



200 AH

Gov. MACH.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

2 December 1982

Dear David,

I am writing to thank you most warmly for inviting me to the party yesterday evening to celebrate the first anniversary of the Management and Personnel Office. I greatly enjoyed meeting the members of the staff who were present at the party, and was impressed by the good spirits and enthusiasm evident in those I met. I send you and all members of the MPO congratulations on what has been achieved in the Department's first year and best wishes in carrying forward the Department's work.

Yours
Baroness Young

The Right Honourable The Baroness Young

AH

PRIME MINISTER

The Management and Personnel Office have asked if you could look in at a drinks party on Tuesday 30 November to celebrate its first anniversary. There are two separate invitations, one for drinks before lunch for media and MPO top management and one for drinks in the evening for a representative group of staff.

Robin thinks it would be a good idea if you could spare 15 minutes. You can manage either pre-lunch or evening. Which would you prefer? Robin thinks it would perhaps be better if you go to the one before lunch.

1 November 1982

M. Butler
agree?

Yes

es. Agree?

No - would

prefer the one
without the
media mtg

*Gov Thatcher
Task Force
with RB*

Gov Mach



MR BUTLER

MPO ANNIVERSARY DRINKS

If she has time before this evening the Prime Minister may like to see

- i. list of MPO staff attending;
- ii. the news-sheet which has been distributed to all MPO staff today.

Mary Brown

MARY BROWN
30 November 1982



SENIOR STAFF ATTENDING DRINKS FOR MPO
STAFF: 1800 - 1930, TUES. 30 NOVEMBER

Minister of State (CS), HMT

Sir Robert Armstrong

John Cassels

Angus Fraser

Barbara Sloman

Clive Priestley

Noel Moore

John Stevens

NOMINATIONS FOR INVITATION TO THE MPO ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION
TO BE HELD ON THE EVENING OF TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 1982

Dr E M Brown	<i>Snr. Medical Officer</i>	Medical Advisory Service Murray House Vandon Street London SW1
Miss S Marriott	<i>CO.</i>	Medical Advisory Service Tilbury House Petty France London SW1
Mrs J Martin	<i>PS</i>	Medical Advisory Service Tilbury House Petty France London SW1
Mr G H Mallaband	<i>SEO</i>	Personnel Services Division Room 217 Loddon House Basingstoke
Miss J A Baines	<i>PS</i>	Personnel Services Division Room 1/67 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall SW1
Miss P F Barry	<i>Supervisor of PS's</i>	Parliamentary Counsel Office 36 Whitehall London SW1
Miss C E Johnston	<i>=Prin.</i>	Parliamentary Counsel Office 36 Whitehall London SW1
Mrs V Walters	<i>PS</i>	Civil Service Selection Board Standard House Northumberland Avenue London WC2
Miss S E Paul	<i>S. Psy.</i>	Recruitment Research Unit Standard House Northumberland Avenue London WC2
Mr S C Lyle-Smythe	<i>PIO</i>	Civil Service Selection Board Standard House Northumberland Avenue London WC2
Miss P M Andrews	<i>Prin.</i>	Public Appointments Unit Room 2/124 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1

Mrs M Wood	HEO	Ceremonial Branch Standard House Northumberland Avenue London WC2
Mrs D C Miller	Prin.	CRS Division Room 1/113 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs M A Fuller	CO	CRS Division Room SG/161 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr V Manoranjan	EO	MG Division Room 2/135 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr B Hennah	Prin.	PM4 Room 2/70 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs E Murrow	PS	PM Division Room 2/62 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr B J Sheehy	EO	PM3 Room 2/4 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs K M Ellis	CO	PM2 Room 2/64 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs S D Tanner	EO	PM1 Room G/33 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr G R Beresford	HEO	Finance Division Loddon House Basingstoke

Mrs J Woodage	SEO	Administration Group Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mr B Marsh	HEO	Administration Group Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mrs L Williams	EO	Administration Group Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mrs J Hobbs	CO	Administration Group Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mr M Sylvester	EO	General Competitions Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mrs D Q Hunter	CO	General Competitions Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mrs D L J Bezzant	EO	Science Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mrs L R Innes	PA	Science Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Miss J Godleman	CO	Technology Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Miss I Heaphy	CA	Technology Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mr B L Cooke	HEO	Secretariat Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mrs S Berry	CO	Secretariat Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mr N Bass	CO	ME Registry Room 2/99A Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1

Mr D M Blyth	S. Psy.	ME Division Room 2/37 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr M C Caldon	CO	Rayner Unit Room 1/41 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Miss K Higgs	Prin.	ME1 Room 2/117 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs B Morgan	PS	ME2 Division Room 3/7 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr M D Dean	HEO	Office Services Division Room 1/63 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs J L Kingshott	HEO	Office Services Division Room 3/2 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr E C Wood	EO	Office Services Division Room 1/62 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr A W Doodes	EO	Committee Section Room G/2 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs P V Waterhouse	CO	Office Services Division Room 912 Standard House Northumberland Avenue London WC2

Mrs O E Brice	<i>Snr. Sup. Typists</i>	Typing Pool Room 3/3 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mrs C A Aburn	<i>CO -</i>	Office Services Division Room 1/62 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr D A Rose	<i>CO</i>	Stationery Stores Room SG/140 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr A J Steedman	<i>Ch. Off. Keeper</i>	Chief Office Keeper Room SG/142 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr L Groce	<i>Ch. Photoprinter</i>	Central Reprographic Unit Room G/90 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr G A Piper	<i>DOA</i>	Central Drawing Office Room 4/5 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr R G Coleman	<i>HEO</i>	Office Services Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mr L G Preston	<i>EO</i>	Office Services Division Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mrs A Cleveland	<i>Sup. of Typists</i>	Typing Pool Alencon Link Basingstoke
Mr A Holland	<i>EO</i>	Archives Section Room SG/120 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Miss F Cullen	<i>Librarian</i>	Central Management Library Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1

Mr S Y MacDonald	EO	Organisation Branch Room 1/71 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr W S Byers	Prin.	Chairman Combined Union Side Room G/11 Old Admiralty Building Whitehall London SW1
Mr P D Nicholson	CO	Secretary Combined Union Side Alencon Link Basingstoke
Dr G H Mungeam	A/S	Civil Service College Room 4-10 Belgrave Road London SW1
Mr R B Barnard	SEO	Civil Service College Room 1-9 Belgrave Road London SW1
Mr P Duffin	SEO	Civil Service College Room 1-9 Belgrave Road London SW1
Mr D Moore	HEO	Civil Service College Room 3-5 Belgrave Road London SW1
Miss E M Hunt	EO	Civil Service College Room 6-6 Belgrave Road London SW1
Miss E C Fox	CO	Civil Service College Albert Day Sunningdale
Mrs G I Somerville	CO	Civil Service College Trevelyan Sunningdale
Mr P S Sanders	EO	Civil Service College Room 1-2 Northcote House Sunningdale

Miss A K Taylor	CO	Civil Service College Room 105 Albert Day Sunningdale
Miss C A Douglas	HED	Civil Service College Room 003 Whitley Sunningdale
Miss I Goodchild	Snr. House Maid	Civil Service College Sunningdale
Mr G Grimwood	Waiter	Civil Service College Sunningdale
Mr A Hutchings	CO	Lord Pry Seal's Office
Miss M A Heath	EO	Training Div. Rm 3/59 OAB
Miss P Cavalier	PS	Training Div. Rm. 3/98A

MPO...one year on

To the staff of the Management and Personnel Office

On the first anniversary of the MPO I would like to thank all of you for your work in the past year – particularly those of you whom I have yet to meet, either on my visits to different parts of the MPO or in my office.

What is the MPO's task? It is to help Government departments do their work more efficiently and effectively. As this news-sheet explains, MPO does this in many ways:

- by providing central recruitment at the Civil Service Commission at Basingstoke, and at Standard House in London;
- by providing central training at the Civil Service College at Sunningdale, and at Belgrave Road in London;
- by providing advice and information on many matters, from filling the top jobs in all Government departments to making Government forms as simple and helpful as possible; and
- by going out with staff from other departments to investigate every kind of Government activity, in order to see how it might be run more efficiently and effectively.

MPO is a small department, but it is at the centre of government. Its importance is shown by the fact that the Prime Minister is its head as Minister for the Civil Service. MPO has made a good start in its first year: through your efforts we will keep this up.

I know that some of you will be affected by the move to co-locate alongside the Treasury next year. I do appreciate this will mean extra trouble and patience. But we are making this move because close co-operation between the Treasury and the MPO at every level is very important.

MPO's job is to give the Civil Service a lead. How can you help? I would like to suggest two ways. The first is to realise that your work contributes towards something which is difficult but very important: A Civil Service which serves our fellow citizens as well as it possibly can. That means good management as a policy in its own right. But management is about people – about you. Hence my second suggestion. If MPO cannot set a good example in the way it manages its own staff, we won't achieve as much as we should. So I ask all managers in the MPO to pay special attention to this. Your manager will need your help: take the initiative by regularly discussing your work and how it is organised with him or her.

I hope you will find this news-sheet interesting. It is about your achievements.

Janet Young

*A Message from
the Rt Hon Baroness Young,
Lord Privy Seal and Minister
in day-to-day charge of
the MPO*



WHERE WE'RE GOING, 1982-83

The MPO is currently, and will continue in the immediate future to be, deeply involved in following through the programme set out in the "Early Tasks" document, published in April 1982. The five main themes of that programme are:

- carrying out our part in the Government's programme of efficiency work;
- with other departments, undertaking a major initiative to improve financial management in government departments;
- leading a comprehensive review of the central selection, training and career management of staff;
- examining ways of further encouraging the motivation and performance of staff; and
- promoting the development of good employment practices throughout the Civil Service in line with government policies applying to all employers.

Planning is an important part of the management of the MPO. A set of management documents, also published, gives details of some 70 MPO policies and 90 specific programmes, and assigns responsibility for carrying out the work and for meeting objectives. Progress on all aspects of the Depart-

ment's work is reported monthly to Lady Young and senior management.

Want to Read More?

Detailed descriptions of the current and future work of the MPO can be found in the "Early Tasks" document and in the Department's planning documents. Some of the past achievements and future thrusts of the Department are also described in a White Paper (Cmnd 8616), published by the MPO in September. All these documents are available from the Central Management Library (Room 1/1, Old Admiralty Building).

How Does Your Work Support the MPO's Objectives?

Every one of us is involved in this important work and in achieving the key objectives of the Department either directly or through the myriad of supporting activities that are essential for the smooth and effective running of the Department. In the pages that follow, some of the current and future activities of the department are described. Where do you fit in? And how does your work support the MPO's objectives?

A marathon, not a sprint

In this news-sheet we are taking the opportunity to look back on a year's work. What have the Management and Efficiency Group achieved in the year?

- At the heart of our efforts have been:
 - involvement in the 67 scrutinies in the 1981 and 1982 programme;
 - our leading role on the multi-departmental efficiency and effectiveness reviews (forms; supporting services in R&D establishments; the control of running costs in departments; the use of resources in large executive operations, like the prisons; and personnel work);
 - working out management guidelines about standards of efficiency for activities like typing, transport, messengers and telecommunications;
 - support for the Financial Management Initiative.

Typically the reviews have found that things have often gone wrong because of insufficient control in unglamorous, but sizeable, areas of work. This means - as with the R&D laboratories - that by making changes, a greater proportion of the money spent, and civil servants' work, can go into useful output. And, typically, by no means all of the weaknesses are due to local management. In the majority of R&D establishments, for example, only about 10% of support costs were actually under the control of the man nominally in charge - the Director.

Getting increased sharpness and responsiveness to cost and value obtained is a programme for change which will take many years. We are in a marathon, not a sprint. The question is, therefore, are we up with the leaders? The answer is yes.

Working in the Civil Service will be deeply changed by many of the activities listed above. For example, the Financial Management Initiative and the personnel work review - both now in progress - will bring a much greater insistence on delegating authority, getting responsibilities clear and concentrating on job performance. Individual civil servants will know more about how their work is intended to fit into that of the department more generally; what they are expected to achieve in the next year; and how good a contribution they are making to reaching this year's targets. The review of running costs will give a strong push to putting responsibility for control down the line to those who actually incur the costs.

And what about next year? We need to watch out for two things:

- making the changes recommended actually happen.
- keeping up a sustainable pace of fresh investigation and change.

The best recommendations in the world are not worth the paper they are written on unless they are implemented and made to work. That has not always happened in the past. Key areas for 1983 will be:

- The first report of David Overington's forms unit.

- Getting ahead with the small implementation team on R&D supporting services led by Rob Wright.
- Establishing teams required to follow up the personnel work review, the running costs review and the Financial Management Initiative.
- Helping departments with further management guidelines and starting to audit how they are being applied.
- Learning more about the processes which lead to the successful implementation of scrutinies in departments.

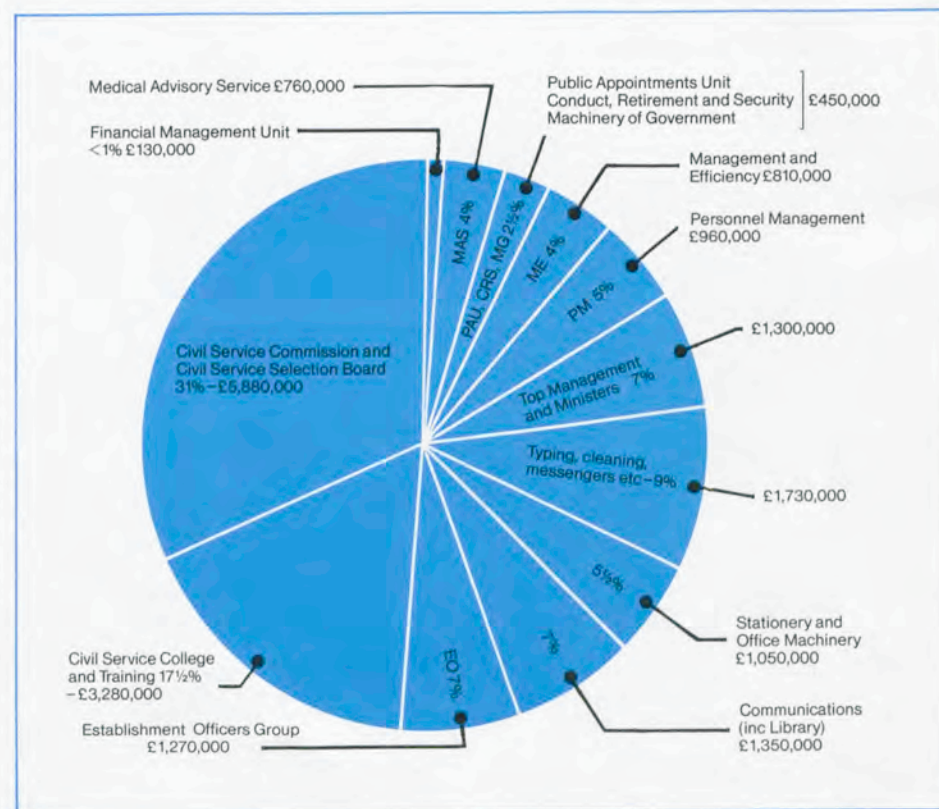
We shall also start a new practical programme of scrutinies and multi-departmental reviews tackling issues of importance to departments.

All of this amounts to a formidable list. Like any marathon runner we need to start from a will to win and the expectation of success - coupled with the hard work to establish the facts, to see things first hand and to make firm proposals for action.

These are the disciplines we must maintain during the next year.

WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT TO GET FOR £18³/₄ MILLION A YEAR?

A lot! That's roughly what MPO costs* That includes nearly 1,200 staff. Of course, no one person can manage such a wide range of activities with the detailed attention necessary to make sure that MPO is running efficiently as possible. That's why Joy Buchan, a Principal in MG Division, has just completed a special study of the management system MPO needs. The object is to involve those in charge of work in Divisions much more in the process of deciding what their staff will be trying to achieve each year, and how much it will cost.



*The MPO budget also includes an additional £5.4 million for certain functions not directly related to MPO, including 10 Downing Street and the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

TOP OF THE FORM

Everyone hates forms. Well-designed forms in plain English can save money, time and aggravation to the public and civil servants alike.

The White Paper "Administrative Forms in Government" published in February launched the Government's initiative for getting fewer and better forms. But well-intentioned efforts in the past to improve and control forms have run into the ground, largely because of the size of the task (8 Departments alone have over 100,000 different forms between them) and the skills needed to tackle some of the problems. So what is different this time?

On this occasion, the MPO has been charged with making sure that action is sustained; that good practice in form design and control is widely known; and that ideas and experience are exchanged within the Civil Service, and between the Civil Service and those with outside experience.

We have prepared draft guidelines on form control and design. We have brought together a group of Departments to share ideas on how to test forms and measure the benefits which result from improved design, and we have given guidance to help Departments select the important forms which merit most attention in the review. We have commissioned a study into the computer-based equipment which would be most helpful to the form designer, and another into the best way to review forms which are produced by a computer or which are used as computer input documents. MPO is also supporting the new Forms Information Centre at Reading University, which will give advice to all departments.

We have been considering the best way to provide good designs for forms which, like the travel claim form, are needed by many departments. MPO and Treasury will shortly be producing sets of master forms from which departments will print their own copies. The master forms will be progressively re-designed to a high standard and HMSO will no longer have to stock many forms which they are only called upon to supply in small numbers.

COI have prepared an exhibition to publicise the forms review, and we will have sent this to 17 locations in the first year, thereby reaching a potential audience of more than 18,000 civil servants. We have worked closely with the Civil Service College who are developing a range of training courses for staff both in forms units and in the policy and operational divisions in departments; and we have been supported by the Plain English Campaign who are also helping the Civil Service Commission with the review of their forms.

Next February, we shall be reporting to the Prime Minister and the Lord Privy Seal drawing together the plans which all departments have made to review their forms over the next two years. And it will show that over 5,000 forms will have been reviewed already - including such well-known ones as the income tax form (a new design will go on trial in selected areas next April) and a new passport application form which comes into use next January.

It is unlikely that an income tax form will ever be a welcome sight to the taxpayer. But at least we can do, and are doing, something to make sure that the form itself rubs the minimum of salt into the wound.



The Prime Minister and the Lord Privy Seal inspect the Forms exhibition at the Cabinet Office recently.

MPO's move to GOGGS is well in hand

MPO's plans for the move to the Government Offices, Great George Street, are well in hand.

When MPO was set up last November it was decided that there would be advantage in MPO staff being housed with Treasury colleagues in the Great George Street building. And, in its recent report, the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee of the House of Commons also emphasised the benefits of co-locating the two departments.

The planning of the complex, inter-related office moves involves four departments - the Treasury, the Foreign Office and Northern Ireland Office in GOGGS, and the MPO in OAB.

Now, at this first anniversary point, most ex-CSD Treasury staff have moved to join their colleagues in the Whitehall part of GOGGS. Some Foreign Office sections from there have transferred to OAB. Some internal MPO moves have been necessary to absorb newcomers. MPO staff will move into the St James' Park end of GOGGS over a number of weekends starting in late spring 1983. Staff moving into the vacated offices in OAB will move over the same weekends.

Gerry Ranaldi, Head of Office Services Branch, is planning the moves to MPO divisions across Horseguards. Fortunately he is no stranger to the problems! As well as maintaining common and office services,

and planning future accommodation changes for other parts of MPO, he and his small team are currently in the thick of the detailed arrangements. We hope soon to be able to let MPO staff see the accommodation plans.

Gerry Ranaldi's task isn't an enviable one. For instance, he spent one Friday earlier in November visiting all the 229 rooms on all five floors of GOGGS which MPO will occupy, in order to agree with the building surveyor structural work and a redecoration and spring cleaning schedule. The great majority of rooms will be brightened up. Improvements to the GOGGS restaurant are planned for next year.

The complexity of the whole operation is considerable. It's rather like trying to swap the contents of two pint bottles of milk without losing any; only it's even more difficult because the need for redecoration and other work reduces the number of usable offices even below the normal level. This may have some unexpected consequences: if you start seeing a lot more of your senior staff in the next few months, it might be because the builders are in their own offices on the first floor of OAB! It simply is not possible - even with temporary internal moves - for PSA's work to be kept to vacant offices only.

But Office Services are confident they can pull the whole operation off. You will only have to worry when you see the tents going up on Horseguards Parade...

The Pick of the Crop

The Civil Service Commission's main task is to select people for the middle and senior grades of the Home Civil and Diplomatic Services - from Executive Officer up to Permanent Secretary - all of whose subsequent training and career management will closely concern other parts of MPO.

We are involved in the selection of individuals for a whole alphabet of grades from Accountants and Architects through Quantity Surveyors to Zoologists. Some of these positions are very specialised! For instance this year we have played an important part in the appointment of the Shipkeeper of the Sailing Barge "Shamrock" on the river Tamar; the Director of Studies at the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh; the Head of the Department of Astronomy and Navigation at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich; and the Deputy Assistant Serjeant-at-Arms in the House of Commons at Westminster.

But "VIP" and one-off boards are just the tip of the iceberg. The bulk of the work concerns vacancies for general service grades such as Executive Officer (over 2,000), Scientists (400) and a great variety of P & T and other specialists. The scale of some of these competitions is staggering. The Commission will receive something like 80,000 applications this year which will result in something like 5,000 appointments.

By definition, we have to disappoint a lot of applicants. It is a tribute to the professionalism and integrity of the staff of the Commission that we receive astonishingly few complaints.

It is probably true to say that the Commission (together with the AA) was amongst the first to put Basingstoke "on the map". Distance from London can cause difficulties for career management, but on the plus side serves to emphasise the independence of the Commission in matters of selection. Since it was dispersed to Basingstoke the Commission has put down roots. Most staff live nearby; some walk to the office.

Most senior staff have had experience in other government departments; and the heads of division and branch heads in the Science and Technology Divisions are invariably on loan from other departments to ensure that the Commission keeps up-to-date with its customers' needs in these specialised fields.

The Commission is at one and the same time local, national and international in its outlook. Visitors this year have included not only the Mayor of Basingstoke but also officials from 19 foreign countries. We keep in close touch with 90 universities and polytechnics, with a wide variety of professional institutions and with colleges and institutes of higher education. And we

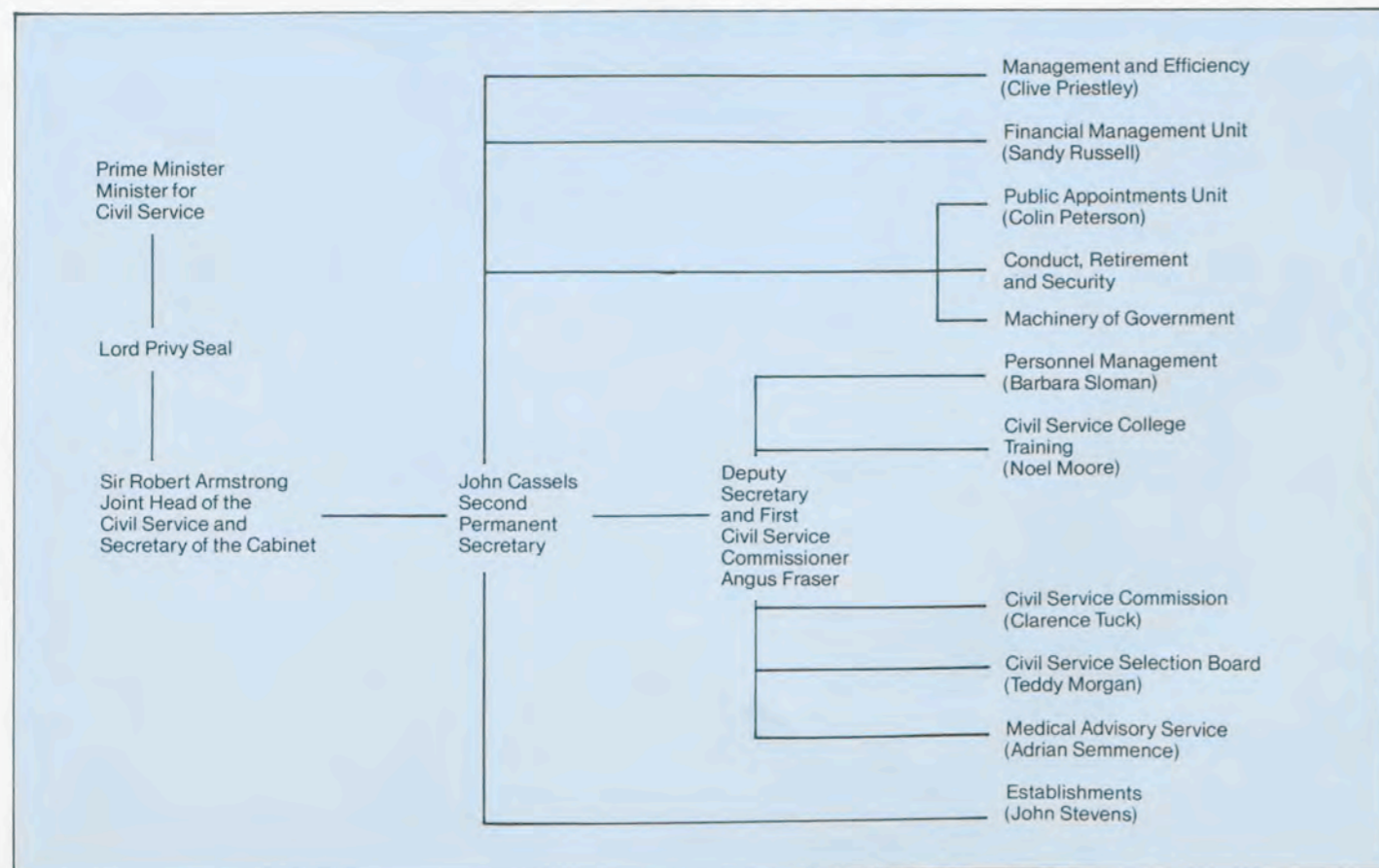
conduct examinations in 50 languages!

The number of staff at the Commission is still reducing (from 507 in 1970, 409 in 1979, to 267 this month), partly because of the reduction in recruitment generally and partly because we are dropping some work. This year we have been busy preparing detailed guidance for departments who from next January will become fully responsible for recruitment to junior grades. This will leave a slimmed down Commission whose direct responsibilities will be the recruitment of mainly graduate and professional people (where activity is showing signs of an upturn) and keeping up-to-date the guidance for departments who will recruit to the bulk of Civil Service posts.

In all this, our aim is to develop and deploy our resources - our experienced staff, our use of mechanical data processing, our professionally designed tests and procedures, and our trained assessors - so as to maintain and if possible enhance the reputation of the Commission as a centre of expertise in all aspects of recruitment. We exist, first and foremost, to ensure that Civil Service posts are filled on merit, by fair and open competition. Principles and expediency are uneasy bedfellows - choosing the best and being fair takes time, which can be difficult when staff are urgently needed. But in the long run quality matters.

The Management and Personnel Office

ORGANISATION



CSSB - A DEMANDING TASK

Most of the Civil Service Commission's work goes on in Basingstoke but there is also, in Standard House, Northumberland Avenue, a small outpost - the Civil Service Selection Board - which everyone calls "Sisby" and where a sophisticated selection procedure is carried out.

One feature of CSSB is that, although there may be upwards of 100 people in the building when boarding is at its peak, the permanent staff is small. Even at peak times there are no more than 25 staff on the books, and many of them are "borrowed".

Before CSSB, candidates will already have had to take a written qualifying test or a preliminary interview board. If successful at CSSB they will usually have to pass on to a Final Selection Board chaired by the First Civil Service Commissioner. Our task is to try to distinguish among a relatively large number of young people which candidates are most likely to have the personal and intellectual qualities to fit them in twenty or more years' time for highly responsible posts in the Service. CSSB looks for aptitudes as much as for achievements.

The same applies to testing procedures for people already in the Civil Service - notably for the new HEOD scheme. They will have had widely different experience in their jobs - some in Whitehall, some in regional or local offices, some in administration, some in scientific or technical jobs, and a good deal of emphasis is placed on job performance. But CSSB is still looking mainly to the future rather than to the past.

This is a demanding task - not only for the candidates but also for their assessors. Groups of about five candidates go to CSSB for two days and have a mixture of cognitive tests ("intelligence tests"), written exercises, oral group exercises and interviews, in which their performance is judged by teams of three assessors.

The early eighties have brought new challenges for CSSB. Recently there has been a sharp increase in numbers of applications, accompanied by an equally sharp decrease in numbers of vacancies. For reasons of economy the number of people seen at CSSB is limited; the only way to do this is to eliminate a higher proportion of candidates before they reach CSSB. This year, over 80% of applicants for the Appointments in Administration competition (for Administration Trainees, diplomats and some other grades) were knocked out before they got to CSSB, and thus before anyone had ever seen them. A similar proportion of candidates for Inspector of Taxes did not survive beyond the preliminary interview boards. In each case around 4000 applicants started, and about 400 were seen at CSSB (a number, of course, withdraw of their own accord).

Perhaps surprisingly, despite large numbers of applicants, it is sometimes difficult to find enough people who match CSSB's standards. This is most marked for the Administration Trainee scheme, for which only about half of the 1982 vacancies are filled.

The selection of high-potential individuals is a difficult task. CSSB makes a vital contribution to the future of the Civil Service. Nevertheless, it is an expensive selection tool, and one to be kept as sharp as possible. The Commissioners recently asked Sir Alec Atkinson, a former Permanent Secretary, if he would review the procedures, with an eye particularly for cost-effectiveness. His report, which is due next February, is awaited with great interest.

Jaimie Dodd (Principal Psychologist, Civil Service Selection Board) taking part in interview training in the closed circuit TV suite at Standard House. He is running a practice interview for later discussion with new assessors.



Much of MPO's work is in the form of expert advice. This is particularly true of the Medical Advisory Service

A leaner, fitter civil service?

Coronary heart disease kills 160,000 people in England and Wales each year. If it could be prevented, the theoretical maximum life span could be over 100 years! One possible way of tackling this major epidemic is to screen people at work and offer special care to those found to be particularly liable to heart disease.

Unfortunately this approach isn't proving as promising as it might, according to the results of a study just published in the United States. In this study some 13,000 men were identified as being particularly liable to coronary heart disease, out of a total group of over 350,000. Some were given special advice, eg on diet and smoking, together with treatment for high blood pressure, while the others were not given any special care. But 10 years on significant benefits from the special care have yet to appear, and similar results have been reported in this country and in Sweden.

The Medical Advisory Service (MAS) in the MPO needs to keep in touch with up-to-date research like this in order to help civil servants and their employing departments

most effectively. For instance, these results support the decision taken to switch the MAS's resources away from screening work and to concentrate more on "occupational medicine".

This means looking at work-related illnesses - which includes helping to protect diplomats against malaria and Ministry of Agriculture staff against animal diseases. Possible hazards (such as from man-made mineral fibres) are also carefully studied.

At the moment MAS doctors are extending their series of regular visits to Civil Service establishments, and the MAS is following up proposals to re-organise the nurses employed by Government departments into an Occupational Health Nursing Service, in order to keep a better eye on working conditions.

Managing People

One of the MPO's most important tasks is to promote efficient and effective working by getting the right people in the right place at the right time with the right motivation. This is principally the work of the Personnel Management Group, though of course it involves ME, Training, CRS and the Commission, as well as constant consultation with other departments. And of course we also have a fair amount to do with the unions.

Departments have a good deal of autonomy in personnel management matters, so a lot of our work is giving advice guidance and encouragement, not laying down the law. We do have some central management responsibilities. PM1 handles the succession planning arrangements which are designed to get the right people, with the right training and experience, into Open Structure, and we are improving and refining those arrangements still further. But our concern is not just with the lofty heights of the Civil Service. PM3 and 4 have responsibilities for the whole organisational framework (the "structure") of the Civil Service. This means asking whether civil servants are organised into grades and groups in the best possible way, and carrying through changes that are needed. Like any large organisation the Civil Service needs to keep up with a constantly changing environment - or face the fate of the dinosaurs.

One of the areas of change is pay. The Megaw Report bears closely on personnel management, and PM4 work with the Treasury to ensure that future pay and structure arrangements are going to make sense in management terms.

But a great deal of personnel management really comes under the heading of leadership. Sir Derek Rayner described it as devising "a policy to enable staff to give of

their best", and this is our key note. For instance, PM1 have been working in improving the general planning of career development for EOs and have just issued a note of good practice which they hope to follow up with seminars with grade managers.

PM2 are hard at work on ways of improving the motivation of staff by helping them to be more closely involved in the way their work is designed and carried out; the Job Satisfaction Team has done a lot of work here. PM2 are also involved in experiments to give managers greater delegated authority and to improve local co-operation between departments. And they are trying to improve the reporting system so that individual staff will have a clearer idea of how they are doing. The emphasis is all on ways of developing a more participative management style throughout the Service. A major development is likely to be the report of the multi-department review of personnel work, on which PM and ME are working together.

PM3 are particularly concerned with about 130,000 specialists in Service-wide grades - people like scientists, engineers, telephonists, security guards, lawyers, doctors and photoprinters (just to name a few). This year 23 Government scientists were recommended for special promotion under a scheme organised by PM3. This scheme allows outstanding scientists and technologists to continue their work without the usual administrative load of their new grade - a practical example of enabling staff to give of their best. But many senior posts need wider skills and less specialised knowledge, so PM3 is also putting a lot of effort into schemes for helping other specialists acquire administrative and managerial skills. SPATS (the senior professional administrative training scheme), which offers good specialists of all kinds training at the College followed by administrative experience, is quite well known. But PM3 is also working on a new scheme for developing scientists and technologists as "technological generalists".

It all adds up to a determined effort to help civil servants make a full contribution to their department's work, and have the job satisfaction which comes from doing so.

Women Only?

A great deal of interest has been aroused by a course for women middle managers, which has been held at the Civil Service College since November 1981. The notion of a women-only training course has caused curiosity and some controversy! Why should such a course be necessary?

For two reasons. First, it is a contribution to the Civil Service's policy of equal opportunity. Currently less than 10% of those in middle management and equivalent grades (HEO, SEO and Principal) are women. (This kind of training is in line with national policy; the Sex Discrimination Act does allow for single sex training under certain circumstances.)

Second, there is increasing evidence to suggest that women about to enter, or already in middle management, have training needs which are not fully catered for by mixed group training. Research evidence suggests that where women form a minority, as is the case in most middle and senior management training, they can be at a disadvantage. Evidence also suggests that some women managers learn more effectively in all-female group. The lack of the competitive element so frequently found in men only or mixed group training, and the support provided by an all-women group, can help women to learn more effectively.

Differences in training needs may also be related to the fact that many women do have different career patterns from men.

Specific course objectives are to help women plan personal and career goals; introduce them to assertion training and interpersonal skills; and for the course itself to form the basis of a support group. A two-day follow-up workshop is held six months after the week's course in order to re-inforce and build on initial learning and support.

Nearly 100 women have attended the four courses held to date. During the first year an additional course has been held because of the large number of applications to attend. The course has been enthusiastically received by most of those who have attended, who considered a major strength of the course to be that it was for women only. Over 90% of participants have managed to attend the follow-up workshops held so far, so the high level of motivation and enthusiasm is being maintained.

The Lord Privy Seal, Lady Young, has shown great interest in and support for the course, and visited it in October to talk to course members.

Of course, this course is just one small - though interesting - part of MPO's work to ensure equal opportunities for women. A Joint Review Group on employment opportunities for women in the Civil Service under MPO chairmanship has met as many as 30 times and is now poised to produce a report which will be of major significance. Jumping the gun on this, the MPO has already begun a review of its own record and procedures in giving a fair deal to its own women staff.

Civil Service College, Sunningdale



College faces exciting year

A smaller Civil Service must be a more professional one. The cut in numbers and the pressures for improved effectiveness and efficiency present the College with a challenge. In the 1981/82 academic year the College showed how well it can meet that challenge.

The College is a substantial part of MPO but - partly because staff are either in Belgrave Road or in Sunningdale rather than Old Admiralty Building - we are not as well known as we might be amongst colleagues in other parts of the department.

There are five teaching directorates, each with directors at Assistant Secretary level. The biggest - Systems - runs courses in information technology, computers and management services. It has had a very busy year, (the most obvious achievement being) the successful running of 50 'IT awareness seminars' throughout Britain as a contribution to 'Information Technology Year'. A lot of work has also been done on forms design.

The Directorate of Economics and Financial Management is very much in the

front-line in the current efforts to improve financial management in the Civil Service and it has designed the new Senior Finance Course which all Principal Finance Officers will be expected to take.

The Directorate of Policy and Administration Studies has a varied task: it runs the new-style modular courses for ATs and other fast-streamers; it runs courses to prepare specialists for wider administrative work; it manages the very successful reciprocal training arrangements which the College has with the French, German and Dutch and which celebrated their tenth birthday this year; and it offers a range of other courses in international and European Community work and in social policy.

The Directorate of Management Studies mounts a wide range of courses on management, including staff management, industrial relations, consultancy and interpersonal skills. And the directorate also trains departmental trainers. An Under Secretary seminar on 'What makes a Government Department Effective?' proved a great success.

The title of the Directorate of Statistics and Operational Research is largely self-explanatory but the work is more wide-ranging than one might expect. For example, an Under Secretary Seminar on 'Value for Money' was one of the highlights of the year and is another illustration of how the College reflects current Government policies and priorities.

In all we ran about 720 courses during the year and logged up 61,000 student days - a record number of courses and the first year since 1975/76 in which student days have increased over the previous year rather than decreased. Courses in general are shorter (an average of about five days), more intensive, more practical and more job relevant than ever before. And lecturers have also been able to fit in valuable consultative work in departments. The College believes it can now offer departments training courses in as wide a range of relevant management skills as can the business schools and its staff have an impressive blend of practical experience and high academic and professional qualifications.

The College faces an exciting year in 1982/83. We must, of course, make a contribution to MPO's planned staff cuts but we nevertheless plan an even bigger programme of courses than in 1981/82. One obvious growth area will continue to be financial management. But all directorates are responding to the need for new courses. The College has never run exactly the same programme for two consecutive years and is never likely to do so. The training needs of the Civil Service are constantly changing and developing. By anticipating and responding to those needs, the College can ensure that it plays most effectively its role in creating an ever more professional and effective Civil Service.

The fascinating role of matching people and jobs

The Public Appointments Unit (PAU) in the MPO is interested in people and the fascinating work of helping to match them to the very wide range of public appointments - boards of nationalised industries, public bodies of all kinds, and Government committees and commissions.

To help Ministers who have to make these appointments, the PAU maintains what is known as the "Central List" of names - 4,500 of them in fact from all over the country.

The Central List is computerised. The person's name and factual information about his or her experience, qualifications and interests is stored on a Zilog micro-computer which sits comfortably on a desktop. It was designed so that it could be used by all members of the PAU with a minimum of training. It enables them to select the names of people on the List who meet

particular specifications (such as experience in a given type of work) much more quickly than a manual system. And information can be kept up-to-date much more simply. It's a good example of how new technology can improve the quality of jobs.

The List is fed from many sources. Anyone can write to the PAU nominating someone (including themselves!) and the PAU are looking for still more names. Only 16% of the List are women and the Government want more suitably qualified women to come forward. The PAU is also always on the lookout for people in their 40s, representatives of the disabled and of the ethnic minorities, and more names of people living in parts of the country other than London and the South-East, to ensure that the List reflects all sections of the population.



At the Belgrave Road centre of the Civil Service College, Mme Jacqueline Millerieux of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, Paris, briefing (in French) a course of ATs and HEO(D)s about the part of their 2½ week course which takes place in Paris. The course is about France and the EEC.

Having been only recently appointed as Head of Information Services Division, in MPO, John Stubbs was in a good position to ask Permanent Secretary Sir Robert Armstrong and Second Permanent Secretary John Cassels about some of the points raised by the media and staff on MPO and its activities. He did so in an interview just before this newsletter went to the printers.



“Are you satisfied with the progress made by MPO during this year on the Early Tasks which were published in April?”

Sir Robert Armstrong: Yes we are. My judgment is that we've made a very good start and are making good progress with bringing them into effect. Indeed we're already thinking about the tasks for next year, so building on the progress we've made. We don't see this as a one-year wonder. The tasks on which we are engaged are going to be with us in various forms for a number of years.

“Do you think that MPO has made the impact hoped for in Whitehall?”

John Cassels: I think we've made a good impact – quite as much as we could have hoped for. The 1982 efficiency programme is well up to schedule and involves an enormous amount of work by Departments in Whitehall. That has made a big impact. Where personnel management is concerned we are at the beginning of a very large task – to help the Service to adapt its approach to people in rather different circumstances than in the past. We've made a start there too.

“Many of the staff in MPO have the impression that MPO is just a stepping stone for something else, such as total integration with Treasury or into a Prime Minister's office. Can you comment?”

Sir Robert Armstrong: I don't think that the MPO is transitional to other things at all. If the Prime Minister had wanted to integrate the MPO with the Treasury, she would have done so last year when the decisions were taken in November about the Civil Service Department. As to the other suggestion of integration with the Prime Minister's office, perhaps I could draw attention to what the Prime Minister said in the House of Commons on 11 November when she said: “I am not setting up a Prime Minister's department, I have a Prime Minister's office . . .” by which she meant her office in 10 Downing Street. The MPO already serves the Prime Minister in her capacity as Minister for the Civil Service. I take very seriously this direct interest on the part of the Prime Minister, for the Civil Service as a whole and for the work of the MPO. And I don't think there is any justification for regarding the MPO as a kind of transitional organisation.

“Do you believe that anything can be done to show Ministers and the public that the Civil Service can become efficient and effective?”

John Cassels: We published only a couple of months ago a White Paper on efficiency and effectiveness in the Civil Service. This was a very full reply to the report of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee of the House of Commons on those very subjects. It pointed out, for example, that the Civil Service will have reduced its numbers by 102,000 as between 1979 and 1984, and that already the salary bill is down by about £½ billion. It pointed to the work being done on raising efficiency with the help of Sir Derek Rayner, and announced the financial management initiative which is now being worked on by Departments, with the aim of making managers more accountable and their objectives clearer. The more we publish the more the message will get over.

“What about the present public and media image. Do you think that the things you've mentioned will improve this and the morale of the civil servant?”

Sir Robert Armstrong: I'm not complacent about the morale of the Civil Service, and I realise that it's not as high as we should all like it to be – and I realise some of the reasons for that. But I hope that we shall not spend too much time thinking about our public image. It's important, of course, that civil servants should present themselves well, particularly those who have to deal directly with the public. But I was struck by reading something which my predecessor 30 years ago said, when he said that the Civil Service's public image is roughly equated with that of mothers-in-law. I don't think that the Civil Service in any country has ever or will ever be what you might call a popular institution. But it is something that is necessary and useful. We shall get a good public image and improve our morale if we are doing our jobs well, with courtesy to the

public, and with the knowledge that we are giving value for money. Improvements in morale will come, less from thinking about morale as such than from concentrating on making sure that our job is worthwhile and doing it as well as we can.

“There is a lot of talk at the moment on issues of equal opportunities— how would you see the long term issues of women in the Civil Service and their career structure?”

John Cassels: The Civil Service pioneered better opportunities for women, and gave equal pay to women a good time ago. We're a little more aware now of the problems there are of giving equal opportunities really full expression. That's why the MPO has been studying the problem of equal opportunities together with the trade unions. Some of the problems are those of society, such as the extent to which women are interested in a full-time career and can pursue one with full support in the home. But there are things we must do in the Service to ensure that we really are giving women equal opportunities. For example, that they have an equal chance of appearing in front of promotion boards; that their need sometimes to be offered part-time work is taken into account; and that we don't unconsciously organise ourselves in a way which is convenient for men but not so convenient for women. So there is a lot to do to make sure that opportunities are genuinely equal.

Sir Robert Armstrong: If I could just say on a slightly lighter note on that point, I think you can rely on John Cassels and me to be very aware of the importance of equal opportunities for women. After all we are the only men in the country, so far as I know, all three of whose superiors in the hierarchy are women.

Postscript

I have just read these articles on their way to the press. They show how much is going on and how much MPO has already managed to do in its first year, as well as how much needs to be done in the next.

There are plenty of signs here that MPO is a lusty infant, in good health and full of energy.

There is one point I particularly want to stress. MPO is the people who work in it. We depend on collective effort. Bright thoughts remain just bright thoughts unless they are captured on paper, transmitted to others, developed, made practical and actually put into practice and this

involves a great many people – typists, telephonists, messengers, clerical officers and a great many others – working together well. How else, for example, could the Civil Service Commission run the direct entrant Executive Officer competition with over 24,000 applicants this year?

So, if MPO does its job well everyone is entitled to credit. I think we can all take some satisfaction from this year's tally.

J. Cassels

9. E/S?



file

RM

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 November, 1982

Thank you for your letter to Robin Butler of 28 October.

I have had a word with the Prime Minister about the M.P.O.'s Anniversary Party on Tuesday, 30 November and she would like to look in some time between 1700 hrs and 1830 hrs. I will be in touch with you again nearer the time to give you more precise timing.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Mrs. M.E. Brown,
Management and Personnel Office

6

From the Private Secretary



Robin Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Management and Personnel Office

Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ

Telephone 01-273 } 4400
GTN 273 }

28 October 1982

Dear Robin,

Mr Butler
Can we discuss
what be done
if you insist!
C. 29/10.

MPO's FIRST ANNIVERSARY, TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 1982

We spoke about this on the telephone today. MPO has decided to celebrate its first anniversary on Tuesday 30 November (a somewhat arbitrary date!). The main events are to be a lunchtime drinks party for media and MPO top management; and early evening drinks (between about 5 and 6.30 pm) for a representative group of staff.

It would be very nice if the Prime Minister were able to look in on one of these occasions, and you thought that the early evening party might be possible.

Subject to your advice, we will of course send the Prime Minister a formal invitation.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Brown

MRS M E BROWN