

Norman Tribble, Honorary Life President (1927- 2005)



If there was one man who could claim credit for the creation and establishment of The Association of Corporate Treasurers it was Norman Tribble. The treasury function began to emerge as an important area of corporate activity in the UK in the 1970s although it had for a long time had a position of considerable standing in US companies – and indeed some of the largest UK companies such as Shell, BP, ICI and Unilever had a separate treasury function for many years.

Treasury clubs were set up to allow members to exchange experiences about a whole range of topics with which many were quite unfamiliar as they were for the most part accountants by background. And out of these discussions there emerged a desire to create a professional body with strong educational foundations but it required a catalyst to channel this feeling into something practical and that catalyst was Norman Tribble. It was he who took the initiative by approaching a small group of senior finance directors and treasurers known to him to start the ball rolling. With his long experience of City traditions he ensured that the launch was carried off in sufficient style and panache to achieve the desired impact in the City. Later, with a small office established, he used the experience he had learnt years before at the Institute of Production Engineers to ensure that all the necessary apparatus was put in place to establish the ACT on a firm ground.

Norman became the first Chairman of Council – in those days he was essentially the Chief Executive. It was in this role that I first met him when he invited me to attend a dinner held at ICI a few months after the ACT was launched. There I met the “pioneers” – a small group including our first President, Alan Clements, all of whom rallied behind Norman’s vision for a

professional treasury body. I was asked to join Council – elections were something for the future – and hesitated because I was already quite heavily involved in the Society of International Treasurers and wondered how Unilever would react to another outside commitment which I recognised immediately would require time and effort. Norman, however, had a way with words which swept such obstacles to one side, so without more ado I became a member of Council and almost immediately joined the Membership Committee.

Much later Norman became Chairman of our joint venture with ICAS – typically coining the catchy name of ACTICAS by joining two sets of initials. His good humour helped to smooth the ruffled feathers when one institute or another felt its interest to be threatened. Many past students and ACT members will be unaware of Norman’s personal generosity in making a substantial charitable donation to the ACT Educational Trust in support of the provision of library facilities. In later years the ACT honoured him by making him an Honorary Life President in recognition of the debt owed to him.

A convivial host and a wonderful dining companion – usually at the ‘In and Out’ – Norman was one of those people who always had a sunny attitude to life. This was in no small part due to his long and happy marriage to Christine, his wife of more than 50 years, and probably also to his second great love, that of music. He was an accomplished musician able to play a variety of instruments including the piano and in his time also did some conducting. He became a Court Member of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and was for many years the Assistant Treasurer.

In the last few years Norman suffered increasingly poor health and his social activities and contact with his numerous friends were curtailed. He will be much missed by all who knew him but remembered for his achievements and his unfailingly cheerful disposition. ■ Gerald Leahy



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