New Employment Law Handbook

Friday, July 21, 2006

Oxford Strategic Leadership Programme alum Joan Lewis is publishing a comprehensive new guide, Employment Law and Occupational Health: A Practical Handbook. Exploring all key issues in occupational health practice from pre-employment to termination of employment, it provides information on topics that include confidentiality, discrimination, drugs and alcohol problems stress and counselling, maternity leave and working abroad – all very usefully backed up with a range of case studies, procedural checklists and templates for letters and documents. Joan’s Handbook will be published by Blackwell on 20 August 2006. To pre-order or find out more visit www.blackwellpublishing.com.

Discussions on the Danube

Tuesday, July 18, 2006

Templeton Fellows Elizabeth Howard and Jonathan Reynolds, along with Templeton research student Muriel Wilson-Jeanselme, presented papers at the 13th annual conference of the European Institute of Retailing and Services Science in Budapest in July. Organised by the Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, over 250 academics from more than 30 countries participated in the conference. ‘This is now a well-established forum for international academics to present their work in progress to a cross-disciplinary audience which is united by its interest in the retail and consumer service sector,’ comments Fellow in Retail Marketing, Jonathan Reynolds. ‘It’s an excellent venue for the discussion of new ideas and new collaborative projects.’

Radio Interview

Wednesday, July 12, 2006

Fellow in Strategic Leadership and Director of The Oxford Strategic Leadership Programme Marshall Young was interviewed on Radio Oxford’s breakfast programme on 5 June. Speaking about his role in the African Leadership Institute programme, the first module of which was held recently in South Africa, Marshall stressed the global involvement of Oxford Said Business School and the College and their commitment to helping develop a new generation of African leaders. The second module will be held in London and Oxford in September. For more details of the programme in South Africa, in the course of which Marshall and the participants met Desmond Tutu, see website news items ‘Management Alumnus Launches African Leadership Initiative’ and ‘College Fellow Meets Desmond Tutu’.
EC’s Massive Microsoft Fine: Not So Clear-Cut After All

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Associate Fellow and long-time Brussels watcher Robin Pedler writes: ‘The record fine on Microsoft of €495 million announced by EC competition commissioner Neellie Kroes on 12 July raises three big questions:

How much power does the competition commissioner actually wield?

How far can the EC go in regulating and punishing American companies operating in Europe, when their behaviour has not been ruled illegal in the US?

What are the implications for the IT industry?

The EC’s competition commissioner has the power to impose penalties on a company but, before doing so, has to clear various hurdles. The commissioner must first consult an advisory committee consisting of representatives of all the member states, then get approval for the resultant proposal from the full college of twenty-five commissioners. The competition commissioner can then announce and enforce the measures or fines. The company, however, has the right to appeal decisions at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) – a right almost always exercised. The ECJ is expected to deliver its verdict on Microsoft’s appeal towards the end of the year. To that extent, therefore, decisions against Microsoft are not yet final, though precedent suggests they are unlikely to be completely overturned.

The Microsoft fine is the latest and most expensive of a series of EC decisions involving US companies. Another recent high profile example was the decision of the Commission to ban the proposed merger between General Electric and Honeywell, even though this had been cleared in the US. Competition regulators do consult across the Atlantic to try to achieve consistency but they face significant problems because the two systems are so very different. In the US cases are brought as litigation and decided by the court whereas in the EU the process is administrative.

This brings us to the IT industry and the issue of ‘bundling’. Bundling according to the EC, is programming together a range of applications into computer operating systems in such a way that competitors selling these applications as stand-alone products are excluded from the market and hence an ‘abuse of dominant position’. The new fine isn’t Microsoft’s first brush with the EC in this area.

In 2004 in response to complaints from Apple (iTunes) and Macromedia (Flash Player) Ms Kroes’ predecessor, Mario Monti, imposed a record fine of €497 million on Microsoft for bundling its new Media Player with the Windows operating system. The company was required ‘to provide competitors with information on protocols and APs of the company’s server software’. It is this requirement that Ms Kroes (no doubt once again urged on by competitors, who have formed themselves into the European Committee for Inter-Operable Systems – ECIS and appointed a combative Chairman Simon Awde to fight their corner) has judged not to have been adequately met.

Microsoft is consulting with the Commission to avoid future problems. However, it is worth noting that next year Microsoft intends to launch a new operating system – Windows Vista – and once again, they propose bundling various applications into the system, one of which is a Windows Defender security system. Microsoft’s attorney Horatio Guiterrez has gone on record that “forcing Microsoft to sell Vista without Windows Defender is like forcing BMW to sell cars without air bags”. Watch this space!

To discuss the case further with Robin contact him at robin.pedler@templeton.ox.ac.uk.

PhD for Visiting Templeton Scholar

Wednesday, July 12, 2006

Congratulations to Andry Rakotovololona, visiting scholar at the College, 2002 – 2006, on gaining his doctorate from the Sorbonne. Andry did a lot of the background research on his dissertation on ‘Credit risk in banking strategy: technical determinants and responsible management for emerging markets’ in the College’s Information Centre and Library. As he lives in Park Town in Oxford, he found having its resources near to hand especially useful.

Andry, a joint French and Malagasy national, whose career has been in international investment banking, has a particular interest in emerging market countries (and was disappointed that other commitments did not allow him to attend the Emerging Markets Forum held in the College last December). Andry participated in The Oxford Advanced Management Programme (AMP) in July 2000 and found its international blending of experience very apposite: “The approach of the AMP, bringing together people from developing as well as developed countries was for me especially useful. I am a firm believer in “mixing up knowledge” and getting the best from all sides.” In future Andry is looking to work at ‘the mid-point between academe and corporate research’, perhaps returning to banking, ‘working as a practitioner but at the same time continuing my research and feeding it into the world of practice.’
Commemorating Ross Davies  
**Tuesday, July 18, 2006**

Friends and colleagues from Oxford and beyond gathered on a gloriously sunny afternoon at Egrove Park on 13 July to pay tribute to Ross Davies, Fellow and Emeritus Fellow of Templeton College, who died in 2005. Ross Davies was the founding Director of the Oxford Institute of Retail Management, now in its 21st year, to bring rigorous scholarship to the practical needs of retail firms, and to mark the occasion an armillary sphere commissioned from David Harber Sundials was unveiled.

Fellow in Retail Marketing, Jonathan Reynolds, commented: ‘In thinking of how we might create an appropriate physical memorial of Ross, it seemed to his friends that an armillary sphere captured both his origins as a geographer, his role as an educator and his love of gardening and landscaping.’ Speaking at an earlier event in London, Sir Stuart Hampson, Chairman of the John Lewis Partnership, had remembered Ross: ‘Peering ahead, he embarked on pioneering research on the impact of retailing on the economic vitality and viability of towns and shopping centres. He brought together a disparate group of retailers into what became known as the Oxford Retail Group – and I’m very proud to have been a member of that Templeton mafia.’

One More Time  
**Friday, July 21, 2006**

At the end of their four weeks’ stay in Oxford executives participating in the Said Business School’s summer 2006 Oxford Advanced Management Programme (AMP) invited student representatives Dr Nicoletta Occhiocupo and Stéphane Girod to join them for their final celebration dinner on Friday July 14. The AMP participants took the opportunity to say how much they had enjoyed meeting members of The College Graduate Common Room during their time at Egrove Park and thanked Nicoletta and Stephane particularly for their help in facilitating this. In addition to meeting informally in the IC&L and Common Room or over dinner this was the third event that brought together the AMP participants and Templeton students during the course of the programme, the first being a ‘Jazz & Jambalaya’ barbecue on 24 June and the second a TV evening to watch the World Cup Final on 9 July. Several students also sat in on the AMP’s Oxford Briefings, in which guest speakers from the University and business lead discussions on key global challenges.

Barclay Family Bereavement  
**Tuesday, July 25, 2006**

The Dean Professor Michael Earl writes: ‘Staff, friends and Fellows will be saddened to learn that Stephen Barclay’s mother, Evelyn, the wife of the College’s original benefactor Clifford Barclay, passed away yesterday after a short illness. From the beginning Mrs Barclay was a great supporter of OCMS and the College, and we were delighted that she was able to visit us for the Barclay Lecture eighteen months ago. I am sure you will all wish to join me in sending my condolences to Stephen, who continues to represent the family on our Governing Body as a Barclay Fellow, and to his family.’

Farewell to Martin Barnes  
**Monday, July 31, 2006**

On 28 July some forty members of the College and the Major Projects Association (MPA) and guests gathered in the IC&L to say goodbye to Martin Barnes, the retiring Executive Director of the MPA – an institution with which the College has had a long and friendly connection during its twenty-five years of existence (see recent news item “Templeton Fellows attend MPA founders’ dinner”).

‘The hand-over of the ship deserves to be marked,’ commented MPA’s chairman Sir Robert Walmsley. ‘Thanks to Martin we are on course, and our future course is clear.’ Manon Bradley, MPA’s Administrator, paid her tribute: ‘Martin, as a director and leader you are second to none. Often you would say “just thinking aloud here”. This is a great thing to say – it simultaneously gave us permission to critique his ideas and the opportunity to think aloud. Another saying was “We’ve done it like this in the past but that doesn’t mean that we have to carry on doing it like this”. The archer hits the target partly by pulling, partly by letting go. Martin knows when to let go. Finally, my favourite saying of Martin’s is “I am very proud of you”. He makes sure we know how much we all count to the success of MPA. Martin, you encourage, praise and support us. We will miss your stories, your sense of humour – and even your pedantries!’

MPA’s Maggie Latham humorously endorsed these sentiments in a poem she had composed ‘after the school of Pam Ayres.’ Also present was the incoming Executive Director, John Glanville, who in conclusion commented on the huge challenge of stepping into Martin’s shoes, adding ‘But I like challenges and that is why I am here.’

To find out more about MPA and its activities and future plans visit www.majorprojects.org.