FAREWELL PRESENTATION TO MR AND MRS SHOCK

In our August edition we reported briefly on the party on 30 June at which a presentation was made to Mr & Mrs Shock. Speeches were given by Sir Robert Kilpatrick, the Chairman of Council, and Mr Shock. We print below part of Dr Bowder's speech, and Mr Shock's response.

Speech by Dr K W Bowder

Vice-Chancellor, I have been with you once or twice already to go through what I called the mini obituaries; and here we are, doing it again. But there is a difference on this occasion. There is something tangible about this affair, and it is delightful that we should have as a presentation, though all too little as a measure of our esteem, the silver tea set you see on the table. Mind you, this has not been without its mystery, because when the likely form of this afternoon's proceedings was first discussed, I understood you were going to be given a desk. Whether you did not like the table which somebody found, or the Dean of Medicine, with his well known persuasion, has rustled up more of the necessary so that we could rise to that delightful silver, I don't know. But I do hope that you will not only treasure it, but will also like and love it - as indeed, we have come to like and love both you and Dorothy.

Tangibility is a very appropriate topic on this occasion in view of the great contribution you have made to this University. We now have a Treasurer who is steeped in the mysteries of finance, not least in its ultimate mysteries in South America. Even he has had to stand aside in an attitude of hushed respect to observe the tangible results of your work, and the significant extensions which have taken place, notwithstanding the near disastrous state of our accounts. I have never seen anyone make more progress out of a deficit than you, Maurice, and Oxford's gain can only be Leicester's loss. Many a Yuppie would tremble in his Italian shoes if he thought that you were going to come and stand alongside him.

In Oadby we have a Sports Hall which has already become a feature of local veneration. The residents have not only welcomed it, they think it is a building of great architectural merit. You have scored bonus points to gain that accolade in such a short time. There are also the Fraser Noble Building and the Biocentre, very tangible marks of your passage through Leicester. A lesser man would have shrunk from undertaking the awesome task of producing those buildings at a time of real adversity.

But, of course, it is not only in the realms of bricks and mortar that you enhance your reputation in the eyes of a person such as me, a mere layman. Whenever I come here I am hushed before the senior academics and their tenacity in retaining their academic distinctions, rights and privileges. It is a brave man who tries to ascertain what they are, a braver man who seeks to define them, and an even more inveterately brave man who will want to change them. But you, Maurice, on arriving here, ploughed into the Senior Common Room and promptly set about reorganising its bar. That is no mean achievement.

Outside, too, you have distinguished yourself again by making such a valuable contribution to bringing - hackneyed phrases - the town nearer to the gown. You have done much to introduce people who have money to spend on research at the University, and have made the town aware of the existence of the University and of the contribution which a University can make to the everyday life and prosperity of this great industrial city.

In the course of my sojourn in local government I meet many people, most of whom are articulate. But you are outstanding for being an articulate and a civilised man. There is not much civilisation in local government. Among my colleagues there are some who are pleasant; there are others whom I need not dilate upon now; but you, Maurice, are not only articulate but an extraordinarily pleasant fellow to get on with. One does not disagree with Maurice out of fear of upsetting him, one just agrees with him because one rather feels one wants to. That is a remarkable tribute to any man. One characteristic
which, outside this building, is conspicuous by its absence is the ability of people to
express themselves in a few words, and to convey a meaning precisely. You, Maurice, have
been described to me as a man who is articulate, pleasant and precise. Coming here from
the outside I have enjoyed my time with you extraordinarily. I share with the others
here today the disappointment at your leaving us.

As you go we hope that you will accept from the University this silver tea set. It is
all too small a token of our esteem for you. But as you and Dorothy put aside the tea
bags - God forbid that a tea bag should ever go inside that pot - and make good honest
straightforward tea for the benefit of yourselves and your guests, please think of us
sometimes, as we shall be thinking of you at all times.

Reply by Maurice Shock

You probably, I think, all know Dr Johnson's famous remark that in lapidary inscriptions
no man is on oath; and you will all be only too aware that, when it comes to making
speeches on farewell occasions, Dr Johnson's rule holds. But I thank Ken Bowder and
Robert Kilpatrick for all they have said.

I calculate that I have seen Robert Kilpatrick well over a thousand times since I arrived
here, and for both of us it has been one of the most rewarding and satisfying working
relationships of our lives. He referred to things that join us. What joins Dorothy,
myself and Robert is that we all belong to the class of 1926, the moment of whose glory
on land has been sharp and bright for the past few years but is now dimming very fast.
The rest of you will soon be coming on.

I think, too, that the Pro-Chancellor and the Dean of Medicine have something in common.
Those of you who have served on committees with them will know perfectly well what it is.
A cricketing jingle of which I am fond often comes into my mind when I see them both in
action. It is about a famous Yorkshire man, George Hirst, and it goes:

"When I faced the bowling of Hirst,
I called out, 'Do your worst'.
'Right you are, Sid'.
And he did".

The fact that there were no bouncers today and it was all nicelobs and half volleys must
not fool you about either of them.

Thank you all for this magnificent gift. It will remind us constantly of our time here
and will continue to do so in our family for generations - though there is likely to be
some competition among our four children as to who shall have it. I stress that it will
remind us both, because much labour goes into creating the sort of garden which Dorothy
has produced at Knighton Hall, and in using that house for the purposes it really ought
to be used for. You cannot overestimate the burden involved in having a Vice-Chancellor
for a husband. So my very warm thanks to her, and to you for a gift which is truly and
fully shared.

It has already been said that I told John Frears when I came here that I would stay for
ten years; and that is what it will be, almost to the day. It is a very difficult fact
to come to terms with. I did not fully appreciate it until I opened the new prospectus a
few days ago to see what I had written for the students who will be arriving in 1988. I
found a strange face peering at me, and a message from the Vice-Chancellor of which I had
not penned a word. Then I began to understand. We both find that after ten such years
you do care very deeply about the place and what will happen to it. My mind goes back to
the first time I began to talk to people in the University, in September 1977. I went
home to lunch and I said to Dorothy, "It's very strange in this place: everybody's so
nice". That is quite unlike Oxford, I can assure you. There is a true collegiate
atmosphere here. What we have become is really very much more in essentials a large
college than a University, though the definition of a University is the "whole body", and
I think one of the marks of the place today is that the relations between staff and
students, between academics and non-academics, between academics and administrators are at least as good here as they are anywhere else in the country. It is therefore a great pleasure to us that there are so many people here today drawn from so many parts of the University. The fact is that the University is composed as much of the Charles Wilson Building, the Halls of Residence, the Gardens and so on, as it is the laboratories and the lecture theatres.

My own debt to close colleagues is immense. First and foremost I think of John Frears and then of Ken Bowder, as Chairman of Council. It is immensely important for a Vice-Chancellor to have someone to talk to who is not directly part of the University; someone in whose advice he can have absolute and complete confidence. I have been extraordinarily fortunate in that respect. Then too, as Treasurers I do not think any University could have had a better run than Harry Skinner, so sadly cut off in his prime, Robert Thornton, and now Eric Whittle. I would also like to mention a Treasurer from before my time, Mac Goldsmith, who throughout the years that we knew each other supported me and was a very close friend. From within the University I began with Ralph Davis and Leslie Sykes, Leslie above all a tremendous repository of knowledge about the University. Without him in my first year I would have been completely lost. The roll call of Pro-Vice-Chancellors since then is Arthur Jones, Geoffrey Martin, Jack Spence, Ray Peacock and Gerry Bernbaum. I can only say that I have warm thanks to Senate for having elected them. If I had had my choice they are exactly the people I would have selected myself in the first place. There was also invaluable help from those who had been Pro-Vice-Chancellor’s before, Jan Grodecki, Norman Pye. I have already spoken of Robert Kilpatrick. We have cooperated on the Medical School like two on a tandem; I have never been quite sure who has been driving whom, but at least I cannot recall that we have ever fallen off.

No one could have been more fortunate than I was to find Michael Baatz as Registrar here when I arrived; and of course, when you have a good Registrar of that kind, it is bound to be the case that you get an Administration of the quality of ours, on which the University so much depends. There is no division between it and the academic life of the University. We try to look on it as a seamless robe, and you must be quite certain that you repel all those who will come hunting for them. In my own office, Olive, Vivienne and Eunice have been tremendous supports, and without them it would have been impossible to manage. What tied them all was deep affection and loyalty to the place.

Deep affection and loyal local feeling is very important. In terms of personal relations the last ten years really have been a joy. I could not have had better colleagues; we could not have been in a better University. That is true even of Senate, which I have come to love; though when I appeared in it for the first time, never having been in a Senate before, I wondered what in heaven’s name I had come to. I will confess that occasionally certain loved words have come into my mind as I have heard some argument. I have never dared to say them to Senate, but I will now: the immortal words, ‘I disagree with my colleagues, for the reasons which they themselves have stated’.

It is not a fashionable age for vision: one is not supposed to utter large words and think large sentiments, or dream large dreams. But I think it is worth saying that what we have here is beyond the wildest dreams of those who organised those theses dansants in the Granby Halls in 1921, which were the earliest fund raising venture of the nursery University College. What we have is beyond the dreams of those like Attenborough, Harold Martin and Charles Wilson, who in the days of the University College and beyond laid the foundations of the present University. It is too easy to fall into the modern carping mould that is apparent in the view that government and much of public opinion takes of the universities. I’ll illustrate this attitude by a story of which Winston Churchill was very fond. A brave sailor jumps into the docks at Plymouth and rescues a boy from drowning. He goes home thinking nothing of it. Next day he is walking in the docks and is confronted by an angry female. "Are you the sailor that rescued the boy yesterday?" The sailor replies modestly that he is. "Well, what have you done with his cap?" That does seem to me to be very much the attitude that governments have taken in recent times.
In fact what we have here at Leicester is a reason for great pride, not just local pride, but something more significant than that, because it is a kind of Cinderella story. No University in this country began on such a subsistence allowance as this one did, unsupported by the County (which had the beginnings of Loughborough), not cared about by the City (which had the beginnings of the Polytechnic); and the Government of course did not recognise that Leicester existed for very nearly thirty years. Now there are areas of activity in the University which rank high on any world scale that you might wish to devise. We have every prospect of being in the twenty first century one of the three or four hundred research universities which will then exist in the whole world; and if you look around you will find it very hard indeed anywhere in the world to discover a better University for the money we have to spend. Certainly you will find many hundreds of universities of which nobody has ever heard, or ever will hear, and which spend a great deal more than we do. This has been achieved while we have tried very hard to make our contribution to the life of the local community. I shall give only two instances of this: the Medical School, which has done so much to transform medicine in the City and the County; and the fifteen thousand or so people in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire who at some point in the year become part of University life outside the walls.

It has been an enormous privilege to play some part in this - and it really is only a very small part, because I was extraordinarily fortunate in what I found when I came here. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to contribute to such success. But in modern times there is no such thing as equilibrium, and in a University there is no steady state. You have to go on getting better all the time, or you get worse very quickly indeed. There is much in train here which I shall look back at with every expectation and great confidence.

So with thanks again from Dorothy and myself for this splendid gift, and thanks to you all for much friendship and kindness over the years, I return the toast. Thank you all very much. May Leicester flourish.

INDUSTRY AND HIGHER EDUCATION - COLLABORATIVE LINKS

The Department of Trade and Industry has published "Collaboration between Industry and Higher Education: Nine Case Studies".

The brochure outlines the benefits of collaboration between industry and higher education, and contains nine case studies based on the winning entries from the Department's Industry Year Award for collaboration between industry and universities. The Department plans to hold another competition in 1988 to reward and encourage links between higher education and industry.

A copy of the brochure can be borrowed from Miss E.M. Davies, Information Officer.

UNIVERSITIES WORK FOR HEALTH

Britain's universities are crucial to maintaining the quality of our health services. Universities train all the doctors and dentists, and many other health professionals; they carry out much of the research and help care for the most seriously ill patients. One in ten of all hospital specialists is paid for by the universities.

This is the argument of a brochure entitled Universities Work for Health, published on September 17 by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

The 14 page full colour brochure describes the services provided by universities in training, research and patient care, and shows that:

- the number of clinical academic staff has fallen by 13% since 1981
- the number of medical students has more than doubled in 20 years
- medical charities now spend more on research and patient care (£160m-170m) than the Medical Research Council (£130m)