

**From the Director General**

## Reflections on 30 Years and every happiness for 2015

Firstly I must wish everyone a very happy holiday season and particularly thank those who attended our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Galas in New York and London. They were so very well attended, and the Mountbatten spirit so much in evidence, that they have convinced everyone that we need more alumni events to celebrate the friendships and opportunities that the Mountbatten year has given to all of you. So let's see if we can have an annual or bi-annual event in NY and London.

The development of the Mountbatten Institute, spanning three decades, owes much to those who contributed the time, commitment and ideas that helped shape the Institute. Some, sadly, are no longer with us. Chief among those is the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, whom I had the privilege of meeting several times. It was his work as an internationalist and as a leader committed to young people that inspired the idea of the Institute, and in whose memory we are named.

Originally a small student exchange between the UK and the US, we began in 1984 with only four interns volunteering primarily in schools in New York. Two colleagues of mine were particularly helpful in getting the organization off the ground in those early days. These were Peter Newell, head of Wolsey Hall, Oxford, and Stephen Spahn, Chancellor of the Dwight Schools in New York. Gradually we expanded our range of training options and in 1986 three organisations became corporate sponsors and their involvement marked a turning point in our evolution. These were the British American Chamber of Commerce (now called BAB), British Airways and the Royal Bank of Scotland. These companies helped to spread the word about Mountbatten through the corporate community in New York. We have not looked back since!!

In those early years the New York office was led by Patti Perusutti, who introduced us to student accommodations at Newport, then a field of mud, with only four apartment buildings, a very run down PATH Train station and an empty shopping mall. To see Newport now, it is difficult to remember how many misgivings we all had in sending our interns out there! Following Patti, Dr. Jane Riles took the helm and set in motion the possibility of developing academic programs, although this did not come to fruition until much later. It was under the tenure of Jill Merl that Mountbatten developed many of the features that have continued to be at the core of our mission and she, working with our Board of Directors, helped formulate our first Mission Statement. For a number of years the organization operated from the mid-town offices of Bell Redford Glenn, a career development company whose CEO, the late Clinton Glenn, was a major supporter of our efforts. It was in 1995 that Michael Billett assumed direction of what was then known as the Mountbatten Internship Programme. His contribution cannot be underestimated, nor can the commitment and care he exercised over a program that grew exponentially during his years with the Institute. His efforts were rewarded by his appointment as OBE by Queen Elizabeth.

Michael was succeeded by Tim Schantz who went on to head the Foundation of the National Cathedral in Washington DC, and who was, in turn, succeeded by Vicki Downey. Vicki has had a long relationship with the Institute, first as a host company manager and later as a member of the Board of Trustees.

The London program was something of a late starter, and our original office was primarily a recruitment center. It was John E. Parkes who set up London, and latterly with the help of the late David Lloyd Jacob CBE. John was instrumental in establishing Mountbatten as a presence in the UK and began the university recruitment cycle that brought the Institute to campuses across the UK (and which still forms the nucleus of our UK recruitment). Following the introduction of our original Certificate Program in New York, developed by Pauline Harvey and the Validation team at the Oxford University Delegacy for Local Examinations, we revisited the possibility of providing internships in London for Americans. Pauline Harvey succeeded John and brought the first cohort of American students to London in 1999. Since then the London program has grown considerably and at its height was hosting up to 200 US students. In 2007 Isobel Hedges, a distinguished international educator, took over the London office and was instrumental in building relationships with corporations in London who wished to bring talented trainees from India to join their company in London under Mountbatten sponsorship. On Isobel's retirement Gary Ball who, for 10 years had been on the Board of Directors of the Institute, assumed the role of Deputy Director General and Director of the London office. I should also express my thanks to our three longest serving staff members. In New York, Jo Harvey has been with Mountbatten for 20 years; the London office has been served by Tim Ellis for 15 years, and June Cali, currently in Texarkana, has been a loyal and hard-working colleague for 28 years.

While Mountbatten was, for many years, an Anglo American exchange, it is worth recording that Steven Hills, LL.B., JP, established our first international recruitment center in Sydney, Australia and, for over 20 years, has recruited a steady flow of students from the Antipodes each intake to join the New York programme.

I was fortunate in being elected Chairman of the founding organization, Mountbatten Internship Programme, and enjoyed both the oversight it afforded me, as well as the ability to pursue my own career in secondary and tertiary education. I concluded my contract with the Bangkok Patana School, the British International School in Thailand, in 2004, and returned to New York assuming the role of Director General of Mountbatten. Following an organizational retreat and a strategic planning exercise it was clear that Mountbatten should move to the next level of its evolution and the decision was made to a) open the program to more international students and b) develop links with an accredited university to offer degree level programs to its trainees/interns. We initially had an affiliation with American International College in Springfield, MA and offered our first MBA degrees to students who, following their internship, moved to Bangkok, Thailand, to study full time for a semester and complete their studies. Dean John Rogers, of the AIC Business School, helped us develop an appropriate curriculum. In 2007, at the suggestion of Dr. Michael Hayes, then Vice Principal of St Mary's University, Twickenham, London, we began offering a UK validated degree, including a Postgraduate Certificate to students who did not wish to proceed to the MBA. A new relationship with the University of Chester has given us additional qualifications to offer

our student/trainees, particularly an MA in Entrepreneurial Leadership in Global Business. Both of these relationships are overseen by our gifted Academic Dean, Dr. Dennis Garritan.

The Bangkok office, like London, began as a recruitment center to help bring more international students into the program. It was originally located at Harrow International School thanks to the support of Headmaster Dr. Mark Hensman and his wife Ann both of whom joined the Thailand Board of Trustees of Mountbatten. When we introduced the Bangkok semester for our MBA students the office expanded considerably and we established an affiliation with Naresuan University to provide academic resources for our students. Robert Thornhill became Regional Director for Asia Pacific and the academic program was overseen by Ajai Randhawa. Robert retired, but has since taken a seat on the Board of Directors who value his insights and perspective. Oversight of the Asia Pacific program currently rests with Dr. Yogini Joglekar, who was formerly Education Director in the New York office and who now lives in New Delhi. Mr. Jeff Simcox is currently directing our educational program at Naresuan on behalf of Mountbatten.

We have already made preparations for the next few decades and fulfillment of the dream that the Mountbatten Institute will, soon, be a degree granting institution in its own right. We are setting a unique course in offering a partnership with business that establishes experiential education as both valid and necessary in a future that needs flexible workers, and managers who are creative and internationally savvy and who understand the necessity for entrepreneurship and innovation. In London we were recently accredited as an institute of higher education by the British Accreditation Council, and in New York we have submitted our application for licensing by the New York State Education Department, and have received permission from the State Education Department to journey on the pathway to recognition as a College or University.

If our future is as exciting and fulfilling as our past, then we have a lot to look forward to. But in closing I would like to extend my gratitude to our Patron, Lady Patricia Mountbatten, a steadfast supporter of many charitable causes and a strong advocate of public service. We are honoured by her support and encouragement. I must also express my gratitude to the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, for their continued encouragement and involvement in providing the J1 Exchange Visitor visa to our student/trainees coming to the USA. Likewise in the UK, the Home Office has been exceptionally helpful to the Institute in approving us for Tier 5 status, enabling our training program to develop. I would also like to note that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been one of our stalwart supporters and, on more than one occasion, has provided invaluable advice and assistance in the face of changing policies and priorities.

I am so proud of all we have accomplished together and wish all our alumni, staff and friends a very happy holiday season and the most wonderful things for 2015. 31 Years old – we still feel like teenagers!!

*Dr. Paul Beresford-Hill, MBE*  
Director General