

One life Arthur Hulme

A profile of Arthur Hulme, aged 90, who has been an active member of the Institute of Management Services for more than 40 years.

Talking with Arthur Hulme about his life, has been like opening a book full of surprises – and the first surprise is the number of chapters. I had thought he must be nearing 80, and was astonished to learn that he would be 90 next birthday. Then there is the matter of the 'book's' content.

Arthur was born in Bolton in 1916, the third and last of his parents' children. Originally Lancastrian, Arthur spent most of his childhood in the Midlands. His father was a sheet metal worker but had a wealthy brother who paid for Arthur to attend the King's School, Ambleside as a boarder from the age of 13. Arthur delighted in the lakes and countryside after living in industrial towns and embraced fell walking and mountaineering, as well as football and cricket.

Arthur vividly remembers being in a party of boys taken, in 1930, to a vantage point overlooking Lake Windermere, to watch Sir Henry Seagrave attempt the water speed record. Sadly the boat crashed and the boys saw Henry and two companions killed.

The Depression years

At 17 he was back in Birmingham, looking for a job during one of the worst recessions in history. In August 1933 he was taken on by the Hercules Cycle Company, where he worked his way up to deputy assistant buyer in two years, responsible for the supply of all finished parts for the mass production of 40,000 cycles a day.

This job was invaluable in giving him an insight into the workings of the whole organisation. He left Hercules in 1939 and spent the next three years on the factory floor in four different industrial sectors – a chemical factory, aircraft industry, oil well engineering and diesel engine manufacturing.

He volunteered for the RAF in 1942 but was discharged due to poor night



By Robert Jefford

vision. He returned to industry and found himself at the Stockport Manufacturing Company building centre sections and tail planes for Lancaster bombers.

In 1945 he joined Philips Electrical Industries and for the first time received training in work study. By the following year he was able to join General Electric as a work study officer, and after six months was promoted to section leader.

During the late 1940s and most of the 1950s he worked in a variety of companies in five different manufacturing industries, dealing with the production of porcelain insulators, brake linings, cotton spinners, laundry and dry cleaning services and textile finishers. All this, and he still found time to get married to Vera.

On the work front he could now tackle a whole range of time and motion studies, job evaluations and bonus incentive schemes.

"In 1958, after having had 13 years of varied work study in several manufacturing industries, together with a period of three years as a part time lecturer in work study at Stockport Technical College in Cheshire, a new challenge faced me. This was to become one of the pioneers of work study in the

hospital service, when I was selected out of 380 applicants, to become a member of the three man team at the Manchester Regional Hospital Board. The objective was to discover whether work study had a place in the complex organisation of caring for the sick," he wrote in the Work Study and Management Services Journal in 1971.

Work study

It did, and it certainly had a place for Arthur too; after two years he applied successfully for the post of Regional O&M/work study officer with the East Anglian Regional Hospital Board (RHB).

Here, in a small attic overlooking the river, he had the daunting task of persuading chief officers that work study was not a gimmick. Arthur went for the grass roots approach, organised a seminar for the chief officers of the 12 hospital management committees where he explained the potential of work study techniques.

Following this first seminar he was inundated with requests and as a one man team, he had to be selective. His first study was of the portering service at Newmarket General Hospital and this generated more than 60 recommendations. Before long the demand for studies had grown and in the next few years more staff were recruited, with teams of officers all over the region.

Arthur had always kept in touch with his professional institute now renamed the IMS, and in 1968 he was elected to the Hospital Group Committee. In the same year he founded the Cambridgeshire branch and over the years served as chairman, secretary and PRO. In 1980 he received an award for outstanding service to the Institute. He retired in 1981 at the age of 65, but that was nowhere near the end of the story.

A year later he was invited to a meeting of the NHS Retirement Fellowship for the Cambridge area and was nominated regional representative, with a seat on the National Council. His first task was to promote branches of the Fellowship in those parts of the region without them. The Cambridge branch was established and Arthur was publicity officer, editor of the newsletter and later on, the vice president (he retired last year).

However, he has still found time to pursue his hobbies – tennis and rambling with Vera and bowls, gardening and DIY. Even the margins of this book have been filled in!