

I had heard during a teaching assignment in the School of Management of Hatfield Polytechnic that two Senior Lecturer appointments had been created. I applied and was interviewed on 28th October 1970. The interview was at Hatfield at 2 p.m. and lasted for half an hour. The Chairman of the Panel was Norman Lindop. Peter Gray Lucas, Head of the Management Centre, was present together with one or two others. The interview went quite well and I was told straight away that I would be offered the appointment.

I spent the next two months writing a Report to the Home Secretary, outlining my experiences which I delivered by hand to the Home Office on 15th January 1971. I then signed the contract of employment with Hertfordshire County Council and joined Hatfield Polytechnic.

OPEN TO INFLUENCE

It might be thought that my job as a Senior Lecturer at a Polytechnic would be entirely mundane and completely devoid of the kind of interference I had experienced over the previous decade. In fact, the reverse was true. My job had nothing to do with teaching undergraduates but was solely to act as management tutor to mature students in Industry, Commerce, and various branches of the Public Services. As will be seen, this left my situation wide open to external influence. Also, I knew from before the start that there would be some unusual features of my presence in Hatfield Polytechnic for while completing the formalities to taking up my appointment I had been told by the Registrar, Ted Roberts, that the Directorate had been briefed about me by the Police. I had little doubt that a few Officers and members of the County Council had been similarly briefed.

I have no idea of the details of the Police briefings on my taking the Hatfield Polytechnic post but apparently they were wholly favourable. There were as it happens two Police Inspectors on a Diploma in Management Studies (DMS) course when I arrived at the Management School. I kept the little I had to do with them on a strictly tutor/student footing. I maintained the same role when I visited Gordon Chambers, a civilian training officer at Constabulary H.Q., in connection with a Senior Management Development (SMD) course I was designing.

Within days of taking up my duties at Bayfordbury I met Norman Lindop, Director of the Polytechnic, in the corridor there. He was very welcoming and I was told by a colleague that he had come to Bayfordbury to show a high-level flag of interest in me personally.

Next was a visit to me at their request by two people named Hall of the Management Services Department of the County Council who expressed great interest in a joint endeavour.

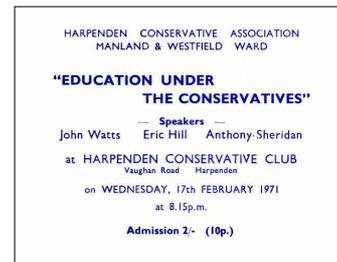
What I had not expected was an almost constant Ministry of Defence presence at the School, namely serving Officers of the Armed Forces and the Security Service on 6-week Part 1 DMS courses. Some of the communications from them were very interesting. For example, a serving Army Officer attending one of my MOD course sessions came up to me afterwards and asked if he could obtain a grant. Something in his manner, coupled to the fact that I was not his personal tutor or in any way the person to ask, gave me the impression that his request was not genuine but was an allusion to my conversation with McCauley about a Russian named Grant. Then there was the open statement by an MOD-sponsored course member in an Introduction session that he was from the security service. There were two or three such pre-demobilisation students, one of whom went further and said he was an MI5 communications officer, looking after their electronic equipment -rather as Peter Wright had before he moved upwards in the Security Service. Other than revealing themselves as members of an organisation which was then supposed not to exist, but with which I had been in contact at top level, I gleaned no information whatsoever about their occupation, nor did I seek to do so. Indeed the only glimpse behind the scenes I obtained from all the security/intelligence services people sponsored by the MOD was from an Army Intelligence man some ten years later, who told me there was a short section in their handbook on Veiled Communication. Apparently the section did little more than warn the officers to be watchful for it.

In due course I learned that the Head of the Management School had worked on ciphers at a forerunner of GCHQ and still had connections with the secret services. Then a newly-recruited colleague said he had previously been travelling the world for the Intelligence Service - he had married a Russian girl, which tended to confirm his story.

CONSERVATIVE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Very soon after I joined Hatfield Polytechnic there were several quite significant developments.

First, I received a pressing invitation to attend a Harpenden Conservative Association meeting entitled "Education under the Conservatives". It was held under the auspices of the very Ward in which I lived. In my covering letter to Reggie Maudling I had countered any disinformation about my political views by describing myself as a "consistently marginal Conservative" and I would not be surprised if this is what led to the invitation. I was after all now in Education myself.



One of the speakers, John Watts, was from the Conservative Central Office. Anthony Sheradin, the principal speaker, was the Deputy Chairman of the County Education Committee, which had confirmed my appointment to the Polytechnic post. I very much liked his flexible, undogmatic approach to Education. Something else I found particularly interesting was that he was a senior manager of an instrument company. I greatly enjoyed the occasion and as a result I attended meetings of a local CPC, in which there were discussions on topics set out in leaflets issued by Central Office. A year later I was invited to a meeting on Education at the Conservative Office, St. Albans, and asked to chair a group which included Anthony Sheradin, who by this time was Chairman of the County Education Committee and thus in effect my local top-level 'boss'. This meeting also had Central Office involvement.

Also within weeks of my joining the Management School, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the Secretary of State for Education, announced that up to 12 "regional centres of management education" were to be established, generally in or associated with a polytechnic. Within days of her announcement, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the Management School and made it clear they would support its becoming one of the new Regional Centres. As with other favourable developments, the Head of the Management School put the kybosh on this Government initiative.

Soon afterwards it was announced that Lord Snow would be opening Hatfield Polytechnic's new Library building and had agreed to become the Polytechnic's Visitor. Given the past history of my 'encounters' with Lord (C.P.) Snow I had good reason to wonder if his appearance on the Hatfield Polytechnic scene was linked to my taking up a post there. He was probably by then no longer a Director of English Electric but was probably a Civil Service Commissioner. I do not think Lord Snow could have done anything for me as Poly Visitor.

MANAGEMENT SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Within the Management School I received further confirmation of the behind-the-scenes influences and favours in Industry, corresponding to the old boy networking in Government and the Establishment. The links between the top managements of large companies - even competitors - are a source of amazement to those who have not worked at that level.

My three professional specialities were Measurement, Design and Management. I had dropped the measuring instrument side but was keen to apply the basic approaches of Measurement to Management. The Design side had been severely curtailed in the IEE but I maintained a strong interest, especially in the evolution of products within industrial companies. In the field of Management per se I had something to contribute to general management and had become particularly well-versed in the behavioural aspects.

For some time after I joined, the Head of School's line was that I should not progress in the Management School nor communicate with anyone in other parts of the Polytechnic. Conversely, in the early days, the longest-serving Principal Lecturer who was de facto his deputy, encouraged my involvement in the administrative side of the Polytechnic. Sometimes the two worked against each other, as for example when by invitation of the Deputy I attended a meeting on the main Hatfield campus. On hearing of this the Head instructed me not to attend further meetings and appointed a recent junior recruit to take over all internal and external administrative matters. I have no doubt this was a deliberate action to block me from progressing in Education Management. There were also some cryptic rumblings by the Head about CCL, where he said his son had worked.

The earliest task I was given by the Head of School, other than teaching on courses, was to organise a cocktail party Reception for the Press at the Oxford and Cambridge Club. I was instructed to liaise with the Deputy County Education Officer about getting a Press Release sent out. The Reception turned out to be a gathering of Management School staff and friends (or in my case a relative - my Home Office brother, John) invited at short notice to make up numbers. I do not think any Press representative attended.

The Deputy Head was instrumental in getting the School moved from Bayfordbury, near Hertford, to Birklands, which was near Marconi Instruments of St. Albans, the firm I had resigned from 5 years before. He also put together a course at short notice for Hawker Siddeley Aviation (HSA) of Hatfield and I was asked to take sessions on Responsibilities of a Manager and Leadership. The purpose of the course was to integrate Design and Production, a topic on which I had lectured to IEE Centres. It was of 6 days duration and apparently had first been mooted as a Design course.

In May 1971 I discussed management courses with Brian Lusher, the newly appointed Management Development Executive of Pye of Cambridge, who hereafter I shall refer to as Pye Trainer. There was some sort of rivalry between Pye and HSA because the Hatfield company immediately commissioned from me a special course for its senior managers at the best hotel locally, Sopwell House. But Pye Trainer prevailed for after asking permission of HSA (as it was put to me) he commissioned a series of 6-day courses called Management in Action (MIA), of which he and I were joint managers. Thus began another saga, which included further attempts to get me back to Cambridge.

BIRKLANDS, ST. ALBANS

The move from Bayfordbury to Birklands took place in September 1971. I was particularly intrigued to note that on the day of transfer there was already a board up outside saying that Birklands was the Management and Design annexe of Hatfield Polytechnic. The Design side referred to Drawing Office facilities for engineering undergraduates. Although this interpretation of Design was far more limited than the one I had in mind it was strange that Birklands now reflected my two main areas of professional interest.

PYE

On 15th September I received from Pye 6 massive Trainers' Manuals for the MIA course. These had been prepared by Pye Trainer and incorporated material I had supplied. I was particularly interested to note that my session on Leadership was associated with Exercise 6 and my other main contribution was labelled Exercise 10. The Manuals were circulated among the nine Birklands staff teaching on the course.

The first MIA course for Pye of Cambridge started on Sunday 3rd October. The residential accommodation was at a local Hotel, at which the Introduction session and Dinner took place. All sessions and most meals after Sunday evenings were at Birklands.

It was during the second MIA course that Pye Trainer started a drip-feed of hints. For example he said, cryptically, that H. Leavitt and E. Schein were flying over from the States to give Pye the benefit of their expertise, Pye having paid them a retainer. I had quoted the writings of Leavitt and Schein in my evidence to the Privacy Enquiry and in my Report to the Home Secretary. On another occasion Pye Trainer told me he had close connections with the Home Office. He also told a colleague that he was associated with a Government Think Tank.

At one time Pye Trainer suggested I should join Pye as his assistant, adding that Peter Threlfall, Pye Group's Managing Director, had asked if I was worth employing and Pye Trainer said he had replied that I was. It was at this time that Pye Trainer made an offensive personal remark about the dilapidated state of my car, which I recognised later as a 'stick' to make the 'carrot' of getting a more lucrative job as his subordinate more acceptable. I regarded this as yet another attempt to get me back to Cambridge - I had at great cost resisted the Cambridge Consultants campaign and I was not going to fall for this one. Pye Trainer later surprised me by apologising for suggesting that I should work for him.

Then, after a meeting at Pye Trainer's Cambridge home he took me to lunch at a hotel at St. Ives near Cambridge - he said he had to make 6 phone calls to book a table. He added that to get to the hotel we had to go past AIM Electronics! This was the tiny company offshoot of Cambridge Consultants of which I had been offered and had declined the chairmanship. Later, Pye Trainer said that Lord Thorneycroft (Chairman of Pye) wished to visit the School - he wished to talk to its Head and I was to be around. Pye Trainer went on to say that Lord Thorneycroft was well-connected in Conservative circles and that it would do me a lot of good in the

Party. When, later, I asked when Lord Thorneycroft would be visiting the course I received the extraordinary response that Lord T had been told that Hatfield Polytechnic wished to see him. Pye Trainer also made a remark linking F.E. Jones (Managing Director of Mullard Ltd, who I knew) with the Prime Minister, which I did not understand.

Pye Trainer also said that one of the directors of Philips, which owned Pye, had visited an MIA course during my absence and that the President of Philips wished to visit Birklands. He added that the Philips family were very anti-communist and supported those who stood out against them. The remarks about Philips were particularly interesting. Did Philips have its own submerged 'law and order' organisation or special relationship with the Government as had Marconi? I first thought of this when my Home Office brother quite unexpectedly presented me with a box of Philips screws.

Then Pye Trainer offered to get the Head of the School out and me into his place - he said "we have" two men on the Council who would use their influence to this effect. I declined the offer. It occurred to me after this particular exchange that the request for me to be around when Lord Thorneycroft visited to see the Head might be interpreted as a hint along the same lines. In fact the offer triggered memories of when Ray Burnett some seven years earlier said he and another member of the Governing Body, John Coales, would get me the job of Principal of Hatfield College. I had declined that offer likewise. At another time Pye Trainer said complainingly "if people do not make it clear what they want, how can anything be fixed up for them?".

Meanwhile Management School colleagues teaching on the MIA courses were getting adverse feedback from course members. The Head and his Deputy and four others were one by one pronounced unsatisfactory and on Pye Trainer's demand were removed from the course. The dissemination of the feedback by Pye Trainer and their removal greatly upset colleagues. By the end of the 8th MIA course (which was for senior managers) only three were left, of which I was one. Then, behind my back, the Head of School went to the other two and suggested they do a deal with Pye Trainer to provide their services on a private basis. The net result of the Head of School's clandestine action was that Pye Trainer wrote me two letters, one official and the other personal (a particular kind of Direct/Indirect communication) the first withdrawing the courses and the second praising me for my efforts. At a personal level, this combination of treachery and greed on the part of my colleagues was a 'ghost' which could not be entirely 'busted' in future relationships. Whatever the intention may have been, the overall effect was that Pye Trainer had come in, been around for a year, dropped a lot of hints and then departed leaving behind a series of wrecked relationships.

CHURCH & POLYTECHNIC

In the meantime there had been another interesting Church development when Rev. Michael West, Industrial Chaplain of the Diocese of St. Albans, came to see me at Birklands to discuss the possibility of providing courses for clergy at the School of Management. The idea was that if they had more understanding of Industry they would be able to cope better with pastoral problems arising from industrial 'casualties' among their parishioners. As a result a course entitled 'Industry Today' started on 13th January 1972. I think it ran for a ½-day a month for five or six months. I taught on about half the sessions.

On the first ½-day of the course I had to take a colleague's session at very short notice and I used it to say something about my departure from M.I. to the clergy. It was both rewarding and frustrating for they agreed with what I was able to tell them but I knew that was only a simplified fraction of the whole story.

In November 1971, Rev. Dr. Tolley addressed a meeting at Hatfield on Christianity and the Polytechnics. This was particularly interesting because George Tolley was Director of Sheffield Polytechnic as well as Curate in a Parish Church. It crossed my mind that a role model was being offered to me - and with George Bosworth now a Director of a Polytechnic but formerly Group Personnel Director of English Electric and knowing of my involvement with the Church, it was easy to see how such a man-made hint could be organised.

JOB CHANGE?

Just before Christmas 1972 that there was a telephone call to my home from a Lord Hall, who said he was with a headhunting agency. He said he had been looking through "Who's Who in Engineering" and had come across my very interesting entry. He asked if I knew of anyone who might be interested in an appointment as Director of Engineering in a major group of companies at a salary of £10,000 to £14,000 per annum. The salary was about 4 times what I was getting as a senior lecturer. I did not respond as I considered the Vulnerability To Manipulation index too high. On whose behalf was Lord Hall acting?

JOB OPPORTUNITY?

Also in May 1973, another higher-paid job was dangled before me. A Visiting Lecturer I was using on a DMS course, who worked for Personnel Administration Ltd. (PA), was very keen for me to visit PA's Management School at Sundridge Park, persistently asking me to phone and make arrangements for a visit. On one occasion he puzzled me by adding something about a Mansion and a Director. Eventually I agreed to go, to explore with someone I shall call PA Trainer the possibility of having a TV tape or film made for use in a management exercise I had devised. When I arrived I found I was given V.I.P. treatment. I first saw PA Trainer and then I was given the company of a very attractive young woman in being shown over the Management Centre. Next, I was taken to see the Director, with whom I chatted over a drink or two. It was then back to PA Trainer, who surprised me by describing what was needed in the Director of Sundridge Park, referred to a Trust arrangement in respect of the Director appointment and said the Director's signature was required for the distribution of video tapes. I was shown a MONEY film (with the Director in it) and then one about Appraisal Interviewing. I did not get in touch with PA again - clearly I had been targeted but I judged the VTM Index to be too high. But who was behind the approach?

RETURN TO IEE

In November 1973 I renewed contact with the "learned society" side of the IEE by attending a lecture at the IEE, Savoy Place, by Dr. Alex A. Copisarow. He had been with McKinsey, the consultancy which, I had been informed in 1965, had identified me with the Office of Chairman in the English Electric Group. A year or so later, while I had been acting as consultant to CCL, that Company had some correspondence with him. Now, apparently, he was a senior civil servant with the Ministry of Technology. The title of his lecture - "Is the Management Challenge Too Much for Electrical Engineers?" - was of great interest to me. Like me, he had a 'two cultures' approach and from then on I used a reprint of his lecture in certain of my Management sessions.

In January 1974 I attended an IEE Symposium on the Electronics Industry and Higher Education at the Royal Holloway College. In conversation between sessions, I was surprised and rather put out by a comment by one of the speakers, Professor W.E.J. Farvis, that I was destined for a political career - someone had decided I would go into politics and evidently the Professor had not queried the human rights issues but just gone along with it. He had been a member of the IEE Committee of Enquiry back in 1970/71. To make matters worse there was a follow-up remark by someone taking part in the conversation, to the effect that if Prof. Farvis said I was to be a politician that was what would happen. I was also intrigued by a conversation I overheard, as may have been intended, to the effect that another of the contributors, who had been involved in my departure from M.I., was being protected in his lecturing job by a clandestine group.

DIVERSION?

September 1974 had seen the start of another activity, namely the Inauguration of a Community Health Council, a new statutory body covering the Districts of St. Albans and Dacorum (Hemel Hempstead). On 17th October the CHC held its first 'proper' meeting and I was elected Chairman. There followed an intensive 'leisure-time' period of finding premises, recruiting staff, and determining organisation while at the same time meeting many health professionals and getting to grips with problems in the delivery of health care from the point of view of the public at large and particularly the patients.

In the afternoon preceding my election as CHC Chairman, I was interviewed for promotion to Principal Lecturer at Hatfield Polytechnic. The interviewing panel was chaired by Norman Bloomer, the new Deputy Director. There was a delay in announcing the result and when a few days later the Head of School wrote saying who had been appointed (it wasn't me) he said that those not appointed must seek status outside the Polytechnic. There was something suspicious about this and I wondered if the delay was due to seeing how I fared in the CHC election.

SUMMARY

In the four years since I had joined Hatfield Polytechnic there had been numerous developments. Some were clearly contrived, others possibly so; some were natural developments, others were sheer coincidence. But which were which? And from which human organisations did the contrived happenings originate? Also, were the coincidental events God-made? There were many, many issues about which to pray for guidance.

Harold Beck
August 2015