

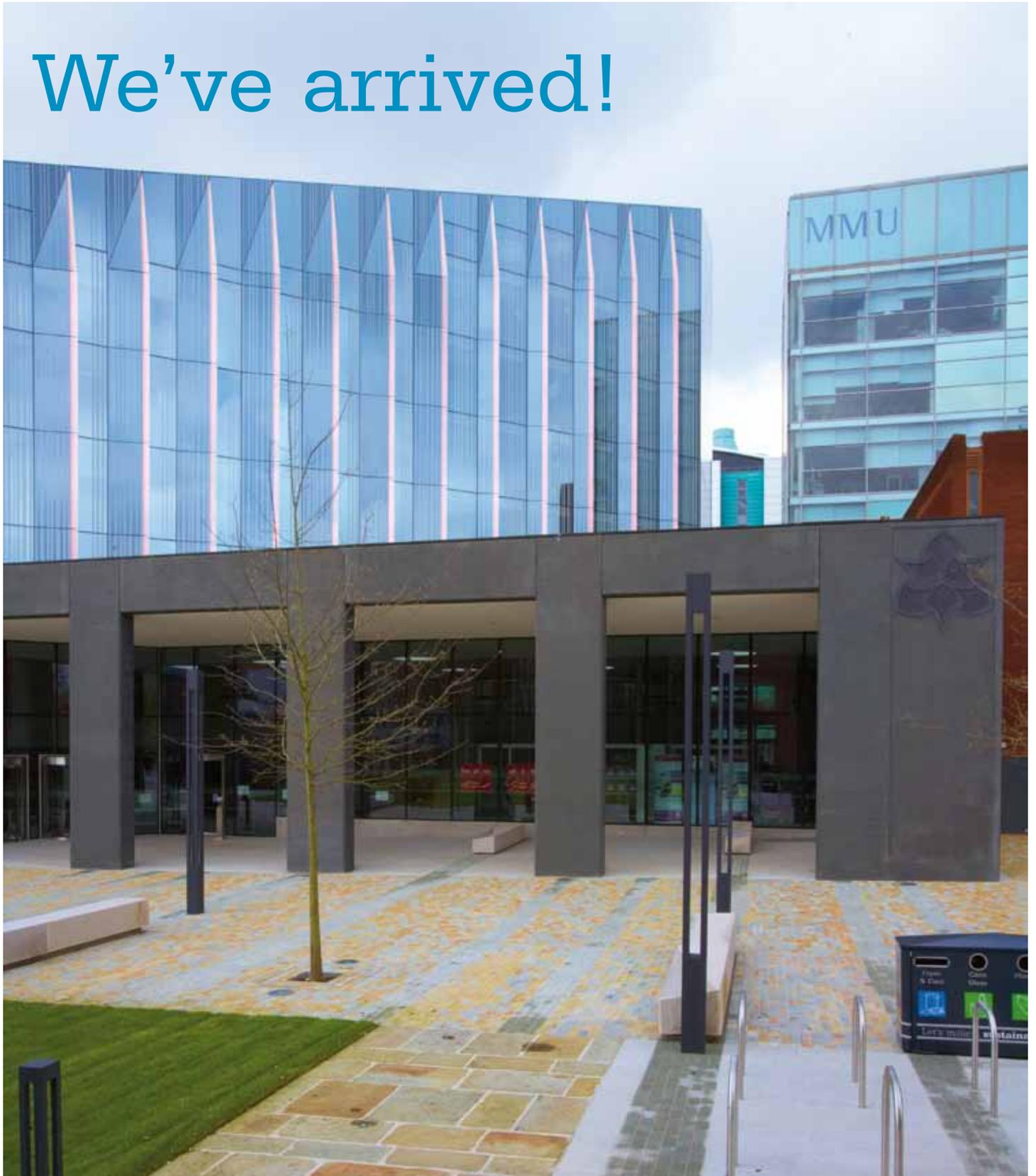
Welcome to the 14th Edition of the MBA Newsletter



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

October 2012

We've arrived!



The New MMU Business School

Prague trip April 2012

Full-time MBA



The study trip began in the very modern University of Economics with two very interesting lectures on the current economic position of the Czech Republic and why so many companies choose to invest in the country. This was followed by a fascinating tour of the historic Prague Castle and the first of our many meals in one of Prague's fine restaurants.

The first of the business visits was to Hewlett Packard with a seminar on cultural differences by the Head of Human Relations. After gaining an insight in how to deal with different cultures across Europe - and learning that not everybody understands the British sense of humour - we headed to the Pilsner Urquell brewery for an educational insight into one of the Czech Republic's greatest exports.

The next visit was to the Moser Glassworks just outside Prague, where we saw glass blowing of the finest world-renowned crystal, using traditional production methods. We moved on to a guided tour around the beautiful spa town of Karlovy Vary, ending the day with a tasting session at the Beckerovka distillery and a tour of the Grand Hotel Pupp, the film location of Casino Royale and the Czech Republic's annual international film festival.

A trip to the Skoda factory and tour of their car museum allowed us to see how the moving assembly line has changed since the day of Henry Ford to include high levels of automation. The afternoon was spent on a walking tour of Prague city centre crossing the famous Charles Bridge and seeing all its charm.

The next day began with an economics lecture from the Head of the EU Office, Česká sporitelna/Erste Bank in Prague, highlighting the advantages and issues faced when conducting business in Czech Republic. The trip to TPCA (Toyota Peugeot Citroën Automobile) followed, where we could compare their production to that of Skoda. A Q&A session with the Head of Marketing helped us understand why Toyota opened a joint venture with Peugeot and Citroën when they are the experts in automobile production.

The evening was spent at a traditional Czech restaurant, where we enjoyed an entertaining night of food, drink, singing and dancing!

The final day's excursion to the breath-taking Castle Karlštejn was a captivating history lesson of the Czech Republic and its colourful past, rounding off a full and action-packed week in a wonderful country.

Prague proved itself something special that we would all recommend as a destination to visit. The trip itself proved to be very exciting, enjoyable and a real opportunity to understand doing business in a post-communist country. Something that we will all look back at with fond memories, just one of the benefits of doing the MMU MBA.

Phil Osborne

A Modern Day Industrial Revolution

Consider a situation where you might find yourself amidst a modern day industrial revolution where 20% of the world's population depend on the economic prospects of a mature western market in continuing its industrialised growth of 9% per annum, finding 15 million new jobs a year and nurturing a culture which is 2000 years old, well then, you would be in China.

The voyage of self-discovery experienced by Executive MBA students continued in Beijing this year. Hosted by its 20 million citizens, we were able to experience the sights, sounds and smells of a culture truly steeped in history. From the wonders of the Summer Palace and Forbidden City to the modern day events surrounding Tiananmen Square and the infamous standoff of the student and the tank, China does not disappoint. If it's exercise you are after look no further than the Great Wall of China, it really is truly breathtaking, if only walls and steps could talk!

Modern day Beijing hosts the extremes of economic success alongside the origins of its existence, with 41% of China's wealth in the hands of 1% of the population it is easy to spot the odd Bentley and Range Rover from the 5 million cars and, according to Katie Mellua, 9 million bicycles! For those of you of a nervous disposition be prepared for the happy coexistence of near misses on China's roads, people, bikes cars and buses seem to find a way through what would befuddle and enrage western drivers. For fun, cast your minds back to the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and the opening scene where Hugh Grant is late for the first wedding, missing a motorway junction, he slams his mini in reverse heading back up the motorway to retrieve the missed junction... our coach driver demonstrated this manoeuvre whilst returning from the Great Wall with great aplomb, but no one seemed to mind!

The pursuit of money sees a wealth of activity from street vendors and counterfeit markets, to recycling on the litter free streets where three wheeled bicycles ferry cardboard, plastic



and metal with scant regard for axle weights. Despite still relatively low wages, compared to the west, increased consumer spend is fuelling real-estate development; skyscrapers shopping malls and karaoke bars are part of Beijing's new fabric. This does, however, come at a price, rents in Beijing for modest accommodation at 3000 Yuan/month exceed most incomes leading to increased labour costs fuelling urbanisation as farming citizens become part of China's floating city population.

Business and family are not distinct from each other in Chinese culture, being bound by togetherness in dwellings where several families live together or in the board room where your business reputation is as important as the interest in your family and your ability to serenade in the karaoke bar as the latest business deal is sealed.

Greater liberalisation is hoped for with a change of Government at the end of this year but wherever you go there is evidence of controlled elasticity as the next generation explore the boundaries of East meets West.

Finally China is a must do visit if only to witness first-hand the economist's golden goose, without which they would have precious little air time.

Richard Huxtable

MBA Alumni Spotlight



Marium Ali

Marium graduated with an MBA from Manchester Metropolitan University's Business School in June 2010. When she began her studies she was Group Commercial Manager for Tetrosyl, the largest manufacturer and supplier of car care products in the UK, and has since been promoted to Marketing Director. She believes her MBA played a part in securing her promotion.

Deciding to study for an MBA can be daunting, even before you've worked out where you'd like to apply. Marium Ali spent five years weighing up her options. *"I'd thought about an MBA for several years, and one of my first tasks was to think about which method of delivery was best for me. I looked into studying online, or taking a home-based course, but decided that face-to-face time with lecturers, staff and fellow students was a priority for me."*

"I work in Bury, and live in Manchester so the proximity of the Business School to my work and home meant it would work for me and my employer, which was important as they funded my studies. I could take an afternoon off work to study, and stay on campus to use the great facilities. The reasonable costs were also a deciding factor."

Marium started out as a chemist after graduating from the University of Salford. *"I began at Tetrosyl as a graduate trainee, but soon decided I didn't want to take a scientific path. I stayed with the company, and worked my way up in business administration, before becoming Group Operations Director. I enjoyed my chosen career path, but always felt something*

was missing. I knew the business well, but there were gaps in my knowledge, and areas of business that I didn't understand. I knew that an MBA would help me to 'fill in the gaps' and allow me to do my job better."

What were Marium's expectations for the MBA? *"I hoped it would give me a broader understanding of how to run a business, and I was keen to get back into uni life and have a forum of like-minded people."*

"I have to say that my expectations were exceeded! I was surprised at the diverse range of people on the course; from council workers and school staff through to IT specialist and business owners. The breadth of experience made for useful discussions and allowed me to tap into great business minds."

Marium particularly enjoyed the 'strategy' module. *"It was the hardest module, but strategy is integral to my role at work, so the ability to learn 'textbook' strategy and link it to my experience gave me new ways to work, and improved outcomes for my employer."*

Finally, Marium achieved a distinction for her dissertation, which she applied to a real life business scenario at work. *"Tetrosyl bought one of its largest customers whilst I was studying, so I used this real scenario for my dissertation. I worked on merging the two brands through research and analysis and focus groups with consumers. Tetrosyl was then able to see which brands were most commercially viable, and rationalise its products whilst strengthening its brand. My work still informs its marketing strategy"*.

Full Time MBA's visit to the Roberts Bakery

A loaf of bread in our life is one of those essential items which has its own sweet permanent place in a store shelf to our kitchen. Almost a necessity in most households to start our day with, we pick our choice of brand from the stores depending on our taste and preferences. A tour inside Roberts Bakery was quite an 'out of the ordinary' visit for MBA – Cohort 9.

With the memories of Prague still afresh in our minds and after a successful wrap of our second semester, we were offered yet another interesting day out which had in store for us a hearty meal at 'The Windmill – Robinsons' to begin with. A blend of casual chat, couple of drinks and a freshly served lunch at an Old English Pub from 1730's over a perfect sunshine was one of those spectacular moments of the MBA which we keep referring to as 'cherishing the good times'.

From the supply of our breakfast bread rolls to brown, white and pita bread including other flavourings (like tomato, mushroom and linseed) and certain popular bakery products that include the chocolate clusters, ginger biscuits, Easter bunnies, Frank Roberts and Sons Ltd – commonly known as Roberts Bakery, is a popular name among clients which include Tesco, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer, ASDA and Domino's in the UK.

Our visit to the Bakery and interaction with their staff helped us discover the competencies of this family business which has evolved over the period of six generations. Their constant innovation of products offered and processes of manufacturing has helped them capture a market share that may be smaller than their competitors but where they are a 'favourite' amongst their clients and customers. What helps them maintain their competitive edge is their efficiency in production of bread in terms of volume and their waste management.

Quoting Robert Harrison, one of the senior board members from the business 'Roberts Bakery has been a story of slow growth and a constant innovation' whilst they look forward to their expansion in infrastructure and exports. The walking tour guided by Michael Roberts and Sarah Steele helped us understand the details of dispatch management, loading Management, engineering and waste management which was followed by an open discussion around the company's existing performance, their competitors, KPIs and their future expansion plans.

Finally, to add even more to the whole experience, we were offered 'goodie bags' which consisted some of the best items from Roberts Bakery including my personal favourites - the 'chocolate clusters' and 'ginger biscuits'.

Sananda Thakurta

Employment News

Sarah Acton - Current Executive MBA student

When Sarah began the MMU EMBA in September 2011, she was working for a very successful south Manchester law firm as their HR Manager. Less than a year into the 30 month EMBA, she was approached through LinkedIn by Americana International to discuss an opportunity in the Manchester head office. Americana the firm behind the renowned Manchester fashion brand Bench., which employs approximately 300 UK staff and a further 300 internationally.

At both the informal and formal interview stage, Americana were impressed with the knowledge she had developed on the EMBA, and in particular her understanding of the link between Finance and HR, which is vital for successful operational and strategic HR. Sarah is now also interested in employer branding, a concept which has also been reinforced by the MBA.

Just before the EMBA trip to China, Sarah was offered a position of HR Manager for the firm, reporting into the Group Head of HR. The role is an exciting new challenge, involving operational responsibility for the firm's Manchester head office and the 26 retail stores across the UK.



MBA Challenge



The Business School has once again launched the 'MBA Challenge'. The prizes this year are one full scholarship for the Executive MBA and two £4,000 scholarships for the two runners up.

Twenty finalists attended the Business School in July to undertake the first challenge – *the business simulation*. The participants were divided into four teams to undertake this exercise. Each participant was given the opportunity to play their 'joker' – this entitled them to the opportunity to double whatever score they attained. As it happened it was the winning team who as a group played their joker!

The photographs give some idea of the intensiveness of the activity and a glimpse of some of the rooms in the new Business School.

The second challenge – around emotional intelligence have already been submitted, with two more to go. The final challenge and prize giving will take place in the Business School on Wednesday 26th September.



Talk by Tom Hattersley MBA

Head of Operational Supply Chain, Siemens

As part of Corporate and Business Strategy in an International Context, a graduate of the MBA, Tom Hattersley visited to deliver a session on operational strategy from a Siemens perspective. Tom is Operational Manager for Siemens at its Congleton plant in Cheshire.

Tom delivered a presentation on the key strategic aims he and his team are trying to deliver at Siemens and how progress towards them is measured and monitored. Following this we viewed several Siemens corporate films that had been developed to get the company's strategy message across to all its staff. These allowed us to see how some of the theory we have been taught being used in practice and helped us to relate it to 'real life' scenarios.

An interactive exercise followed with the class being split in to two. Each team devised questions for Tom based on the content of his presentation in order to gain further insight into how the strategy at Siemens works in practice.

This session made the concept of business strategy easier to understand and allowed us to see how a company's strategy helps them achieve their aims and objectives but at the same time can also cause challenges to operational personnel as they try and deliver it.

Jenny Ellams

Connected on LinkedIn? - Join the MMUBS MBA Alumni Group now!

Your Views are Valued

Have you got any ideas for the MBA newsletter?

Any interesting stories, internet links, information, contacts or questions you would like to share?

If so, we would be delighted to hear from you.

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Karl wins MBA Challenge

£16,000 scholarship for businessman

Businessman Karl Roberts has won a £16,000 scholarship in Manchester Metropolitan University Business School's MBA Challenge.

Karl, who is managing director of cash services company 360Cash, beat hundreds of applicants to win the full tuition fee prize.

The MBA Challenge consisted of four business challenges aimed at testing twenty shortlisted candidates' business acumen and skills. Candidates also had to complete emotional intelligence testing, showcase their debating skills, and take part in a five minute pitch to a panel of regional business heads and MMU Business School academics.

Powerful tool

Karl has been running his own business since leaving the RAF seven years ago and wanted to do an MBA to learn more about business management.

He said: *"Competing in the Challenge gave me a real insight and taster into the world of business academia, and a better understanding of what an MBA qualification could do for me."*

"Having realised what a powerful tool it is I was even more determined to do well. I was up against some very successful and knowledgeable opponents, and I was shocked at winning. I'm very pleased to be able to undertake an MBA at MMU, and can't wait to get stuck in!"

Karl's business pitch really impressed the panel of judges. Cathy Parker, Professor of Marketing and Retail Enterprise at MMU said: *"Karl's idea of secure end-to-end cash drawers really made us sit up and take note, and his research into the idea made his pitch solid and indeed showed the viability of his idea."*

"We can see a real gap in the market for his product, and it's something which our retail industry partners would be very interested in."



Business skills

"We can see a real gap in the market for his product, and it's something which our retail industry partners would be very interested in."

"The MBA here will really help Karl to develop his product and his business skills".

Karl's business - 360Cash - was established in 2005 with the specific objective of providing services and solutions to the cash services industry.

Nadine Malik and Laura Mackay were first and second runners up, and have both received a £4,000 scholarship towards their MBA tuition fees.

MMU's AMBA-accredited full-time MBA and Executive MBA programmes are taught in the Faculty of Business and Law's new £75million teaching and research headquarters.

It develops students skills in areas such as strategic management, leadership and communication, finance, marketing, human resource management and entrepreneurship.

Visit www.business.mmu.ac.uk/courses/mba/index.php for more information.