turkey, where ethnic tension was rising, and Amnesty felt that the agreement did not go far enough in protecting the human rights of local residents along the line. At this point, I tended to accept BP's assurances at face value but Peter and his colleagues did not trust the company. So they met with BP and expressed their concerns.

The essence of Amnesty's critique was that the project agreements could have a chilling effect on Turkey's willingness to enforce their human rights, labour rights, and environmental obligations required by international treaties. Amnesty warned that the land acquisition could require the resettling of 30,000 people who would be forced to give up their land rights to make way for the pipeline; there could be inadequate enforcement of health and safety legislation to protect workers and local people; and there could be a serious risk to the human rights of any individuals who protested against the pipeline. Amnesty expressed particular concern that the

agreement would create a disincentive for the host countries to protect human rights because the governments had agreed to pay compensation to the BTC consortium should pipeline construction or operation be disturbed and be liable for any disruption to the economic equilibrium of the project.

BP's response was that it and the BTC Consortium had done all they reasonably could to protect environmental and human rights concerns within the agreements. In any case, the Company argued, its exemplary policy and performance record on environmental and human rights matters showed that it could be trusted not to deny anyone their rights in ways that Amnesty was concerned about. Amnesty's response was that however good BP's policies might be, when it came to on the ground decisions in practice, operational priorities and lawyers' arguments tended to prevail. BP's recent environmental misdeeds in Alaska were quoted as a case in point. In other words, BP could not be trusted. The conclusion of the meeting was that BP 'heard what Amnesty was saying' but refused to take any further action. It was deadlock.

What happened next was an exemplary piece of NGO action regarding how effectively to put pressure on a company and it was largely due to the painstaking work of Peter Frankental. The first thing he did was to commission Sheldon Leader, professor of human rights at Essex University along with a brilliant young research assistant, Andrea Shemberg, to produce a report on the issues, which was called 'Human Rights on the Line'. In order to ensure as much publicity as possible, Peter organised a launch event for the report in prestigious rooms off The Mall. It was attended by a significant number of diplomats from affected countries, MPs, BP representatives and journalists. I had the privilege of chairing the meeting which was addressed by Sheldon Leader and Andrea Shemberg, and also a community leader resident near the route of the pipeline. Following the presentations there were a number of questions from the floor, including from BP's senior lawyer, and what followed was a forceful but civilised debate. Next day there were several strong pieces in The Guardian and Financial Times among others, very much siding with the case presented in the report.

Shortly afterwards, BP asked for an urgent meeting with Amnesty and Peter invited them to the Roseberry Avenue office. BP's senior lawyer and a senior public affairs man, whom I knew well, were squeezed into a tiny, uncomfortable meeting room with Peter and Sheldon, along with me to keep the peace. Some hours later the two lawyers agreed to go on meeting, the eventual upshot of which was that BP agreed to sign a legal document that met most of Amnesty's concerns over seeking compensation for any disruption to the pipeline and other related issues. Such was the success of this outcome that it persuaded the International Finance Corporation, a subsidiary of the World Bank, to add human rights criteria to its major project lending requirements regarding future host government agreements.

Another memorable event that challenged my chairing skills took place in the Autumn of 2004. It was when the United Nations backed 'Norms', a set of explicit behaviours expected of companies regarding human rights, were being heatedly debated. The NGOs on one side were keen to make these as legally binding as possible while governments, companies and, interestingly enough, trade unions were resisting. I was asked if I would chair a meeting of large numbers of representative of the interested parties to debate the issues around the Norms at the UN building in Geneva. It was to be held in a large hall, seating at least 200 people, with full translation facilities. There was to be a large stop watch limiting speakers to a maximum of three minutes with yellow and red warning lights displayed 30 seconds before and at the end respectively. It was my job to keep speakers to time, keep track of hands raised and call the speakers in turn. I also introduced a two hands intervention device for anyone who wanted to respond to a particular point raised by a speaker. Two hand interventions were limited to just one minute. The meeting went very well as a process but it was clear that there was to be no consensus on the future of the Norms.

The following year, the UN announced the appointment of John Ruggie as the Secretary General's special representative on business and human rights. Over the next six years, John, showing immense diplomatic skill and clarity of argument, somehow managed to get all the sides who had disagreed over the norms together to agree a set of guiding principles based on a three-pronged framework:

1. The state has the duty to protect human rights
2. Companies have the responsibility to respect human rights
3. Both have the responsibility to provide access to remedy for victims of business-related abuses.

This 'protect, respect, remedy' formula, clarified by the Guiding Principles, has since become the key global foundation for business and human rights and, in my view, the positioning of human rights at the centre of corporate social responsibility.

During 2007, our relationship, or lack of, with Amnesty's International Secretariat (IS) was coming to a head. Since late 2006, the IS had been developing an overall approach of tighter global leadership of Amnesty as a whole. It was deliberately using the 'new' area of economic relations as a guinea pig, asserting its authority and tying the hands of national sections like AIUK regarding independent action. There was also a clear bias towards exclusively focusing on exposing and campaigning against human rights abuses by companies rather than a more balanced approach which included constructive engagement to improve company performance. This may have been seen by traditionalists as the right thing for Amnesty to do but it went against all the lessons learnt through the work of the UK and other business groups. In this scenario, a semi-autonomous external body of the nature of the UK Business Group, with a strong record of direct engagement with

companies, was seen at best as an irrelevance and at worst as a threat. Hence over the 2006-07 period, we found the Group increasingly marginalized by the simple process of exclusion from day-to-day involvement and requests for work such as company visits or public representations.

The UK Business Group was still a unique gathering of business and human rights expertise. Its potential value to Amnesty UK and to the movement more widely was as great as ever. However, I argued that if for reasons of internal strategy, it was no longer able to function as well as it had the capacity to, it would be better to end it rather than carry on meeting as a forum that essentially talked to itself. Hence, I proposed that the Business group should cease to meet and its members rather reluctantly agreed. I let the Group know that I intended to canvass opinion widely about the need to create a new organisation that could take on the role that Amnesty was unwilling to do.

I am very grateful for the time I spent with Amnesty. It is a most inspiring organisation, full of highly motivated, dedicated people, many of whom are volunteers, working long hours without pay. It may be a rather cumbersome, bureaucratic body to shift, with annual general meetings, run like that of a trade union, complete with composite motions. It is, of course a membership organisation and subject to the constraints as well as the virtues of democracy, unlike Human Rights Watch, which can be much more nimble and opportunistic. Nevertheless Amnesty sticks close to its principles, which are the pursuit of the fulfilment of all human rights in their entirety with no compromise. Perhaps I was wrong to expect Amnesty to engage directly with companies and seek outcomes which would inevitably lead to compromises; second best solutions which I might prefer as a pragmatist but which would offend Amnesty's fundamental principles. The BP case described above was to be an exception. But there was a clear case for a new organisation that could take constructive engagement with companies forward. So was born the idea of the Institute for Human Rights and Business.

The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

In 2002, just two years into my job with the Business Group, I bumped into, quite literally, Chris Avery on the street outside Amnesty's offices. Chris had recently left Amnesty's International Secretariat where he had been a senior researcher. He had become increasingly frustrated by Amnesty's reluctance to target the business sector on human rights issues and had started on his own to build a database of business and human rights incidents and publish it on a website. He was talking to Ulf Carlberg on the pavement outside Amnesty's offices. Ulf was chair of Sweden's business group which was more or less modelled on ours and had just been at one of our meetings. I was ushered into a cafe where over the next hour or so Ulf and I persuaded Chris not to take himself and his fledgling website back to the States but to stay in the UK, where we would help build a formal organisation around him. This

became the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRRC). To begin with, we met in Chris's 30th floor Barbican flat. Our first recruit, Annabel Short, was found a desk with the Business Leaders Forum (part of the PWBLF) and Greg Regaignon worked from his home in the US. Eventually as more staff were needed, Chris found a large room on a third floor in Charlotte Street in the centre of London, near to many good restaurants, informed knowledge of which was one of Chris's passions. I was asked to be chairman and Mary Robinson was approached to become chief patron and chair of a virtual board of international advisors. Although Mary had little day-to-day contact with the centre, her support gave us great strength and her mention of the Centre's work every time she made a speech really helped to put us on the map.

The web site suffered many teething problems but gradually grew in quality of content and efficiency of access to the information it contained. A founding principle was that the website should be a fair and balanced source of information. Stories about company human rights abuses and, less often, positive contributions were to be responsibly sourced and only published having first given the company concerned the right to reply. After a few years it became clear that it had become a unique resource library of information about business and human rights and its weekly update was essential reading for business people with a social responsibility brief as well as human rights professionals and academics. Increasing numbers of small NGOs in developing countries were able to get their voices heard through BHRRRC's web site and memorably this would sometimes lead to dialogue between a small NGO and a company on a pressing human rights issue, which would never have happened otherwise. Interest in the site was further increased when John Ruggie chose it as the main communication medium for the output of his work as the UN Secretary-General's special representative for business and human rights.

Unfortunately, there was no easy way to translate the popularity of the site into funds to support the work. Chris had to spend huge amounts of his time, occasionally with my help, fundraising. Raising finance was hard as Chris was clear that we could not take money from companies or individual employees as this might compromise the perception of our independence in the eyes of a sceptical public, especially human rights NGOs. We had to rely on foundations and government departments. An early visit to the Rausing Foundation, a contact through Ulf, led to a six-year core funding grant which not only provided much needed cash but also persuaded others that we were a sound bet. We went through the bureaucratic process of making BHRRRC a charity, which then added to the responsibility of the board, now officially trustees. Financial solvency was always a worry but fortunately we had a series of excellent treasurers who managed to see us through the difficult times.

Over the next few years, the Charlotte street office became increasingly congested as new appointments were made, added to by a constant stream of interns. The

Resource Centre staff were immensely dedicated, brilliant people who gave everything to the Centre's mission on a pay level about half of what they might have earned elsewhere. Yet staff turnover was very low. Periodically, their tight working space was cleared for the Board meeting, which I chaired. Chris had an inclusive approach to these meetings, encouraging as many members of the team to participate as possible. We always began meetings by hearing from the new recruits and interns. Later as Chris developed a network of researchers in many parts of the world, our meetings would start with hearing from each of them about the amazing work they were doing, sometimes in difficult and even dangerous circumstances. We would often have at least 25 people squeezed into the room and several more far away on the telephone. The technology was rudimentary at the beginning but improved over time, eventually embracing video, thanks to the expertise of Mauricio Lazala, who later became deputy director. Once again I found myself chairing a group of people much more expert than me but it worked. It was my first experience of chairing telephone and later video meetings and I had to learn on the job. I did a lot more later and have been told that I am quite good at it.

Apart from chairing meetings, my main role was to be a shoulder for Chris to lean on and bounce ideas off. He often paid me the compliment of saying that I was the ideal chair because I let him get on with running the show, I had no agenda of my own to peddle, just the interests of the organisation – and I was always there when needed. Perhaps those are essential ingredients of being a competent chair. In 2013, after eleven years in charge, Chris Avery decided to move on and we had the difficult job of replacing the founding director who had done so much to get the Centre established and was widely respected around the world. We were fortunate to attract a strong short list of candidates and, amongst them, Phil Bloomer, from Oxfam, was the outstanding choice. He has taken the organisation to a new level, with increased focus on promoting awareness of critical human rights issues for companies. I eventually resigned my chairmanship two years later in 2015.

The Institute for Human Rights and Business

The inspirational Mary Robinson became a great champion of the Centre, never forgetting to sing its praises in every speech she gave on business and human rights. I got to know her quite well. So it was that early in 2007 she and I sat down in a corner of the Resource Centre's one room office in Charlotte Street to discuss an idea I had for creating a sister business and human rights organisation. I had already talked to Chris about it and he had decided that it was not appropriate to expand the Centre in this new direction at this still early stage in the Centre's development. The idea had arisen out of a growing frustration within the Business Group about its lack of influence on Amnesty and also a *cri de coeur* from some leading business people that their attempts to do the right thing regarding human rights were not getting any positive recognition or support. I tried the idea out on Mary that we needed to create a new organisation that was prepared to research key business

and human rights issues and work with companies on how they should best face up to them. Mary agreed, as long as I did all the work, to become the first chair of what would become the Advisory Board of the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB).

I spent much of 2007 canvassing opinion and speaking at events about the idea. I had tentatively raised the concept of establishing an Institute at the Business and Human Rights Tools Forum in Zurich in September 2006, an event hosted by Klaus Leisinger from Novartis. Following that, I formed a small Ad-hoc Steering Group and an initial proposal paper was written and circulated to key stakeholders for initial reaction. The concept was presented again at the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre seminar in December 2006. The first multi-stakeholder consultation took place in London on 26 June 2007. Progress from the initial consultation was reported to the Global Compact Working Group on Business and Human Rights, chaired by Mary Robinson, on 6 July and 14 September 2007 and adopted as part of its ongoing agenda. Further progress was reported at the next multi-stakeholder event 'Business and Human Rights Tools Forum' in Zurich on 24 September 2007. Following that, the steering group agreed that there was significant support for the concept of an Institute and that we should create a process to develop the idea further and make it happen.

I had already had a long conversation with John Morrison about the possibility of him leading the new organisation. John had previously worked with Anita Roddick at the Body Shop, he was a member of the Amnesty Business Group and was now managing the Business Leaders in Human Rights (BLIHR) initiative in a freelance capacity. He was positive about the idea and we managed to raise sufficient funds to pay for him and his assistant, Sam Hoskins, to work for one day a week to direct and manage a series of further consultation and workshop trialling which took place during 2008. By September, it was clear that a new organisation was needed and that John was probably the best person to lead it. He and Salil Trepathi were appointed on a three days a week basis as acting director and research director respectively. Scott Jerbi, a longstanding assistant to Mary Robinson and who was at the time working with her 'Realising Rights' initiative, was also seconded for a day a week. The Institute was formally launched at the International Seminar on Business and Human rights in Paris on 4 December, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With Mary's help, John and I assembled an impressive Advisory Board which met for the first time on 19 February 2009. Meanwhile I had the job of direct oversight of the Institute's activities on behalf of the Board, with the help of what eventually became the board of trustees. The appointments of director and research director had to be done properly so we drew up rough job descriptions, advertised the posts and set up a small interviewing panel. After due process, it was unanimously agreed that John and Salil were the outstanding candidates and they were duly appointed.

John bravely took on his role on condition that he was able to raise the necessary start-up funds, including his own salary. Following Salil's appointment, the interviewing panel was slightly worried that John and Salil on their own might wander off into the realms of blue sky thinking and we needed to appoint someone level headed and able to keep them well grounded. Frances House had interviewed strongly alongside Salil and the Panel felt she would be ideal for the job. I met with John shortly afterwards at Euston station and persuaded him that we needed Frances. Fortunately he agreed, even though this would mean having to raise even more money. I then rang Frances, who agreed to take on an as yet only vaguely defined managerial role. It proved to be a very wise appointment as later she became Financial Director, a job at which she excelled.

Unlike the Resource Centre, the Institute was free to raise money from companies but raising money is never easy and John found himself spending a huge proportion of his time fundraising, from companies, national governments and foundations. For the original trustees, Bjorn Edland, Bennett Freeman, Caroline Rees and myself, meeting monthly by telephone, finance was our main concern, as it remained throughout the next eight years. John's ability to raise funds was amazing but it was hard to keep pace with the growth of activity, recruitment and therefore turnover. Over the next few years, the Institute gradually established itself as a much-valued 'Think and Do' tank. Leading edge papers were written on issues such as land and water rights and doing business in conflict areas, numerous contributions were made to conferences and several were initiated and led by the Institute. Three centres to promote responsible business were established in Myanmar (Burma), Colombia and East Africa (Kenya). A ground-breaking sector-wide impact assessment (SWIA) was carried out in Myanmar on the oil and gas sector. I was able to see some of this work, done under the impressive leadership of Vicky Bowman, first hand when I visited in 2014. Meanwhile, further work was being done on the human rights issues for business in, among other sectors, mining, finance and the preparation for and staging of mega sporting events.

John Morrison proved to be a great leader, full of ideas and an inspirational speaker at conferences. He assembled a strong, dedicated team around him, including a number of interns and people on specific research contracts. The trustees also grew in strength as they became more experienced and confident. We held regular monthly telephone meetings and twice a year met in person along with senior staff. This provided John and the team with a useful reporting discipline as well as a body they could turn to for advice and support. We all became good friends but I like to think that we remained capable of asking the hard questions and insisting on financial soundness.

During 2017, my last year as chair of trustees, the Institute really came of age. Along with the continuing success of the Myanmar and Colombian centres, sadly the Kenyan one less so, two initiatives epitomised this. The first was the Sporting Chance

conference held in Geneva and chaired by Mary Robinson. There were two major human rights themes: treatment of migrant workers in stadia and infrastructure construction in preparation of mega sporting events; and the treatment of women in sports activity and attendance at events, especially in the Middle East. The Institute provided the organisation and a wide range of excellent background papers. IHRB and Mary's convening power attracted key senior figures from the IOC, FIFA, Japan (Winter Olympics), Qatar (World Cup), companies and leading women sports campaigners. The outcome of the conference was a commitment by the leaders present to establish a new Centre for Sport and Human Rights in 2018 and a determination to make more use of the power of collective action. It was clear from many of the contributions that the Institute was now regarded as a vital player in bringing these issues to public attention and helping to progress action. As chair of trustees, I privately and rather ruefully reflected on how difficult it still was to secure funding for an organisation that everyone regarded as so important. However, the success of the event, of which I was largely just an observer, gave me a great sense of satisfaction.

The second initiative was the creation of a 'Circle of Innovators', representatives from leading companies plus a few from governments and leading NGOs, who met first in May in London and again in December in New York. The idea is to enable companies in particular to share experiences and ideas about managing their impact on human rights and to identify new issues – as well as hopefully get them to support IHRB financially. At the same time, the discussion will help shape IHRB's future work priorities. The Institute provided the background papers, the organisation and facilitation of these one day seminars, which produced much leading edge discussion. For instance, the New York event examined the role of companies at a time of serious lack of government leadership on human rights issues, including one issue in particular, Big Data. There is increasing concern about how the interconnectedness of electronic data is being used to manipulate behaviour by both companies and governments. Behaviour by the Chinese government was described as 'beyond Orwellian'. Everyone left the seminar much better informed and probably a little alarmed. I was delighted to observe the Institute providing exactly the contribution I had envisaged when we first mooted the idea of a new business and human rights organisation some ten years earlier.

As with BHRRC, the permanent and contract staff of IHRB are a brilliant, enthusiastic, dedicated group of people who seem to work all hours available and enjoy every minute. It is a great source of pride and satisfaction that during the last part of my career I have been able to help create these two amazing social enterprises and about 40 important, creative jobs that support their work.



Teaching ENPC's IMBA programme in Tokyo



A 'mixed' MBA discussion group in Abu Dhabi



2004 – Amnesty Economic Advisory Group meeting at our house in Harpenden, including International Secretariat Director, Irene Khan (front centre), and Salil Tripathi (second from left)



2005 – Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) team members and trustees, including Peter Frankental and Chris Avery (front centre), Mauricio Lazala (back left) and Ulf Karlberg (back, third from left)



2005 – Charing the BHRRC committee, with Melvin Coleman speaking, John Elkington and Chris Avery (first and second on the left)



2014 – Visiting IHRB's Myanmar project with Vicky Bowman (second from the right)



2017 – Chairing a meeting of the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) with John Morrison and Frances House



December 2017 – With John Ruggie at the IHRB Circle of Innovators event in New York

5: Some concluding thoughts

During these last few years I have come to understand that the long running and often unhelpful debate about the definition of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has finally been resolved. It is now really all about business and human rights.

Back in 1977, when all this started for me and in many ways so did the development of modern ideas of CSR, the issue in the UK was the need for industry to be better understood. Good Industrial performance, particularly manufacturing, was regarded as key to our future wellbeing but seen, especially in education, as somehow less worthy than careers in the public sector and the professions. There was a chronic shortage of engineers then as there still is today. When I was recruited by BP to help do something about this, it gradually became clear to me that the problem was one of lack of mutual understanding. Industry and education were two separate cultures that spoke different languages and were like ships passing each other in the night. What was needed was to get people from industry and education talking to each other, developing mutual respect and, indeed, influencing each other's behaviour. Industry clearly needed the help of education if it was going to improve its image, as somewhat less obviously did education need the help of industry. However, the tendency of business people to regard teachers as sandal-wearing lefties who spent half the year on holiday didn't help. Also unhelpful was the attitude of many teachers that business people were soulless money makers and exploiters of workers and the environment.

The fact was that both sides needed each other. Industry needed to improve its image in education and create a wider understanding of general employability skills which it wanted schools to nurture. Schools, the majority of which were now all ability, comprehensives, also needed to improve their image, as well as needing to understand industry and the world of work better so that they could improve this aspect of their preparation of pupils for the future. To realise this mutual need, schools and industry needed to get to know each other, work together on joint projects and begin to influence each other's perspectives.

It was this insight that led me away from the idea of corporate philanthropy which then dominated most people's thinking about how companies should support their communities. In the UK, there was Business in the Community (BITC) with its 'Percent Club', urging companies to give one percent of their profits to good causes and providing insight days for business leaders to visit social projects which they could support. Meanwhile, in the United States the expectation on companies to make large charitable contributions was a long established tradition, to the extent of almost being a social tax, subject to strong local peer pressure. I instinctively felt

uncomfortable about this. From a straightforward shareholder value perspective I felt it was wrong for business leaders to give away company money to satisfy their own egos and standing amongst their peers without any consideration of whether the money was being effectively used or how the company could benefit. I had no problem with the business leaders being philanthropic with their own money, either while working or after they had retired. However, giving away company money without consideration of purpose, both in terms of project outcomes and returns to the company was wrong. I remember trying to explain this point of view to an American audience around 1990 and being very unpopular.

Corporate spending on community projects, including education, should be subject to the same tough criteria that are applied to internal investment decisions. The process should involve members of the community as well as members of the company. Both sides should be clear about the objectives of the project, how progress would be monitored and the desired outcomes to both parties. In my experience, a joint project which involves the working together with mutual respect of company and community people in pursuit of well understood win-win outcomes is much more likely to be successful than one of perceived one-way largesse from a company. Many teachers and education officials whom I met were deeply suspicious of receiving grants from BP until they saw it as a joint enterprise into which both sides contributed time as well as money. Matched giving schemes which encourage employees to make contributions to the communities in which they live as well as work are examples of how this can work well on an individual basis.

Throughout the 1980s, this was largely what CSR was thought to be about. Leading companies had head office teams, like mine, with quite large budgets to spend on good things that helped gain the company a positive reputation and, in the case of potentially environmentally dangerous companies, like BP, its licence to operate in the community. In BP's case, the central team increasingly worked with local sites to ensure that funds from head office supported the building of local community relationships. As head of the BP's Community affairs in the UK and with an international brief to network those responsible for our community relationships around the world, this was my job. However, I was increasingly aware that it was not enough. CSR could not just be about community relationships and investing in mutually beneficial social projects. The social responsibility of a company is much more than that. It is to understand and manage responsibly all its impacts on its local communities and society generally; everything from paying taxes where the business is done, paying bills on time, treating workers properly, having active non-discriminatory policies and practices, managing environmental impact, as well as working with all stakeholders on pre-investment decisions, then in the stages of construction and running of sites and during any withdrawal or closure. In other words, CSR is part of the whole business process.

Unfortunately, attempts to develop this holistic view of CSR in the late 1990s were constantly thwarted by traditional ideas of corporate philanthropy and companies 'giving back' some of their profits to support good community causes, however well managed. Those of us who wanted to advance this thinking tried phrases like 'Corporate Citizenship' and 'Corporate Responsibility' (dropping the 'S' from CSR), but to little avail. The European Union supported the project 'CSR Europe', which essentially saw CSR as a voluntary activity. Meanwhile, the tradition of corporate philanthropy in the States continued unabated. It was also ironic that after I left BP, the newly appointed American PR manager in the company's London head office reinstated the central charity budget.

When I became actively involved in business and human rights, I initially saw this as a subset of CSR and indeed taught it as such when I designed my 30-hour MBA course. It is only recently that I have come to understand that business and human rights actually covers the whole spectrum of a company's responsibilities to society. All aspects of a company's impact on society, from its impact on the environment to how it treats its employees and local communities are essentially human rights issues. So those who wish to hold onto their limited ideas of CSR can be left to do so. Limited concepts of CSR are in effect just subsets of business and human rights, which should now be considered as the umbrella under which all company social responsibilities are viewed.

The big question remains, however: will pressures on companies to understand and manage effectively their human rights responsibilities, defined in this broadest sense, ever be sufficient to help them become fully contributing and acceptable members of society? Amnesty and many other NGOs are highly sceptical of attempts to persuade companies voluntarily to behave responsibly by a mixture of direct engagement and reputation pressure. They campaign for changes in the law. In principle they are right; company behaviour should be regulated by law in the interests of the wider community. But what law? National law can be effective, as in the UK's 'Foreign corrupt practices act', but has limited impact internationally if other leading countries fail to apply similar laws. International law is only effective if it is backed up by national law, but for reasons of national competitiveness and relentless pressure lobbying on governments by international companies this rarely happens.

At the time of writing, there does seem to be momentous change in the air. Along with some of the more potentially damaging aspects of populist ideas and resentment with the political status quo, fuelled through social media, there are serious questions being asked. Is globalisation really benefitting most people? Should large international companies be allowed to operate without restriction over national boundaries, choosing where, if at all, they pay their taxes and answer to politicians? As we enjoy apparently free access to amazing new forms of communication and information, for how long are we prepared to tolerate the

increasing levels of manipulation of our behaviour and opinions by the internet companies, which is the real cost we are paying?

It is very much in the interests of most large companies to promote free movement of goods, services and finance globally. The election of Donald Trump, Britain's vote for Brexit, the rise in youth support for Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn, and the use and manipulation of social media in achieving these results, must create alarm signals for companies planning their long term strategies. How will they respond? Will they, belatedly, come to realise that their long term survival relies on their achieving a closer social contract with society – a licence to operate in a way that combines cost efficient working for them and full benefit for society? Ever the optimist, my hope is that the likes of BHRRC and IHRB can play a significant part in helping achieve such a win-win outcome.

Over the last 50 years I have worked in the public sector, the private business sector and the non-governmental, not for profit sector. I have come to see myself as a boundary worker, bridging the boundaries between industry and schools and later between industry and the community more widely. Having some experience of both sides as it were, I have done my best to help what are often different cultures to understand each other better and, hopefully, realise their common goals. The Institute for Human Rights and Business and the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre are in effect also boundary organisations. Although firm and passionate proponents of human rights, these institutions understand the business world and are prepared to seek pragmatic ways forward while continually pushing for further improvement.

IHRB has done me the great honour of appointing me one of its three patrons, alongside Mary Robinson and John Ruggie; what illustrious company. I am hopeful that, with Mary's and John's continuing strong influence, Human Rights will increasingly take centre stage in business's understanding of its internal operational responsibilities as well as its responsibility to engage actively with pressing social issues. I am confident that BHRRC and IHRB will be key players in supporting this process. If I can still continue to make a small contribution to this, then I will be more than happy to do so.



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