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The new Chairman's message to the Institute's Members

Duncan Ross, the new Chairman of the Institute, speaks to Members and provides an exclusive insight into the future of the Institute of Administrative Management



Duncan Ross, the new Chairman of Council of the Institute, might be a retired Royal Air Force Officer, but he is still a very busy man. *Manager* caught up with him in Harrogate, where he was visiting the Institute's stand at the *Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)* Exhibition. However, his views on the current state of the Institute and future developments, made the effort of chasing him well worth while. We reproduce below the text of the interview with Editor, **Ray Moorcroft**.

Ed. Please tell us about your involvement with the Institute, and how you think this will help you in your new post as Chair of the Institute?

D.R. I became involved with the Institute of Administrative Management when I was the staff officer responsible for producing the training policy for administrators in the Royal Air Force. The general ethos of the Armed Services is based on a strong and committed belief in developing individuals to fulfil their potential whilst appreciating the need for teamwork and commitment. It was obvious to me that the Institute was the ideal professional body to enable RAF personnel in the administrative branch to have their skills, knowledge and experience recognised and certificated. This particular need was very evident during yet another period of enforced downsizing when many RAF administrators found themselves having to totally change career pattern and progression. There is no doubt in my mind that the Institute of Administrative Management understands this need more than the great majority of other professional Institutes and bodies. And, because we are a small but thriving organization we can, perhaps, sometimes offer more personal guidance and advice. Although much of my experience was gained in the Royal Air Force, I believe there is a parallel with most, if not all, other sectors of industry and commerce in general management and administration. People need, and are entitled to, appropriate training and recognition for their skills. This applies to Managing Directors as well as people on the shop-floor or in the office. Transferable skills are part of the currency that enable people to move from one area of business to another, or to one company or another. That is why I strongly support the concept that people should pursue professional and vocational, as well as academic, qualifications as part of their personal continual development. Working life is much like

climbing a mountain. Very few get to place a flag at the very top, and qualifications as well as experience are part of the equation that help us to succeed to reach our individual summit.

Ed. Would you care to give a statement about the current health of the Institute?

D.R. With pleasure. The fact that we have over 12,000 members of whom approximately 10,000 are continuing their professional development - either through our formal education or CPD programme at any one time - speaks for itself. However, when we analyse the Institute, we see that there are two clear elements. The first is that of the corporate professional body, which comprises individuals with similar fundamental skills but widely differing experiences, who band together in order to get their skills recognised and to promote those skills to the world at large. The second element is our education programme. In these instances there is no doubt that the Institute is recognised and accepted as a 'Quality Mark' for people with administrative and organisational skills. The Institute's programme - from Certificate to Advanced Diploma and onto the Bachelor of Arts degree in Administrative Management (BAAM) - could not be more highly regarded.

Ed. Where do you see the organization in 5 years?

D.R. I can only see further development in all areas. We will make significant inroads into Europe and increase the number of colleges in China. Although we cannot award a degree we will build on our arrangements with Lincolnshire and Humberside University to enable the BAAM to be made increasingly accessible to those of our members who hold the Advanced Diploma. I am in no doubt that our membership will grow considerably with a commensurate increase in all grades.

Ed. In recent years the international scene has grown significantly: what are your views on this development?

D.R. A great success story, and we are continuing to develop. We have Members and students in 62 countries, and those that jump immediately to mind are China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. However, we also have students in Europe and have just awarded Accredited Centre Status to a college in the West Indies. It would be easy to rest on our laurels secure in the knowledge that we are a truly international education provider; but that is not our way. We must, and will, continue with this expansion for there is no doubt that a clear demand for our qualifications is waiting to be satisfied.

Ed. Yes, I was going to talk to you about that. David Lam, Head of Business Studies at the School of Professional and Continuing Education at the University of Hong Kong, believes that IAM qualifications are highly regarded in the international community.

D.R. I'm very pleased to hear that, but not surprised - especially when you consider the all-encompassing nature of 'Administrative Management'. This is not a niche market; in fact, it's exactly the opposite. We are the solid core of essential knowledge for anyone who wishes to manage "information through people" within their organisation. We teach a generic set of fundamental, essential skills: essential wherever in the world you work. We argue that good administration is good management: the business world is overloaded with niche qualifications which confuse the employer. What we're about is clarity: employers know what Institute of Administrative Management accreditation means. Our membership is valued because we are rigorous in the application of our standards, whilst our skills are valuable because of their transferability.

Ed. In view of these (International) developments and the obvious implications of ICT in terms of study and membership, do you foresee any changes in IAM structure and organisation?

D.R. We are a diverse and thriving organisation served by a small staff in the Institute headquarters. Moreover, we must never forget that we are a charitable non-profit making organisation, and we must keep lean. However, we need to develop HQ functions, and this is best done through ICT. To this end, our integrated system for accounts, registration, membership data, exams administration and renewals has been commissioned and will be fully active early this year. Our Website is up and running, but we recognise the need to develop the site in order to maximise its potential as a member benefit. I am confident that our Members will witness a considerable improvement over the coming year. If I could slip in a commercial break! Please use the website and tell us what you expect of it - let us develop it together. It is a world-wide marketing tool not just for the Institute but, more importantly, for our members. With regard to the journal, I can only say that it is the greatest benefit to our Members at present: it is a tremendous publication of good quality. However, as with the website, we are here to serve the membership - all feedback will be much appreciated.

Ed. What message would you wish to send to Members at the beginning of your period of office?

Before I send any message, I would like to pay tribute to Christopher Hayward, the former Chairman and current Vice-Chairman. Christopher has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Institute over the past two years not only within Council meetings, but as our ambassador all over the world. The nature of the Institute means that it is impossible for any Chairman to meet every Member, but I am in no doubt that anyone who has met Christopher, or heard him speak, cannot fail to have been impressed. Thank you Christopher, you are a hard act to follow. Members will also wish to know that Professor Graham Robinson, after seven years as CEO of the Institute, has moved on to the E-Skills National Training Organisation (e-skills nto). In partnership with a team in the University of Surrey he is leading the design and development of an innovative business improvement tool on the government funded E-Skills into Business Programme. On behalf of the membership, I would like to thank Graham for the contribution that he has made to the Institute over the years and wish him every success in the next phase of his career.

A final note of appreciation to every member of the staff at Petts Wood. This has been a difficult year for everyone due to the development of the IT system. We operate to a very strict, externally driven, timetable and it is no exaggeration to say that we have been close to the mark on many occasions. I believe that we have had a successful year only because of the good humour, tenacity and diligence of everyone concerned; thank you all. Personally, I promise two things: first, that I, with the support of Members of the Council of the Institute and the Staff, will guarantee to maintain the quality of

IAM Chairman of Council Duncan Ross FInstAM

Duncan joined the Royal Air Force in 1961 following a short period of employment with Glaxo Laboratories in Barnard Castle. He was commissioned in 1978 in the Administrative (Secretarial) Branch and over the past 20 years has filled a variety of posts encompassing personnel management, career development, accounting and training on stations as diverse as St Athen (Wales) and Mount Pleasant (Falkland Islands). Whilst on his final tour, Duncan headed the team with responsibility for management planning and the budget of Royal Air Force, Northolt. He retired, in the rank of Squadron Leader, in 1987 and shortly afterwards joined Southampton University Air Squadron as the Squadron Adjutant. Duncan first became involved with the Institute whilst he was the MOD staff officer with responsibility for the training policy and delivery of training for the Royal Air Force's administrators. Initially serving on the Education Committee, he was elected to Council in 1996 and became Deputy Chairman in 1998. In the meantime, he served as Deputy Chairman of Education, a member of the Audit Committee and the Admissions Committee.

In his younger days, Duncan was a keen sportsman who qualified as a tennis coach and soccer referee. A major motor accident ended his sporting activities, but he became an internationally qualified umpire who officiated at major tournaments throughout the country including the World Student Games and 16 years at Wimbledon. Duncan has been married to Jean for 33 years and they have one son.

our education programme whilst increasing the number of colleges that deliver our programmes. Secondly, that we will gain greater recognition of the quality of our skills and training in the recruitment environment. By directing my efforts into these two areas, I believe that we will enhance

the pride that our Members' experience in writing InstAM after their name.

It is the Council's mission to make employers want to see InstAM after their employees' names, but what we really want to see is employers *demanding* to see InstAM there..!

Welcome to Alan King FInstAM Interim Chief Executive Officer



Alan King FInstAM, Interim CEO (third from left) with David and Betty Lam and Duncan Ross at the recent Members Lunch at the House of Lords.

Alan King was recently confirmed as Interim Chief Executive Officer to fulfil the role until a new CEO is appointed. He is well known to the Institute having joined in 1961 at Associate level and he was an active member of the London Branch during the 1960's.

Since the late 50's Alan has had a varied career in the food, catering and fast moving consumer goods industries. He moved

on to work in the fields of information systems design, management consultancy and general management until he took early retirement in 1988.

An Oxford graduate, Alan held the role of Interim CEO between the periods of Office of John Ainsworth and Christine Hayhurst. He was awarded the Institute Medal in 1992. From his position in the IAM he moved to The Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA) where he held the position as Director of Public and Professional Affairs.

During his retirement Alan keeps busy as clerk to the trustees of a medium-sized grant-making foundation, and with other organisations in a voluntary capacity.

Alan's first official function in IAM was to join the Chairman of Council in networking with our Members at the House of Lords in October.