

RICHARD HENRY MAUDSLAY

Mr Chancellor

Our new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chris Brink, is fond of pointing out that the Mission Statement of this University contains a refreshing novelty. Alongside aspirations to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to which all other universities are also committed, Newcastle University pledges to “play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England”. Such a fundamental commitment to regional development is indeed far from commonplace for a seat of higher education, and it therefore represents a significant and novel challenge to our working practices. In response, our University has embarked upon an invigorating programme of reorientation, with initiatives such as the ‘Cultural Quarter’ and ‘Science City’ through which we are placing our own learning at the service of our City, our region and the wider world. As we do so, however, we are quickly being reminded of our own continuing need for lifelong learning. To put it bluntly, we do not know everything we need to know about how a civic University

might best go about making an appropriate contribution to regional development.

It is therefore with considerable relief that Newcastle University knows it can count on the sage counsel of friends such as Richard Maudslay, whose insights are born of sustained engagement at the highest levels in the development of North East England, and whose wisdom is tempered by 35 years' experience at the forefront of a wide array of businesses with worldwide reach.

A graduate of Edinburgh University, Richard first plied his electrical engineering skills in the same city, at the world famous power transformer factory of the then Bruce Peebles Ltd. Richard soon proved to have a real flair not only for design of complex electrical transformers and related equipment, but also for streamlining the (no less complex) business processes of the capital goods engineering sector. The high-voltage transformers and large turbines which Richard so effectively brought to market provide fitting metaphors for the dynamism and transformational capacity of a remarkable individual. He rose quickly through company ranks,

and at the early age of 29 was appointed General Manager of a Mexican subsidiary of Parsons Peebles.

Following his seven-year Latin American adventure, Richard finally traded Mariachi melodies for Tyneside twang in 1985, when he moved to Newcastle to take up the post of Managing Director at NEI Parsons Turbine Generators. Two years later the parent company, NEI, was acquired by Rolls-Royce plc; Richard subsequently became MD of their Industrial Power Group and served on the Board of Rolls-Royce plc. Consequent upon the sale of Rolls-Royce's steam turbine interests to Siemens in 1997, Richard embarked upon a diverse range of highly influential private and public sector appointments. Election as a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering distinguished Richard as one of the leading engineers of his generation; it was for his services to business that Richard was awarded a CBE by the Queen in June 2006.

A key player in innumerable central government committees with remits for industry, Richard recently assumed the Chair of the Board of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, the largest publicly-funded research laboratory in the country. It is to the great

fortune of this region and this University that, despite an ever-growing catalogue of commitments in government circles, he has resolutely remained in the North East for the last twenty-two years. Richard and his family live in Longframlington, whence he is wont to sally forth, clad in high-visibility sports clothing, to cycle in a carefree manner through the car-free lanes of Northumberland. When more elegantly attired, Richard and his wife Roz indulge their shared passion for music, not only as audience members, but also participating in the organisation and delivery of choral renditions at All Saints Church and Brinkburn Priory.

Richard's passion for the region is not restricted to recreational activities. As Vice-Chairman of One NorthEast, he played a key role in placing universities at the heart of the Regional Economic Strategy. In his subsequent role as Chair of the region's Science and Industry Council, Richard successfully pioneered a model of strategic planning of innovation which is now being replicated elsewhere in the UK. As a member of the Council of this University, Richard's incisive mind and constructive attitude became a dependable resource to which the Chairman, Nigel Sherlock, and other members frequently had fruitful recourse. Effectively, Richard was in the

vanguard of a group of forward-looking Council members who equipped this University with the structures and skills it needed to launch a credible model for contributing to the economic development of the region. The University continues to benefit from his counsel on Court, in which he now serves.

As Chair of the University's Equity Committee – a novel element in our reformed academic management structure – Richard has effectively transformed the way in which bright ideas are translated into practical benefit. Before the Equity Committee was established, the University often struggled to understand how best to manage enterprise. With hindsight some commercial opportunities were probably missed, and perhaps some poor prospects were entertained for too long. With the experience of Richard and his colleagues on the Equity Committee at its service, the University has gradually transformed its capabilities with regard to the appraisal of business plans, and in the rational management of risk and reward. Insofar as our University achieves its ambition to “play a leading role in the economic development of the North East of England”, much of the credit should justly be assigned to the devoted service of the likes of Richard Maudslay.

There's an old saying in the business world: "If you want something done, ask a busy person". Richard Maudslay is a living embodiment of the veracity of this axiom. Few people have been more occupied with great affairs of business, governance and regional development; yet even fewer have sustained as great a personal commitment to the expansion of the horizons and capabilities of the civic university in their adopted home City.

For helping us fully understand the implications of our commitment to make a significant contribution to regional development, through patiently sharing with us the fruits of great wisdom borne of many years in the frontline of business, I now ask you, Mr Chancellor, to bestow upon Richard Maudslay CBE an Honorary Fellowship of Newcastle University.

Citation by Professor Paul Younger