

This memo from Dr Stringer caused resentment amongst Observatory staff for a variety of reasons. It fuelled the anger that exploded in the letter of 30th Oct 1968 to Prof Hinton.

received 29.9.68.

TO ALL OBSERVATORY TECHNICAL STAFF

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1445
a.m. 15.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR (Dr Stringer)

The University Session commences on Monday, September 30th. I want this to be the occasion of a renewed effort on the part of the Observatory Technical Staff to improve the efficiency of the Observatory. Soon after the Session commences, we shall be receiving daily visits from both Postgraduate and Undergraduate students. It will then be very apparent that the Observatory is a part of the University of Birmingham; since it has become obvious to me during the past few weeks that the full meaning of this development has not been realised by every member of staff, I am taking this opportunity of presenting you with certain information which should help you to appreciate your place both within the University community and also in the Observatory's future. We shall soon be appointing two new assistants, and you must set standards for them, too.

1. THE SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR: HIS FUNCTION AND AVAILABILITY

The Scientific Director of an establishment is appointed sometimes on a full-time basis, and sometimes on a part-time basis; depending upon the cost, and therefore the importance of that establishment to the University. In my case, the appointment is part-time, and I still have my full-time duties as a Senior Lecturer to perform. My Observatory connection does not absolve me from any of the latter. The amount of time I spend at the Observatory is not rigidly defined in my contract. However, the fact that my salary as Scientific Director amounts to less than 1/12 of my total University pay indicates that the University considers that I should spend no more than 3½ hours per week at the Observatory. I therefore intend allocating 4 hours per week for internal Observatory work, normally one hour per day, Monday to Thursday inclusive. I would ask you to note, however, that since I shall also be devoting time to the students, both Postgraduate at 5 Waterworks Road and Undergraduate at the Observatory, and to the work of the Postgraduate School, this means that some days I shall be available at the Observatory or 5 Waterworks Road for 3 or 4 hours.

For your information, my priorities are as follows: (the numbers in parentheses indicate the number of hours which I ought to devote to each in a "normal" 40 hour week, as determined by their financial or academic worth to the University at present) -

- First - Postgraduate School (11)
Lectures 3, Administration 4, Students 4.
- Second - Undergraduate Work (13)
Lectures 5, Administration 4, Students 4.
- Third - University Research Projects (2)
- Fourth - Observatory Services (2)
- Fifth - Writing - articles and books (4).

Sixth - Observatory Routine Supervision (4)

Seventh - Private Consulting (4)

Please note, there is no time allocated here for staff, faculty and committee meetings, interviews, tutorials, outside visits; neither is there any allowance for travel time. Hence, I rarely experience a "normal week." Last Session I was only able to keep track of things by working 24 hours per day on many occasions. My health suffered severely because of this, and under no circumstances, will I repeat last year's experience. This means that I cannot be bothered with pure routine or with minor staff worries.

My prime function is to represent the University in Observatory matters and, in addition:

- i. To ensure the Observatory is running smoothly so that it may achieve its legally-established objective, i.e. the provision of regular and reliable climatic data for Edgbaston.
- ii. To improve scientific standards of the activities of the Observatory.
- iii. To extend the commercial services of the Observatory, in due course making it self-supporting.

2. EXISTING STAFF OF THE OBSERVATORY

At present there is no Deputy Scientific Director and no Observatory Superintendent. If an Observatory Superintendent is appointed in the future, the intention is that this post should be filled by Mr. Chaplain. The Observatory Secretary is to be kept fully informed of all Observatory work and activities. She forms a permanent link in the organisation between myself and the Observatory. In terms of seniority of Observatory the order is:

First - Mr. Chaplain.
Second - Mr. Osborne.
Third - Mr. Brenholz.
Fourth - Mr. Shanker.

12. on phone. When I am not available, Mr. Chaplain is to act as Observatory spokesman, when he is not available Mr. Osborne is to be spokesman, and so on.

*Develop. Network
communications
instrumental*
In terms of future expansion, my hope is that Mr. Chaplain will become Superintendent of Forecasts, Services and Networks, Mr. Osborne will become Superintendent of Schools and Lecture Services and Mr. Brenholz will become Supervisor of Telecommunications and Instruments. If it were at all possible, I should like Mr. Shanker to be Superintendent of Agrometeorology. Each of you are in effect "heads of departments" already. In future, if we are to expand as envisaged, then each head of department may have highly qualified people under him: it therefore is important that he should prepare himself for this eventuality. *ie. do some hard learning.*

For the present, Mr. Chaplain is responsible to me directly for forecasts, services, networks and climatology; Mr. Osborne is responsible to me for office routine and schools; Mr. Brenholz for telecommunications and instruments. The term "Officer I/C" is probably the best distinction for each division. If any of you disagree with my future decisions or orders, you have every right to go directly to Professor Linton. If you disagree with his decision, you have the right to consult Dr. Alty, Deputy Principal.

3. TYPES OF UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENT

A. Academic Staff

Senior Academic Staff: Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer.

Junior Academic Staff: Lecturer, Assistant Lecturer, Demonstrator.

The Academic Staff constitute collectively the "University." To become a member of Academic Staff a good degree is essential. The main functions of Academic Staff are teaching and advancement of a particular science or subject by research, writing, or other means. In the case of an affiliated institution such as the Observatory the normal procedure is to place a member of the Academic Staff as Director at the Head of that Institution. Such a person is not a member of the staff of that Institution; in effect, he is the "University" watching its investment. Academic staff initiate and direct research programmes but do not normally do the detailed work involved.

B. Scientific Staff

Research Associate	(with the standing of Professor)
Senior Research Fellow	(" " " " Senior Lecturer)
Research Fellow	(" " " " Lecturer)
Research Officer	(with a status of Assistant Lecturer)
Research Assistant	

The function of Scientific Staff is to implement research programmes planned by Academic Staff and then to develop them further. During the past year, I have received numerous enquiries from persons interested in appointments to the Observatory Scientific Staff, right up to Research Associate level.

Miss Wilkins is the only member of the Observatory Scientific Staff at present. In the Autumn, however, I hope to make application for funds to appoint research fellows or senior research fellows for numerical forecasting, Radar Meteorology, Satellite Meteorology and Agrometeorology.

C. Technical Staff

Chief Technician
Technician
Junior Technician

The function of Technical Staff is to undertake routine work which the Academic and Scientific Staff have not time to perform, for example, routine observations at the Observatory. In cases of special responsibility (for example student demonstrations) appointment may be made on the Technical Officer scale, as in your case.

Sent to University & Community
Under no circumstances may Academic or Scientific Staff undertake the work of Technical Officers or Technicians or stand in for them. In like manner, under no circumstances would Academic or Scientific staff expect Technical Staff to stand in for them and give lectures or tutorials or attend committee meetings. *

The Technical Officer staff of the Observatory has been established to cover every normal eventuality.

The order of priorities for Observatory Technical Staff is as follows:

1. Routine observation and transmission of data.
2. Routine forecast services.
3. New services.
4. Observatory administration.
5. Student demonstrations.
6. Self-education of Observatory Staff.

This order of priorities is to be adhered to rigidly at all times. In cases of difficult decisions, please refer to me.

C. Secretarial Staff

This Morgan sent!!
Executive Secretaries are regarded as capable of taking complete charge of administration in a department and act as Personal Assistant to the Head of the Department. The working week for Secretarial Staff is 37½ hours; no overtime is normally permitted. If a member of the Secretarial Staff works over one day she must be given an equal amount of time off during the next day to make up for this. The Observatory Secretary has a very full load and is not to work overtime. Executive II Grades are equivalent to that of Chief Technician, or Technical Officer on the Technical Grades. In time I hope that the Observatory Secretary will take over all administration of the Observatory except that of a technical nature.

4. DEALINGS WITH THE PUBLIC AND OTHERS

A. No communications (other than routine forecasts) are to be given to the Press, B.B.C. or A.T.V. without first informing me of their contents. If I cannot be contacted no communication may be made.

B. The Observatory Staff are members of a unique community, that of a University. Such a community conducts itself in a civilised manner. Any infringements of this involving the use of bad language when dealing with visitors or students, etc. will be dealt with very severely.

i.e. does nothing.

C. A responsible attitude towards the commercial customers of the Observatory is essential at all times. At best the Observatory forecasts are very good. At worst they are abysmal. All staff must take the preparation and issue of forecasts very seriously: their accuracy and consistency reflects upon the University.

D. The Observatory is now part of one of the leading scientific universities in Britain. Unrivalled facilities are open to us for the improvement of forecasts and of the services. It is imperative that all staff are aware of their responsibility here: slight lapses in scientific accuracy on the telephone may have serious repercussions for the University. A scientific attitude must be maintained at all times. In particular, all staff should make an effort to understand probability forecasting. Clients who do not want these type of forecasts are ignorant of their potentialities. Observatory staff are not to express disbelief in this form of forecasting, whatever their personal view.

E. Because of the attitude of certain Observatory Staff, many individuals in the University have become antagonistic towards the Observatory. Mr. Kelley's attitude towards the University left much room for improvement and it is up to all staff to show in their dealings with all departments of the University that a new attitude towards authority has indeed developed at the Observatory.

F. Salaries, I know, are difficult matters these days. Therefore, if any of you wish to supplement your incomes by paid lectures, paid consulting or other work connected with Observatory topics you have my permission. However, I insist that such work must be carried on outside normal working hours and I should always be informed what you are doing in this context.

5. FOR THE FUTURE: A WARNING

Edgbaston Observatory has, I believe, a great future. However, let us not blind ourselves to what it is in the minds of some people: an old-fashioned, out-of-date anachronism staffed by persons of conflicting temperament and background, which for many years lived a hand-to-mouth existence on scraps begged by a man whose main qualities were enthusiasm for the weather, a love of instruments and a capacity for hard work. University affiliation demands more than these qualities, admirable as they are. Some of the commercial services of the Observatory in the past were worth far more than the payment the Observatory received. Others were so bad that to accept payment for them was unwise. This means that we have two futures: one to be proud of, one to bury and forget.

Now it just breaks promise & agrees

I have chosen to associate myself with the Observatory because I think that it can do much to further the cause of Applied Meteorology in Britain, and also because it is of unique value to geography students in the University. This association has resulted in considerable personal losses for me. My book has been delayed for two years, my students have not been given the attention they deserve, my research has been brought almost to a standstill, and I have lost almost £2,000 in private consulting fees. There is no point in my

think cause of the Obs !!

i.e. will relinquish association -6-

continuing this association if the Observatory is to become a thorn in the flesh of the University. To prevent this happening Observatory staff must adopt a responsible attitude towards the University. I am fully aware that most of the time this is what in fact you do. The following points are made for your information, not as matters of censure:

Please do not bother me with personal quarrels: these should be settled between yourselves. If you sense certain irritations, please make notes of these until they amount to an important problem, then bring your evidence to me. If one of you has a grievance against another member of staff I want both of you - accuser and accused - to arrange to see me at the same time. I do not want to be told tales behind people's backs.

The University was very loath to take over the Observatory in the first place. I persuaded them in the belief that the Observatory was well worthwhile and had fine potential. So far, that potential is on paper only. The University has no firm long-term plans for the Observatory. The numerous plans I had prepared have had to be shelved because of financial difficulties. This is the case in all other departments too. The Observatory's future rests on

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are also
- (a) myself, in initiating new research projects which will attract outside funds and new services for which we receive payment;
 - (b) yourselves, in implementing these projects and services.

I cannot carry out my part of the endeavour if all my time is wasted on trivialities. The Observatory must be made to run itself on a routine basis, with reference to me only on policy matters, or for difficult decisions, or in the case of unforeseen events or developments. *But this is impossible*

Rubbish

From a precarious existence, the Observatory has been saved for posterity by the University. Its staff have been placed on permanent salary scales. The time taken in painstaking University discussion over your personal positions and the future of the Observatory has been far more than that devoted to the establishment of far more costly institutions in the University to my knowledge. Please realise your blessings as well as your misfortunes. You have very little cause for complaint. You have become members of a community which is dedicated to keeping alive the principle of reason and the ideal of truth, in the dark days of British civilisation, whose decline we see going on around us. The Observatory is destined to play an increasingly important role in the inter-relationship between University and the outside world. You all have serious responsibilities in this, not only directly in your dealings with the public but also indirectly via the influence you will come to exert on the young minds with whom you will come in contact. Because of your University affiliation you are now not only meteorologists, but are also credited by the outside world as being educated cultured men. The dignity of such a status is worth upholding.

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Yes

You ask if the University is fully aware of your work and its responsibilities. The answer is yes. In turn, the University may ask me to give them the assurance that you are fully aware of the responsibilities of University

?? Prof

affiliation. I would like to be able to reassure them on this matter.

When you have ideas for the betterment of Observatory work and services, or when you want genuine help, I shall always be pleased to talk to you. When you want to see me in confidence, but cannot contact me by telephone, please let Miss Morgan know and she will inform you when I will be available. In turn, I promise to leave you to carry out your own work without interruption. I will make a point of calling in at the Observatory on a friendly informal basis for up to one hour each day, Monday to Thursday inclusive, except of course when I am away from Birmingham. Friday, I normally work at home or am away on consulting duties. You may phone me at home any time provided the matter is urgent.

In conclusion, I assure you that provided you take your responsibilities as a member of the University seriously, I will support you very strongly at every available opportunity. I feel sure that if we persevere we shall find each of you in charge of a very active and satisfying department of the Observatory in 2/3 years time. I know that each of you has a deep interest in Meteorology and has the good of the Observatory at heart, but these facts must become apparent to everyone else too.

E. T. STRINGER.

23rd September 1968.