



# IPSM WORLD



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The Quarterly Journal of the Institute of Public Sector Management

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## THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME!

Liverpool 2008 Revisited – Whither 2009?

The above photograph was taken at the IPSM's Celebratory Dinner at The Suites Hotel, Knowsley during the evening of Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008. In the photograph – from left to right – are Maurice Condie, Rosy Leigh, Andy Egan and Gregory Alake.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the first edition of IPSM World, the Institute's quarterly e-journal. The IPSM's membership is becoming increasingly international, with members throughout the UK, plus Canada, France, Ghana, Nigeria and Spain. A report on the Institute's most recent Council meeting is set out below, together with a report on the Institute's historic and very successful celebratory dinner held at the Suites Hotel, Knowsley, during the evening of Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. Many of the IPSM's diners and their partners stayed overnight in the Suites Hotel, and on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October, eight of them participated in a conducted minibus tour of Liverpool, the European Union's City of Culture in 2008, visiting both Liverpool cathedrals and all four former homes of the UK's greatest ever pop group, The Beatles.

Just to remind you, the IPSM's 2009 Subscription Year covers 13 months, as agreed by Council in May 2008. Subscriptions for 2009 fell due on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009, covering membership up to and including February 2010. Already, 107 IPSM members have paid their subscriptions for the current year, with 24 members taking advantage of the IPSM's offer whereby members could pay for their subscriptions for 2009, 2010 and 2011 at 2008 prices, thus making a saving not only on their 2009 fees, but in respect of any possible increases agreed in 2010 and 2011.

In 2010, subscriptions will fall due on 1<sup>st</sup> March, covering the 13 months until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. From then on, the IPSM's Financial and Subscription Years will be harmonised, covering the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March every year. The Institute's Regional and National Groups are becoming more active, with the Welsh Group planning on an event for all members living and working in Wales on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June. As Clerk to a local council, I have requested that on this occasion all IPSM members serving Town, Parish and Community Councils be invited to participate in this regional / national event, which will focus on recent developments in HR legislation, especially in terms of how such developments affect public sector managers.

One of the key pieces of legislation is the Employment Act 2008, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. The legislation will be particularly relevant in terms of Disciplinary Procedures and Policies, and will also have some bearing on other personnel / human resource procedures, such as public sector organisations' Grievance Procedures. IPSM member Paul Egan, a Fellow of the Institute and until recently Deputy Chief Executive of the South Wales Probation Service, has kindly agreed to provide all those attending with the latest information concerning employment law, and how such legislation affects IPSM members in their role as managers, especially as staff managers. I do hope that all Welsh members, plus all the IPSM's Clerks and Deputy Clerks of Town, Parish and Community Councils, will be able to attend. Information is being sent out under separate cover by Jeremy Morgan, Welsh National IPSM Group Leader.

Derek Wolfe, FIPSM,  
Immediate Past President and Hon. Secretary.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES & THE RECESSION**

The recession that started in 2008 is already having a significant impact on the finances of public organisations including local authorities and housing associations. The main economic effects are:

- Restricted access to credit
- Falling property and share values
- Falling currency values
- Low levels of consumer demand
- Low levels of economic growth
- Increased unemployment
- Government ownership of and guarantees for banks
- Guarantees for banks
- Low interest rates
- Bringing forward of public expenditure plan

The first half of 2008/09 saw inflation increasing to a peak of 5.2% in September 2008 causing cost pressures. This level of inflation was higher than that which was predicted at the time of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review leading to budgets for 2008/09 being lower in real terms than was originally intended. Fuel bills, for example, increased significantly. However, inflation is now falling to lower levels and the local government pay settlement for April 2008, for example, was agreed (subject to arbitration) at 2.45%. Cost pressures are therefore likely to arise from increased demand rather than from inflationary pressures.

The collapse of the Icelandic banks obviously had an impact on those organisations that held deposits there. One local authority that was especially badly affected pointed out, ironically, that they had diversified their lending to avoid falling victim of a banking collapse and had invested in four separate Icelandic banks. A concern about the safety of deposits is now widespread, giving a higher profile to Treasury Management, lending policies and the use and reliability of credit ratings.

A survey of local authorities by the Audit Commission in December 2008 found that demand for services is starting to increase. They found that 25% of Councils were experiencing increases in demand for the care of elderly people, 33% were dealing with increases in homelessness and 10% had even found an increase in demand for state school places for children who were previously in private education. This effect was especially marked in London, presumably because of the impact of the recession on the financial services industry. There is already evidence that the demand for social housing is increasing. An increase in the number of family breakdowns is expected. It is also expected that the number of home repossessions will increase thus increasing the demand for social housing.

Economists are predicting that unemployment will increase to three million and this will increase numbers claiming unemployment and other benefits including Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit. The numbers seeking financial and other advice will increase. The number of Council Tax payers finding difficulty in paying Council Tax will increase resulting in lower levels of Council Tax collection, increased arrears and write-offs and increased costs in collecting Council Tax. It is expected that the proportion of tenants eligible for housing benefit will increase during the recession. It is also expected that the number of tenants finding difficulty in paying rent will increase resulting in lower levels of rent collection, increased arrears and write-offs and increased costs in collecting rents. There is also likely to be a reduction in demand for some council services for which charges are made. These are likely to include leisure services, car park charges and rents from industrial estates, garages and shops as individuals and businesses seek to reduce their costs and as businesses that rent premises cease to trade.

The recession is reducing the level of development activity with 80% of Councils already reporting a reduction in the autumn of 2008. This includes development of social housing with housing associations being less able to access private funding at affordable levels, less able to use commercial development to cross-subsidise social and shared-ownership housing, and less able to benefit from the reduced number of section 106 agreements. It is also reported that at least six major housing associations are now in financial difficulties.

Councils borrow most of their money from the Public Works Loans Board and this has not been affected by the recession as much as borrowing in the private sector. Furthermore, borrowing rates from the Public Works Loans Board have reduced. The variable short-term lending rate has fallen from 5.5% in January 2008 to under 2% in December 2008. Interest rates on fixed rate loans have also been reduced. This means that Councils have access to cheaper financing than has been the case in the past, but in the case of the Housing Revenue Account this will be reflected in Housing Subsidy.

Reduced interest rates mean that Councils are receiving less interest on their balances. This is not a factor in the calculation of Housing Subsidy and so this represents a loss of resources to the Housing Revenue Account as well as to the General Fund.

Contractors and Suppliers to Councils are also threatened by the recession meaning that Councils are potentially at risk from such companies getting into financial difficulty or going out of business.

Local Authorities have a role in Economic Development and in Place Shaping. Statutory powers, the local leadership role and the fact that local authorities and other public bodies are major employers and major purchasers in the local community give local authorities and their partners an opportunity to help their communities and businesses through the recession. To achieve this may require some new thinking. For example, Councillor Tim Knowles, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development at Cumbria County Council said:

*“The old traditional processes should not bog us down. Councils have enormous powers in what is called ‘well being’ – things like land allocation, procurement and how you buy things to benefit Cumbria through the economic downturn. We must use these opportunities.”*

The Audit Commission also suggests seven ways for Councils to help their communities through the recession: Supporting debt counselling, providing loans to struggling home owners, improving benefit take up, creating credit unions, addressing fuel poverty, helping local businesses to bid for council work and paying small businesses quickly.

Lower levels of inflation and lower interest rates may benefit some Councils in 2009/10. The Revenue Support Grant settlement is based on an increase of 4.2% reflecting 3% inflation and additional provision for the Private Finance Initiative. Interest rates are also reduced, although it will take some time for Councils to realise the full effect as much of their borrowing is at fixed rates. As inflation is predicted to be below 2% in 2009/10 this should allow for a real increase in expenditure but this may not be enough to meet the additional costs caused by the recession.

However, many Councils are reported to be considering making economies involving reducing services or reducing staff levels. In December 2008, Eden District Council reported that the recession had led to a significant reduction in its investment income and a collapse in the recycling market leading to an increase in its net expenditure on recycling. The Council is therefore proposing an increase in Council Tax of 4.99% in 2009/10 (just below the expected national limit); reductions in expenditure on arts, leisure, parks, open spaces, cemeteries and public conveniences; and the withdrawal of £300,000 from balances.

The Audit Commission has suggested that public organisations should be proactive in managing their finances and that achieving better value for money is imperative. Clearly these things are important in enabling public organisations to meet increased need from limited resources. Furthermore, public organisations – especially local authorities – need to ensure that the need to ‘balance the books’ does not cause them to lose sight of their role as community leaders, obliged to help communities through the recession.

**Adrian Waite**  
**President, IPSM.**

## **IPSM TRAINING & NETWORKING EVENT**

I am delighted to report that the first “Regional” event to be organised since the appointment of National / Regional Group Leaders last November, will be taking place in Brecon Theatre, Rhonda Cynon Taff, South Wales on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June. The event is specifically being organised for all IPSM members living and / or working in Wales, plus all members working for Town, Parish and Community Councils in England and Wales. The event will focus on recent HR and Employment updates, resulting from the enactment of the Employment Act 2008, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April this year.

Our keynote speaker will be Paul Egan, FIPSM, who until his recent retirement was Deputy Chief Executive of the South Wales Probation Service, having previously served as Director of Human Resources for the same employer. Other speakers will include Derek Wolfe, FIPSM, on how the Institute aims to serve all its members, as well as modernising its roles and objectives to ensure the organisation remains relevant and of interest to prospective IPSM members in the future. Other topics covered will be street lighting and highways issues, entailing a mystery speaker, to be announced on the day!

Although the event is being targeted at Welsh members plus UK Town, Parish and Community Clerks, essentially all members are welcome to attend, if they wish to do so. The event starts at 10am for 10.30am, with a break for a buffet lunch at 12.30pm, before resuming at 1.15pm or thereabouts. The training and development / networking event is scheduled to close at or slightly before 3pm. The cost of attending (to cover hiring and buffet costs) will be £20, and either Jeremy Morgan or I will need to know if you intend to attend by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May at the latest. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the Institute of Public Sector Management, and sent to our Devon Headquarters, namely 45 Cherry Tree Road, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5GG. Please note that payments are non-refundable, unless the event is cancelled (which is most unlikely!) in which case a full refund will be made.

All IPSM members living and / or working in Wales, plus all UK local council clerks in membership of the Institute will be written to or e-mailed by Jeremy Morgan within the next week. In the meantime, any members interested in attending this informal but hugely informative event can contact IPSM HQ for further details.

Derek Wolfe,  
Hon. Secretary.

## **MOST RECENT IPSM COUNCIL MEETING**

The Council's most recent meeting in February took place in another new venue for the Institute, namely Rugby Town Hall, the headquarters of Rugby Borough Council. Our host on this occasion was Council member and former President, Julie Price. The key items of discussion and decisions arising out of are set out below.

The Honorary Secretary was reminded of the need to prepare a simple directory of members' names, job title, area of work and employer, details to be circulated only to other IPSM members. The Council was reminded of its outstanding vacancy. It was reported that nobody had so far come forward to volunteer to fill the casual vacancy in the Council's 12-person strong membership. Council members noted that none of the Institute's Scottish or Irish members served on Council, adding that it would be useful to encourage representation from those nations. It was agreed to identify a willing volunteer, based outside England and Wales if possible.

With regard to the Institute's Business Plan, Robin was thanked for all his additional work in the production of a comprehensive Plan, incorporating relevant sections from the 1997 document drafted by Rodger Lawrence. It was agreed that Council would look to sign-off Robin's revised Business Plan, including the 2009-2012 Action Plan, at its June meeting. It was also agreed that the Business Plan should be reviewed annually on a formal basis, in time to influence the draft budget for the following financial year, and to enable changes to be made to the Action Plan or other sections of the overall Business Plan at the outset each year.

With regard to the Training Questionnaire, the Hon. Secretary reported that, most unfortunately, he had only received three responses to the Questionnaire published in the previous editions of E-Topics and Topics. This was hugely disappointing; even though the three replies themselves were very informative, revealing other topic areas and fields where vocational and qualification training might usefully be provided. Robin pointed out that in future, questionnaires should be available on-line. It was agreed that copies of the replies received should be made available to Simon Pomfret of Spirals Ltd, for him to analyse and evaluate.

Council members discussed the contents of a brief report prepared by the Hon. Secretary, regarding the role and purpose of National / Regional Groups and especially, those appointed as Group Leaders. Council was reminded that at its November 2008 meeting, it had made the following appointments:-

North-East Region	Maurice Condie
North-West Region	Adrian Waite
Yorkshire Region	Robin Raily
Midlands Region	Rodger Lawrence
South-West Region	Stephanie Pateman
London Region plus South-East Region	Gregory Alake & Stephen Guile
Northern Ireland Region	Vacancy

Scottish Nation  
Welsh Nation  
Other International Members

Vacancy  
Jeremy Morgan  
Vacant

In his report to Council, the Hon. Secretary had suggested that Group Leaders be given the roles set out below. These five roles were approved by the Institute's Council.

- (1) Responsibility to establish a limited number of events within the Nation / Region each year;
- (2) As an initial point of contact for IPSM members "locally", aside from IPSM HQ in Axminster;
- (3) Responsibility to seek to establish "local" networking groups;
- (4) A limited amount of "reaching out" to local members, providing a local "presence" and reporting difficulties in contacting members;
- (5) As a local IPSM Recruitment and Promotion Point.

Should Group Leaders need funding for expenditure in relation to their region / nation, then IPSM Council would need to take a view on this, perhaps determining allocations across all Group Leaders and their areas. Council agreed that the five responsibilities set out above be approved as IPSM policy, noting that any resulting expenditure would need to be very limited, and adding that overseas members should have just one Group Leader between them for now.

Council noted that in 2008, subscription income had totalled £10,478 out of £13,218 receivable from all members, leaving £2,740 to be collected in arrears, and that 14 new members had been recruited, with a further one member rejoining after an absence of several years. (Subsequently, a further £666 was received from members who had previously fallen into arrears.) Council also noted that after three-quarters of the 2008-09 financial year, income was projected to exceed expenditure by £1,029 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. Having given detailed consideration to the draft prepared by the Hon. Secretary, Council approved its contents as the IPSM's budget for 2009-10.

With regard to the Institute's recruitment efforts, Council members were reminded that it had been agreed at the July 2008 Council meeting to move forward with an e-advertising recruitment campaign. The Hon. Secretary apologised for his lack of progress in that direction. It was agreed to ask him and the Institute's Administrator to investigate ways of advertising membership of the IPSM on-line, as well as via other untried and innovative means, such as via employee pay-slips, with a view to implementing a cost-effective programme of e-recruitment.

On the subject of future conferences and training seminars, it was felt that the type of initiatives being promoted in the discussion paper submitted to Council

members would need a great deal of marketing in advance, especially if the implementation dates were to be achieved. It was felt that the suggested training seminars should be launched in the summer and / or autumn, perhaps tackling topical issues rather than general management skills.

Council members gave detailed consideration to the Equality & Diversity Policy Statement, Strategy & Action Plan implemented by the Byker Bridge Housing Association. It was agreed that the BBHA document be adapted for use by the IPSM by Council officers, and circulated to all members.

Council members, including those who had been sceptical about the likely success of the IPSM's celebratory dinner when this had first been suggested by the former President last year during his term of office, congratulated Derek on the unqualified success of this social event. Those who had attended commented that everyone had thoroughly enjoyed themselves, especially those 8 members and their partners who had been able to go on the Liverpool Minibus Tour the following day, visiting the former homes of all four "Beatles", two of which had since become museums. It was agreed that the Secretary be authorised to organise another similar event in 2009, possibly in Bath, Stratford-on-Avon or York.

It was reported that from 2009 onwards, the IPSM would cease to publish either Topics or E-Topics, and would publish an internet-only journal, to be called "IPSM World", thereby reflecting the increasingly international flavour of the Institute's membership.

It was agreed that the Council's next meeting would take place in Cumbria on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009 commencing at 12.30pm in the Eden Rural Foyer, Impact Housing Association, Old London Road, Penrith, CA11 8ET.

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## **SPIRALS' FORTHCOMING TRAINING COURSES**

Spirals, the Institute's strategic learning & development partners, have drastically revamped its open programme to make it a lot more comprehensive. The following are the courses being run during 2009, together with details of Spirals recently announced NVQ levels 4 & 5 Executive Diploma and Advanced Executive Diploma in Management qualifications.



### **Open Programme 2009**

**Tue 16<sup>th</sup> June – Lean Thinking – 1 day – BEDFORD - £185 per delegate**  
**Tue 11<sup>th</sup> Aug – Time Management – 1 day – NEWMARKET - £185 per del.**

**Thu 17<sup>th</sup>/Fri 18<sup>th</sup> September – Project Management – 2 days – BEDFORD  
- £355 per delegate**  
**Tue 3<sup>rd</sup> November – Team Building – 1 day – RUGBY - £185 per delegate**

All delegates receive 30 days free support from the course tutor after attending the training.

(IPSM members will continue to receive the 20% discount off the above fees)  
For further information or to book your place, please call Spirals on 01953 602505 or email [general@spiralsplus.com](mailto:general@spiralsplus.com)

You can also book your place on our website [www.spiralsplus.com](http://www.spiralsplus.com)

### **About Spirals**

*Spirals is an exciting company with a growing reputation and proven track record for delivering bespoke services, based on tried and tested methodologies. At the heart of the organisation is the belief that excellent performance comes from well managed and innovative people, processes and projects.*

*Spirals specialise in working with public and third sector organisations. Our understanding of the culture and drivers of these sectors ensures we produce work that is sensitive yet challenges in the ways laid out by the modernisation agenda.*

*As well as working with organisations to improve their people, we also work with them to help them develop as organisations. This work includes Investors in People consultancy and support and helping the achievement of BVPIs.*

*Spirals are an approved supplier to the IDeA, the strategic training partner for the Institute of Public Sector Management (IPSM) and regularly speak at events on the modernisation agenda, efficiency in the public sector and developing people.*

*Our reputation is for high levels of customer feedback, and for bespoke services developed specifically for each client group. Clients and delegates say they like our plain English and common sense approach. We take pride in designing our assignments to embed the learning and development within the organisation.*

**For more information about Spirals' Management Consultancy, Training and Development and Project Management Services, call 01953 602505 or view our website, [www.spiralsplus.com](http://www.spiralsplus.com)**

## **Executive Diploma in Management**

The Executive Diploma in Management Programme is a certificated programme, accredited by the Chartered Management Institute through Change Consultancy and Training. The emphasis of the Programme is on issues facing the higher levels of management, including the deployment of resources to achieve given targets.

On successful completion of this Programme, the candidate will know and understand:

- Aspects of innovation, continuous improvement, re-invention and strategic quality management
- How to manage the quality of work in the context of a healthy, safe and productive working environment
- How to manage physical and financial resources to meet organisational plans
- How to enhance one's own performance and build up relationships
- How to manage the recruitment process and re-deployment
- How teams and individuals can be structured to meet organisational objectives
- How to deal with situations where individuals' or teams' performance is unsatisfactory
- How to chair meetings and establish communication systems that facilitate decision-making

In brief, the Programme consists of eight modules, which cover the following topics:

C51 – Developing in Your Management and Leadership Role

C52 – Managing Performance

C53 – Financial and Resource Management

C54 – Managing Business Challenges

C55 – Managing Operations

O52 – Managing Information Systems

O53 – Developing and Implementing Human Resource Plans

O54 – Developing Project Specifications and Objectives

O55 – Developing and Implementing Marketing Plans

The programme runs for approximately 18 months, with an event being held each month. To achieve the award of the Executive Diploma in Management, participants are required to:

- Complete 8 assignments of 3,500 words
- Produce an integrated project (of 7,000 words) and present this at the conclusion of the Programme in the form of a 20 minute presentation to a group of invited guests

C51 – Development in your  
Management and  
Leadership Role

C55 – Managing Operations

C52 – Managing Performance

O52 – Managing Information Systems

C53 – Financial & Resource  
Management

O53 – Developing & Implementing Human  
Resource Plans

C54 – Managing Business Challenges

O54 – Developing Project Specifications and Objectives

O55 – Developing & Implementing Marketing Plans

Note: Half day Support Meetings will take place in the morning 09:30 – 12:30. All Workshops will run from 09:30 to 16:30. The cost for the Executive Diploma in Management is £2,450.

IPSM members interested in any of the above courses should contact us for further details and information. In a fortnight's time we will have a brochure describing all of the courses, available as a PDF document for displaying on the IPSM website, if that would be helpful.

David Elverson, MSc MCIM, Commercial Director, Spirals Ltd.  
Jackie Walters, Office Manager, Spirals Ltd.

Tel: 01953 602505 Fax: 01953 605800

Email: [david@spiralsplus.com](mailto:david@spiralsplus.com) Website: [www.spiralsplus.co.uk](http://www.spiralsplus.co.uk)

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## **POSSIBLE CELEBRATORY DINNER IN 2009**

As you may have read in the summary of the IPSM Council's most recent meeting, I have been authorised by Council to organise another Informal Celebratory Dinner for IPSM members and their partners. The 2008 event took place on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October at the Suites Hotel, Knowsley, and was fully booked with all 30 places available being reserved well in advance of the Dinner itself.

Unfortunately, unforeseen circumstances led to 8 diners dropping out before the evening, but even so the remaining 22 had a great time dining, drinking and talking in the Arthur Suite, retiring to the bar for a night-cap shortly before 11pm! Most diners stayed overnight in the hotel, who provided IPSM members with a fantastic discount on bed and breakfast accommodation in a really high standard 3-star hotel – although frankly I couldn't understand how it hadn't been rated as a 4 star establishment!

The time has now come to decide where the 2009 event is going to take place. Various towns and cities have been suggested as being potentially suitable, such as Bath, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick and York. If you are interested in participating in a 2009 celebratory dinner, please let me have your ideas concerning venues and dates as soon as reasonably possible.

Derek Wolfe,  
Hon. Secretary & Immediate Past President.

In view of the lack of responses when the IPSM published the following training and development questionnaire for members to complete in the Winter 2008-09 edition of E-Topics, I thought it might be a good idea to reprint the questionnaire to allow all members of the Institute (including those serving on its Governing Council!) to have another opportunity to complete the simple and straightforward document and to return it to IPSM H Q. A number of completed questionnaires have already been sent to Simon Pomfret at Spirals Ltd, for him to analyse, with a view to providing improved targeted training and development opportunities for IPSM members.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR IPSM MEMBERS**

The IPSM is conducting some research into the qualifications its members currently hold and their perceived training needs. This will enable the IPSM to offer a training programme in future that more closely matches the needs of its members. We would therefore be grateful if you could take the time to complete this questionnaire.

**Name**.....

**Organisation**.....

**Position in Organisation**.....

**Q1.) What qualifications to do you currently hold? (Please put a tick in the relevant box)**

MBA		Level 5 Management Qualification		Level 4 Management Qualification	
Masters in Business related subject		Level 3 Management Qualification		Team Leader Award	
Prince 2		Managing Successful Programmes (MSP)			

**Other qualifications**.....

.....

.....

**Q2.) Which areas of development would make the biggest impact on your performance? (Please pick your top five and put a tick in the relevant box)**

Project Management		Marketing		Chairing Skills	
People Management		Financial Management		Time Management	
Managing Stress		Managing Change		Effective Reading	
Communication Skills		Presentations Skills		Assertiveness	
Emotional Intelligence		Customer Service		Facilitation Skills	
Influencing Skills		Public Speaking		Motivating People	
Business Writing Skills		Effective Recruitment		Problem Solving	
Budgeting		Level 5 Management Qualification		Level 4 Management Qualification	

**Other development areas.....**

.....

**Any other comments?.....**

.....

**(When completed, please return this form to Derek Wolfe, Honorary Secretary, IPSM HQ, 45 Cherry Tree Road, Axminster, EX13 5GG)**

## THE CHRONICLES OF PERCY THE PEREGRINE – A YEAR UP THE POLE

It is hard to believe that it is a year since I flew over wrapped in a Sainsbury's sustainable carrier bag on a royal mail flight to Cordoba and bundled onto a truck to Palenciana to wait in the local post office until the Punshons arrived to pick me up.

Unlike last May the sky is totally blue and the sun is actually warm allowing Dave to sit up here with me and my mates (John and Dave) so I have lots more to regale you with this month. Before we start however I must share with you a sanitised version of a joke sent in by Steve,

- Winnie the Pooh and his mate Piglet were wandering through the woods looking for honey, Piglet thought to himself "this is wonderful, walking through the woods with such a wonderful friend as Pooh" Pooh on the other hand thought "if he sneezes he is dead"

Remember the phrase, If Pigs Could Fly? Well now they can and look at the trouble it has caused, we should stick to the natural order **flying is for birds.**

Last month I reported on the joys of Easter well that was only the start of the party season over here, May the 1<sup>st</sup> was a bank holiday to celebrate International Labour day (not shunted off to the nearest Monday) and Saturday marked the first communion of children in the village a bit like a Bar mitzvahs but for more than one family. The population of the village quadrupled and bars opened where never seen before to hold family parties. Overnight streets were closed and the festival of the crosses was celebrated by the erection of amazing floral tributes (see attached). As this is a community event there was no indication where these tributes were, drivers simply had to stop and reverse until they found an alternative route through. The best is yet to come however on May 15<sup>th</sup> the village celebrates San Isidro the patron saint of agriculture when an effigy of the saint is paraded around the village and then out to the campo for a massive communal all day party. Dave and Barbara have had two sets of guests in April (it's never too late (or early) for that last minute holiday) [www.andalucianretreat.me.uk](http://www.andalucianretreat.me.uk) The first paying guests were a couple from Clitheroe in Lancashire who came because of our proximity to Cordoba, Seville and Granada their comment in the visitors' book was :-

**"Thanks for a superb week. Granada Cordoba Seville and Ronda were what we came for, El torcal was an unexpected joy and the villages Semana Santa celebrations were an unrepeatable experience. Jesus outside your window at 7am on Good Friday morning never to be forgotten."**

With only one day to clean the apartment the next visitors were George and Sheila from Guisborough over to help celebrate Dave's 61<sup>st</sup> birthday, which coincidentally is David Juniors 40<sup>th</sup>. George, as some of you know is an avid bird watcher and attached is a list of birds that he saw in only two days. The celebrations were really a week long party but with wine at 1€ a bottle that is

hardly surprising. As well as George and Sheila the party guests included the rest of the Palenciana. The British contingent and Rita and Laurie were also from Guisborough.

Rita and Laurie have been friends of the Punshon family since 1983 (more later) and coincidentally moved to Spain the same week as Dave last year. Like Dave and Barbara they have had their ups and downs and their shared adversities have brought them all closer together and all agreed on one thing, the move to Spain was still the right decision.

Dave first met Rita when they both started work for the Alzheimer's Disease Society in 1983 (before Barbara) and to celebrate this longevity and the appointment of Carol Ann Duffy as Poet Laureate here is a poem written by Dennis Punshon and published at Dave's old office the Management Resource Centre in Guisborough .

#### Confusion

Was it only yesterday I sat upon the wall?  
Or was it a hundred years ago? I've forgotten most of all  
My days. And times unending corridors, echoing out of place  
Fill me with foreboding as I turn away my face.

Was it only yesterday, or is it still to come?  
And did my daughter marry me?  
What happened to her mum?  
Who promised to love me forever, but she's gone away somewhere.  
I wish I could remember where.

I must reach out to touch them but people seem to slip away  
Along with time and other things. If only they would stay  
I might be able to manage and even to recall.  
Was it only yesterday I sat upon the wall?

Why not wing me an email

Lots of love  
Percy

Dave Punshon, FIPSM, former President, I P S M.

## I P S M COUNCIL 2009

At its Annual General Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November last year, the following members were elected to serve on the Institute's governing Council in 2009. This included two new appointments, namely Gregory Alake (Royal London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea) and Stephanie Pateman (Devon County Council).

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Stephen Guile	LONDON	(Via HQ)	(Via HQ)
Martin Harvey (Web-Master)	POWYS, WALES	(Via HQ)	<a href="mailto:webman@ipsm.org.uk">webman@ipsm.org.uk</a>
Rodger Lawrence	BIRMINGHAM	(Via HQ)	(Via HQ)
Stephanie Pateman	DEVON	(Via HQ)	(Via HQ)
Julie Price	SUFFOLK	(Via HQ)	<a href="mailto:jprice@bergholt99@freeserve.co.uk">jprice@bergholt99@freeserve.co.uk</a> (home)
Robin Raily (Vice-President)	SOUTH YORKS.	(Via HQ)	<a href="mailto:rraily@tiscali.co.uk">rraily@tiscali.co.uk</a> (home)
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Gregory Alake	LONDON	(Via HQ)	(Via HQ)
Adrian Waite (President)	AWICS Appleby Business Centre Bridge Street Appleby-in- Westmorland CUMBRIA, CA16 6QH	01768 352347 (work switchboard) 01768 352165 (work direct) 07971 321863 (mobile)	<a href="mailto:Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk">Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk</a> (work) <a href="mailto:awaite@ukonline.co.uk">awaite@ukonline.co.uk</a> (home)
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