

Dear friends and colleagues,

First, I should like to apologise for my absence today. As at least some of you will have begun to realise, when you reach my age bits begin to fall off as that dreadful man, the Duke of Edinburgh, said recently. Whilst no bits have actually fallen off me yet, I did have an operation on my spine in early September.

The operation has been fairly successful but I find sitting for long periods quite difficult and in consequence could not undertake the 23 hour journey from Christchurch to Boston (and back again for 23 hrs).

Mind you, the Headmistress of my Primary School commented to my sisters, when they told her that their little brother was now a Professor, that she always knew that Jeremy would do well as he could never sit still in class. Over 60 years out of primary school and I am still unable to sit still!

Berthold has mentioned that I live in Christchurch NZ and that our family is safe and well. He has also mentioned our family dog Harvey who has featured in my 'out of office' messages for a number of years now.

As my readers will know, JEPP comes second to Harvey each time I return from holidays. Thus, I claim the distinction of being the only journal Editor whose dog is known to many of the journal's readers.

No doubt some rejected authors think he is a referee too!

On a more serious note, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many JEPP contributors and referees who have taken the trouble to ask about our welfare over the past week or so. There is much wrong with academia, but the warmth and concern which has been shown to me and my family by so many of you sitting here today makes me feel that I made the right career choice, way back in 1966.

So, one way or another, fate has denied you all the pleasure of listening to me giving a two hour lecture outlining my thoughts on EU and new governance. I had hoped to convince you that there was not much new in the so-called new governance. Not so much old wine in new bottles but old wine in old bottles!

I had also intended to say a few words about how to be successful in what is now termed the 'university business', as academic colleagues at the early stages of their careers always want to know the secrets of success.

Each successful person has their own special secrets of success, I guess. I think I have only three tips to offer. First, and most important, one should always be happy to appoint and work with colleagues who are much more intelligent than oneself. This is especially true when appointing or

working with junior colleagues. I have made a successful career by working with people much better than me. A good few of them are sitting in the audience tonight, and I thank them for teaching me much more than I taught them.

Secondly, when one gets to the top (I guess this award allows me to be immodest), one needs to remember that one was once at the bottom. As many of you know, I did not like Oxford much (as Sonia had predicted) but there is a moment at Oxford that I still cherish. My new office was under construction and I popped round to ask about the sound insulation in the walls. Approaching the carpenter, I asked him ‘what type of insulation are you putting in these walls, mate?’ To which he replied, ‘why, are you the bloody plasterer?’ At that point I realised that I was still Essex man, not Oxford man, and went home really happy that I had been mistaken for the ‘bloody plasterer’, rather than the Oxford Don that I was.

Thirdly, there is a, rather unusual, tip which I can offer. I knew nothing about the European Community, as it then was, when Sonia Mazey came to give a seminar at Nuffield College in 1989. (I have to say that she knew nothing about pressure groups either, though now claims that she had cited me in her Oxford D.Phil!).

Some 22 years and two children later, she still knows more than me about what is now the EU, but I owe her a massive debt. Without Sonia, I would not be receiving this award. In truth it should probably be awarded to the author, ‘Mazeyson’ whom one Strathclyde University undergraduate claimed to have read.

Thus finding the right partner is always a jolly good start.

Alas, because I am not here in person, you are being denied yet more pearls of wisdom (my first wife told me that everyone was entitled to my opinion), but I hope you will draw some small consolation by being able to get to the bar much earlier as a result.

I have struggled to find the right words to capture my feelings on receiving this award. It is conventional to say, on such occasions, that it was totally unexpected. I have been accused of many things in my life but never of being conventional, yet here I am being utterly conventional. When Adrienne emailed me, I really did think that there must be some mistake (not that Adrienne is prone to mistakes!). So, I Googled ‘Jeremy Richardson’ and, sure enough, found another Jeremy Richardson with far more entries than me, only to discover that he is a basketball superstar!

So, it must be me then, I thought, and so began a glow of self –pride. As with many good things in life, it did not last long as it dawned on me that ‘life-long’ had a slightly ominous, almost deathly, ring to it.

Thus, the award might be a simple artifact of demography: the Association might have run out of aged EU scholars, still alive and standing!

However, having now survived two major earthquakes in six months (Sonia keeps asking ‘whose clever idea was it to move to New Zealand, Jeremy?’), I have learnt that one should grab whatever good things come one’s way, whether deserved or not.

This award is, indeed, a jolly good thing (and rather well-timed too) and I confess that the warm glow of pride has returned. However, you can rest easy that it will not last too long as I have lots of carpenters to deal with, as we reconstruct our wobbly old wooden house here in NZ.

I accept your award with humble thanks, but will soon be the **‘bloody plasterer’** again.

Off to the bar you go!!