

40 Years of Publishing Innovation ...Created by Scientists, for Scientists

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Its Spring 1962, Harold Macmillan is Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Elvis Presley is topping the charts and Old Albanians are playing local rivals Verulamians RFC. The result of the rugby match is not known, but a conversation that took place in the bar after the game was to help shape the laboratory equipment market for decades to come.

Twenty three year old Michael Pattison is playing flanker for Old Albanians. A recent chemistry graduate from Kings College London, Michael is undecided about how to exploit his recently acquired qualification and is enjoying his rugby whilst working as a rating officer for the local council. His opposing centre is Dennis McGreiv; a local apprentice.

After a couple of pints of beer, both players discover a shared dream – to travel the world and experience different cultures. Today, this might not seem a particularly unusual aspiration, but in 1962, international travel was perceived to be the reserve of royalty and film stars. Despite fitting in neither category, Michael and Dennis set about preparing for their trip by purchasing a Citroën 2CV and contacting an array of businesses seeking sponsorship. These efforts were rewarded with donations of spare tyres, batteries, biscuits, cigarettes and beer and in the October of 1962 the two young men loaded the car with all of the donations, a selection of provisions and a 12-bore shotgun. It was anticipated that some game – rabbit or duck might liven up the probable lean diet. In the event it was never used and later traded with the Taliban.



Michael with the Old Albanians team

Travelling the World in a 2CV

And so began an exciting two and half years adventure that spread across the globe and provided both young men with high levels of resilience and self-confidence; characteristics that would help them greatly in later years. Each of the countries that the boys visited provided a different challenge and an opportunity for learning new skills. For example, in Tehran, Michael became a part-time English teacher, which forced him to improve his grammar and literacy with the aid of a number of classical text books. Other experiences included being attacked by wild dogs in Turkey; and in Jordan the boys were evicted from a temporary campsite that they had established in what turned out to be King Hussein's garden!

In the 1960s adventures of this nature were extremely unusual and Michael's letters were regularly published in the 'Herts Advertiser' a local newspaper in the UK. This was Michael's first involvement with publishing, but at that stage he had no specific plans to pursue this as a career.

Sadly, Michael's father died in 1963 and Michael returned home from Tehran for one month to attend the funeral. During this time another 1963 event took place which, more than any other, was to shape the rest of his life; he met up with Janice who was keeping her horse Nimrod at his family house, Newgate, Nimrod later had a road named after him and Newgate became the foundation of his business. However, his travels continued and so Michael and Janice's early relationship was confined to the pages of hand-written letters.



Pattison and McGreiv and their 2CV.

The 2CV was eventually sold (at a profit) in Kathmandu and the boys teamed up with a young Englishman named Tim Page. Tim flew with them to Calcutta and since he was without funds, the boys suggested that he should exploit his interest in photography by attempting to photograph conflicts in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He did so, and has since been the subject of many documentaries and two films. He has authored many books, including 'Page after Page' and it is also believed that Tim was part of the inspiration for the character of the journalist played by Dennis Hopper in Apocalypse

Now. Back in India, Michael found himself again drawn into the world of publishing; helping Arthur Swinson research his book 'Six minutes to sunset - the story of General Dyer and the Amritsar affair' April 1919.

Before their travels had started Dennis had met Harrow School educated Prince Chula Chakrabongse, a member of the Siamese (Thai) Royal Family, and as a result, when they arrived in Bangkok they were greeted by a chauffeured Rolls Royce and when they ventured further into the country they were given a note by General Prapas, Thailand's Interior Minister, instructing anyone they should ask to give them a lift! The General opened the Cambodian border so they could visit Angkor Wat. It was here they met Dennis' future wife who was an American Olympic swimmer. Later in the United States they had a son named Thai.



Pattison in Thailand

After hitch-hiking across Malaya, the boys caught a boat to Perth, Australia, and finally separated so that Michael could travel to meet relatives in Sydney. However, before arriving in Sydney, Michael found work in the middle of the desert on a construction project, building the road between Perth and Adelaide. This was to become a very profitable venture for Michael, because on hearing that he was a chemist, the mining company Broken Hill promoted him to the position of explosives engineer, or 'powder monkey' as he was affectionately known to his colleagues. The work was hard, and the dust and heat were oppressive, Adelaide reported earthquakes in the desert, but it paid very well and enabled Michael to travel to South America via Japan. At the time, many young Japanese were travelling to Buenos Aires on the same boat and to while away the time, Michael and the young Japanese men spent most of their time competing at Judo.

During his time in South America, Michael visited every country by hitch hiking in very strange vehicles and water craft, and experienced everything that the continent had to offer, including Hepatitis resulting in hospitalisation in Bolivia. One of his most memorable trips was to visit the Iguazu Falls which stretch across the Brazil/Argentine border and have a flow capacity of three times that of Niagara Falls. A photo that Michael took of the Iguazu Falls appeared in his first environmental publication. But more of that later.

Meanwhile, Janice, at the tender age of 19, had taken a job in Connecticut as an Au Pair, and Michael was missing her, so he took a long journey on a Greyhound Bus across the USA and paid her a visit. This turned out to be a costly event for Janice because by now Michael had spent all of his Australian wages and so she paid for his return flight to the UK. So, in 1965 the young couple returned home in time for Christmas, and announced their engagement. Michael says it was the least he could do to show his gratitude, but Janice says it was because she took pity on him.

Selling Spectrophotometers

On arrival in England, Michael set about exploiting the benefits of his chemistry degree and was duly appointed to the position of Technical Sales Executive at Unicam in Cambridge, selling spectrophotometers. His success in this role led to the offer of a job in the United States training distributors and he and Janice duly moved to New York. Unicam was then purchased by Pye and subsequently by Philips, and this led to a job training a new salesforce under the name of Norelco/Unicam.

Selling Advertising in the Lab Sector

Michael and Janice stayed in the USA for 7 years before returning to the UK in order to set up a Distributor business for infrared analysis instruments. However, whilst in the USA, Michael had written a number of articles for laboratory magazines, so he was well connected in the media and was asked to help sell advertising in Europe. With previous experience selling laboratory instrumentation, Michael was well placed to help instrument manufacturers with their advertising programmes and became very successful in doing so. Unfortunately, however, the publishers which benefited from the increased advertising did not fulfil their commission obligations and Michael found himself in the middle of a legal dispute. Ultimately, Michael won the court case but the seed of an idea was starting to germinate in Michael's mind...

LabMate

Travelling the world and living on your wits (before the invention of mobile phones, Skype and the Internet) engenders a 'have a go' mentality that is symptomatic of entrepreneurs, so it is not surprising that in November 1974, Michael decided to launch his own UK publication: 'LabMate'. At first, his intention was purely to address the UK and Irish markets, but this soon expanded and International LabMate was launched at Pittcon in March 1976.

International LabMate quickly became hugely popular with the laboratory sector, not only because it had been created by a chemist for chemists, but also because Michael's experience as an instrumentation manufacturer meant that he understood the needs of the market's major players.

LabMate's success was boosted by other synergistic innovations that included laboratory conferences and exhibitions and market-specific publications for sectors such as health & safety. However, one of the major benefits of LabMate's longevity is its mailing list; for forty years, the publication has been the 'go to' source of information on laboratory instrumentation and related news. During this period, the magazine has been available at all of the world's major laboratory exhibitions and the mailing list has been continuously expanded and refined. As a result, the lengthy list of advertisers at the rear of every copy of LabMate is testament to the fact that anybody wishing to market a laboratory product globally needs to make sure that it appears in LabMate.

International Environmental Technology (IET)

In 1989 Michael's eldest son Marcus joined the company in the sales department having studied at Leeds University. As well as sales, Marcus enjoyed the challenges of marketing technical/scientific products and helped to extend the company's success. Marcus also had a keen interest in the environment and was conscious of the growing raft of regulations that was being created around the globe, and the effect that this was having on the environmental instrumentation market. So, in 1990 he launched 'International Environmental Technology', the company's first tabloid publication. By this time, all of the company's publications were printed in colour and IET quickly became a highly recognisable publication; coming from the LabMate stable, it was an instant success with readers and advertisers.

Building on the strength of IET, a number of new publications were launched soon thereafter. These included:

- **1994: LabAsia**
- **1996: Asian Environmental Technology (AET)**
- **1999: Petro Industry News (PIN)**
- **2003: Measurement Analysis China**
- **2008: Chromatography Today**

These publications in conjunction with a book division and ILM designs (a design and print division providing services to both internal and external customers) have all helped contribute to the multiple awards that ILM Publications has received from the Herts Chamber of Commerce, and in 1996 the company received the Queen's Award for Export.

Exhibitions and Conferences

The synergy that Michael exploited in the early years with LabMate has since been replicated through the creation and/or management of a wide variety of technical/scientific conferences and associated exhibitions. Many of these events are linked with the growth in environmental monitoring and with the methods and standards that perform an essential role in ensuring that monitoring data is accurate and reliable. These events were supported by many distinguished trade or Environmental Ministers from around the world and even HRH Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Phillip contributed to the opening conference/exhibition catalogues of 1993.

AQE (Formerly MCERTS)

Established in 2003 with the Source Testing Association (STA), the MCERTS events were created to help industry comply with new regulations, such as the Environmental Agency's Mcerts (monitoring certification) scheme and monitoring requirements relating to emissions to air. Since then, the remit has been expanded and AQE 2015, the international Air Quality and Emissions conference and exhibition will be the 8th event of the series; each larger and more successful than its predecessor.



Pattison with Professor Stephen Hawking at a reception in February at the Science Museum. Michael taught Stephen at St Albans School in 1958, map reading and weaponry.

WWEM

The WWEM events (Water, Wastewater and Environmental Monitoring) were created to address all issues relating to the testing and monitoring of water. WWEM has become a focal point for the water monitoring community worldwide, providing an opportunity for people from every industry to see the latest technologies and to catch up on the latest regulatory requirements. WWEM 2014 will be the 7th event in the series, including conference speakers and exhibitors from all over the world. The remit for this event has also expanded and WWEM 2014 will include simultaneous conference presentations and more than 80 workshops over the 2-day event. The exhibition also grows with each event and visitors have to plan their time very carefully in order to make the most of everything that is available.

CEM

CEM 2014 in Istanbul will be the 11th in a series of International Conferences and Exhibitions focusing on emissions monitoring. Since its inaugural meeting in 1997 the CEM conferences have been held in the UK, The Netherlands, Denmark, France, Italy, Switzerland and the Czech Republic. The CEM event brings together the international emissions monitoring community to network, trade ideas and discuss technology, methods, applications, legislation and standardisation relevant to all atmospheric pollutants including particulates, SO₂, NOx VOCs, trace elements and greenhouse gases. International Labmate under its environmental division has managed the CEM events since 2009.

Mercury 2013

Mercury 2013, the International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP) took place in Edinburgh, Scotland. The event was the 11th in a series that began in Sweden in 1990 and followed closely behind an international agreement to reduce global mercury emissions. Themed 'Science Informing Global Policy' the ICMGP events were created to promote discussion and find ways to tackle the environmental and health effects of mercury. International Labmate was asked to manage the 2013 event and enjoyed record numbers of exhibitors and delegates.

Online Marketing

The arrival of the internet made 'reader reply' cards redundant because information could be obtained more quickly from advertiser websites. On one hand this was good for readers but for advertisers it became harder to measure response rates and return on investment. However, to address this issue, an array of technical innovations has been built into the company's online media. For example, advertisers are provided with a personal login that provides them with detailed response data for each of their activities, including PR, editorial, adverts and newsletters.

The range of online media has grown enormously, significantly leveraging the value of publicity in the organisation's hard-copy publications. These include:

- **Labmate-online.com**
- **Envirotech-online.com**
- **Petro-online.com**
- **Chromatographytoday.com**
- **Pollutionsolutions-online.com**

In addition, the company issues monthly eNewsletters to complement each of these websites, and two further eNewsletters are currently being launched - LabAsia and Mercury News.

Looking back over the last 40 years, if the Old Albanians vs Verulamians match had been rained off, or if the clubhouse had run out of beer, or if Janice had not paid for Michael to return to the UK, or if Michael had not stood his ground when threatened by writs from America, or if Marcus had shown greater interest in the Arts; much of this would never have happened, and the modern, vibrant media empire that encompasses all of the above would never have been created... thank goodness for rugby, beer and Janice!