

Mark Easterby-Smith (5th February 1948 – 15th April 2020)

Mark Easterby-Smith through his various roles has made an outstanding contribution to the life and development of the British Academy of Management.

Mark's father, Victor was a career naval officer who, as a torpedo officer on HMS Rodney took part in the sinking of the Bismarck, while his mother Margery, a WREN drove ambulances during the Blitz. Mark went to Rugby School, where ironically his preferred sport was cricket, although he enjoyed all sports. Going on to university he completed a first degree in engineering before then deciding that his interests lay more in the human side enterprise and moving into the behavioural sciences. Mark read for both his degrees, *Engineering Science* and his Ph.D. in *Organisational Behaviour* at Durham University and it was at Durham he secured his first academic job as a research assistant in 1972.

His early interests were in management development systems and the audit of management development methods and it was in these areas that he established an early collaboration with David Ashton. In 1978 he moved to Lancaster University as a lecturer and into the newly founded Centre for the Study of Management Learning (CSML). This Centre (later Department) had been conceived in 1974 as a Management Teacher Development Unit and was strongly supported by a generous award from the Foundation for Management Education (FME). With Donald Binstead as Director, an ex ICI organisational development advisor, and John Burgoyne as its director of research, this Centre with Mark's contribution soon became recognised as one of the leading Centres in the UK focusing on the study of Management Learning.

Mark not only researched and taught in the CSML but also, together with his colleagues, worked to create institutional mechanisms to develop management learning as a serious academic discipline. In 1993 he founded the Journal of Management Learning and by 1995 it was incorporated into the ISI. In 2003 Mark changed his research focus to concentrate on new emerging themes, organisational learning, and management research methodology.

Up until 1991 management research methods had developed piecemeal, for the most part adopting methods from other disciplines. The contribution Mark made with the publication of *Management Research* was a first attempt to identify and justify methods and philosophies specific to researching in the field of management and business. It is through this book that Mark is so well known as it has been a first port of call for many generations of doctoral students who were setting out on their research and needing to find somewhere to start. In 2009 Professor Dusya Vera wrote a tribute article in Management Learning that recognised Mark's contribution to the field of organizational learning. In this article she highlighted his 'entrepreneurial spirit, and intellectual curiosity that has led him to evolve his work dynamically as the field itself has evolved'. These are all qualities that many of his students and colleagues will readily recognise. Over the length of his academic career Mark has published numerous academic papers and over 10 books.

In 1997 Mark became an academician of the Academy of Social Sciences for his academic contribution in these fields.

Over the years, at Lancaster University he has fulfilled various roles: Director of the School's Doctoral Programme; Director of the Graduate School and Head of Department. His interest in building capacity in business schools more widely saw him take on several external roles. For example, as a visiting faculty member on the International Teachers Program (ITP). In 1984 when this program was held at London Business School Mark acted as its director. During the early 1990s he also instigated discussions with the ESRC about the development of a new cadre of academic faculty for the rapidly expanding business school sector in the UK. This led to funding for 180 three-year Teaching

Fellowships which were in 25 leading UK business schools. Mark served as director of this scheme and it is to his credit that many of the programmes participants have done very well in their subsequent careers, most are in professorial posts and many have been made significant contributions to their various learned societies.

In 1996 Mark was appointed to serve as a member of the ESRC Postgraduate Training Board (later Training and Development Board, now Training Committee). As a result of this involvement he was asked to serve on numerous Research Council Panels but most notably their Postdoctoral Fellowship Panel. His most recent connection with the Research Council came about when in 2003 he was appointed to become a Senior Fellow with the Advanced Institute of Management and Research. One of his remits within this scheme was to establish capacity building activities and to aid the international visibility of UK Management Research, particularly through links with top US scholars in his fields of expertise.

Perhaps though, Mark's most significant and sustained contribution has been to the British Academy of Management. Throughout the 1990s Mark made contributions to the academy as a member of the British Academy of Management's Council. As council member Mark represented BAM in the establishment of the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS). In 2001, Mark was elected as a Vice-Chair and in 2004 became chair leading to in become its president in 2006. It was serving in these roles that he argued for the establishment of Special Interest Groups (SIGS) to better recognise the different research interests and agendas of members and to support member's research. He was also the prime mover around other reforms which included a permanent office in London. During this period and through his energy and focus he contributed to tripling the membership and quadrupling the academy's annual income to establish BAM as the primary learned society of business and management in the UK. In 2006 Mark became Dean of the College of Fellows, chairing the group that recommends Fellowships and national awards.

Following this period of service Mark received a number of honours and awards. In 2010 he was presented by BAM with the Richard Whipp Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mark was a man with few airs or graces, making time for students and academic colleagues alike. In later life when not working quite so hard he rekindled his interest in golf and with his wife Anna Lorbiecki, enjoyed learning Italian - to better appreciate their holidays abroad. He also performed in the local Gilbert and Sullivan society productions with the *Hornby Occasionals!* This came about when he decided that instead of waiting around when taking and collecting his daughter to rehearsals, he would join the chorus! He could boast that three generations of Easterby-Smiths had been in an amateur production of the same opera – Patience.

Hearing of his diagnosis of Parkinson's disease was a cruel blow.

Mark leaves a wife, Anna and three children Sam and Sarah by his first marriage and Sophie by his second.

Richard Thorpe