

Milking the world - EGS Old Boys Society Dinner – 14 December 2013

Brian Dugdill

1. OPENING AND SCHOOL

Thank you. Headmaster, Chairman, Gentlemen

My theme is **milking the world** - a rumination on how I milked my time at Ermysted's to make my way in the world. It's of course a personal story; you are welcome to interrupt, to correct, to heckle if you so wish. If my tales send you to sleep – so be it.

Speaking of tales – as one does on occasions like this – I've just got back from a 3 week job in China. There I had a very tall and enthusiastic 22 year old interpreter. Her name is Dong Yang and she is almost as tall as me. Those of you who know China will know that the Chinese put their Christian name last; Yang means young; so a literal English translation of her name is Dong Young. Anyway, I call her Young Dong. She told me many Chinese tales and jokes when we were out in the field as work out the countryside is called in my trade. Here's one.

A very tall Chinese lady (just like me Young Dong said who is 6 feet tall) was always disappointed that she could never meet a man she could look up to. As a result she found her sex life suffered – to the extent she couldn't sleep. But one night when she did eventually fall asleep, she dreamed she saw a Shaman.

Just in case you don't know, a Shaman is a sort of priest in the remoter parts of China, Mongolia and Tibet – a holy man who uses both bad and good spirits and, crucially, sign language for ritual prophecy and healing.

Anyway, this Shaman was about 7 feet tall and notwithstanding the usual smelly unwashed body and clothes, he was handsome and broad shouldered with a dashing smile. In her dream the Chinese lady looked up to him and thought WOW! He started his ritual sign dance and she started to feel very excited. She asked him how a Shaman makes love. Was it different from ordinary people? 'I could show you now, if you like the Shaman said?'

Her heart was pounding. In her dream he proceeded to play with his index finger then put it to her forehead. A most intense feeling ran right through her whole body like she'd never experienced before. When it was over she eventually composed herself and asked if he could do it again. What, already, the Shaman said!

The second story young Miss Dong tells is a very much shorter Chinese joke:

[Removed] Perhaps the humour in this tale got lost in translation.

My father used to say 'never to start with an apology' – but I've always found starting with one can be helpful, if only to lessen expectation. We've mainly lived and worked overseas, so I know little about what has happened at School since I left in 1963. More importantly I didn't manage to attend an Old Boys Dinner until last year – 50 years on. So I really don't know how to pitch this – or what the usual Old Boys after dinner speech should be.

Be that as it may - to my theme milking the world. I plan to say: (i) a little about my time at School; (ii) tell a few tales about some of our life and work living over-seas in conflict and post-conflict developing countries and in countries in transition; and (iii) finish with a few tales about Mongolia.

The Thesaurus in the Microsoft Word programme on my laptop gives many synonyms for milking including: exploiting, draining, bleeding, tapping, profiting, extracting, benefiting, making the most of, cashing in on etc. What the Word list says about milking could be applied to most of what I do! Time permitting, I will say more about Milking and Microsoft and Bill Gates later; and about Bleeding and Milking in Kenya and Mongolia.

I think using milk to benefit people's lives; and, at the same time, cashing in on milking best describes what I do. I grew up on a dairy farm; and after School went to Reading to read Dairy Science; then fell into jobs with Glaxo International and Asda – who were then a Dales dairy company just venturing into supermarkets – you don't need me to remind you that the letters AS in Asda used to stand for Associated; and the DA for dairies.

For Glaxo International I built milk powder plants in Ireland and at Kendal. Then, as a result of this early experience, somehow dropped into an unexpected adventure overseas in some of the most difficult to get-to and live-in countries in the world (at that time). For example: (i) during the aftermath of the liberation war in Bangladesh in the 1970s; (ii) the civil war in Uganda in the 1980s; (iii) and in Eritrea and North Korea - both countries still warring with everyone else in the world; and more recently (iv) Mongolia as it struggles to shake off the Soviet yoke and transition from centrally planned to market-led economy.

My family are and were Dales farmers from way back. My father's side farmed at Thorpe, Hetton and Rylstone up Warfedale. My mother's side still farm at Gargrave and Elslack and at places further up the Dales. The last surviving member of my parent's generation, my Uncle Thomas Harrison and an Old Boy, is here tonight. My brother David was also at School.

My first experience of Ermysted's was in 1955. I was interviewed for a place in School House by the then headmaster M.L. Foster. What I remember most about the interview was that the Headmaster was more interested in my father and grandfather, and my uncles who had been at School. He had just expelled a School House boy – whose name escapes me, but who was a great mate of Geoffrey Riding (of Riding Cup kicking fame). Headmaster Forster instructed, yes instructed, my parents to buy this expelled boy's tuckbox for me – for the then exorbitant sum of one £ - I still have it.

I got to school in the autumn term of 1956. Those of you who were around at the time will remember Headmaster Foster had moved on by then under a bit of cloud, but to do great things elsewhere. A.M. Gibbon, Gibbo, was acting Headmaster.

I was whacked many times by Gibbo and the headmaster that followed him, Jack Eastwood, right up the fifth form. How many of the august company here tonight were whacked at School? Or was whacking at Ermysted's reserved only for we tougher, more noble School House boys? I imagine Headmaster whacking is no longer entertained by your educational or political masters? Also I know School House is long gone.

We heard tonight how the school goes from strength to strength - and how it is now one of the top grammar schools in the country. A testament to the skill and dedication of your teaching team Headmaster; and to the Society that provides so much support to Ermysted's.

Teaching continuity surely plays a big part in this. I have my father's *Chronicles of Ermysted for 1922* and my Uncle Tommy Dugdill's *Calendar for 1928*. The Calendar reports a raft of new masters arriving in 1928 in what was then called the Michaelmas Term. Masters who were still teaching when I left some 34 years later: Mr. E. Rodger, Mr. H.C. Rodgers, Mr. Hardacre, Mr. Beattie, and, of course, Mr. Gibbon. They were dedicated teachers all – and gave us a great start in life.

2. LIVING AND WORKING ABROAD

So to life and work overseas. My world has been shaped not only by my family, especially my father, and Ermysted's, but also by three adventurers and travellers of heroic stature who also coveted travel to exotic places.

First - Chinggis Haan: or as he is better known in the West – *Ghengis Khan* the Mongolian barbarian-warrior. He was in fact a warrior-legislator-administrator extraordinaire. *Khan* – or *Emperor of the Great Mongol Empire* in the early 14th century he ruled most of the then known world

– the biggest contiguous land mass empire the world has ever seen from: (i) China in the East, (ii) India to the South, (iii) Russia to the North and parts of Europe to the West. 80% of Europeans, including we Brits are reported have some of his DNA. More about Chinggis Haan later. Jack Weatherford's recent account: *Ghengis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* is a reassessment of a ruthless but just leader and very much worth a read. Just a few of the innovations Chinggis introduced throughout the Mongol empire included: (i) the first international laws that even leaders, including himself, were not above; (ii) religious tolerance; (iii) a postal service and (iv) history's largest ever free trade zone.

Second - Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton: who together with John Hanning Speke sought the source of the Nile and fabled Mountains of Moon in central Africa. He translated into English the raunchy *Karma Sutra* and *The Arabian Nights* during the prim Victorian era. A small example of his countless adventures include: (i) as Captain in the army of the East India Company and The Crimea; (ii) British Consul in Fernando Po and Damascus; (iii) the first non-believer ever to travel to Mecca - disguised as a dervish. Mary Lovell's old biography of Burton – *A Rage to Live* – is a no-holds barred account and analysis of his epic life and also worth a read.

Third - Peter Fleming: brother of Ian, and The Times correspondent in Asia in the 1930s. He also made a number of epic journeys and wrote about them, not only in despatches to the Times, but in wonderful books too. Of course like most in his trade at that time, and like his brother Ian, he had another job for our Country as well – as one often does in out of the way places. He made a classic journey across China from Peking to India over the Himalaya to Gilgil in 1934 with a Russian Princess and wrote about it in his book *News from Tartary*. First published in 1936 - it's the best ever travel book in my view.

Bangladesh and Uganda. So when in 1975 an opportunity arrived out of the blue from the UN to go to Bangladesh to build a milk powder plant, ASDA gave their blessing to go on a year's unpaid leave. We stayed 10 and were lucky enough to find a well-paying vocation – a way of life and work that brought us adventure and excitement in what back then were relatively remote parts of the world. Our parents though we were mad to go and live out in Bangladesh with our 2 year old daughter. Communication with our families, and with the UN in Rome and New York, was by telegram. One was left to get on with the job. Today, everyone wants to know instantly what is going on – every minute of every day – including the ever sensational media.

In 1993, after 10 years in Bangladesh and 7 years in Uganda I left full time employment with the UN to set up my own outfit – DairyConsult. Since then we have contracted in over 30 developing countries and countries-in-transition all over the globe. Our DairyConsult clients include governments, various UN agencies and American organisations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID and, very recently NASA. We place individual livestock or dairy or food security advisers, often me, or small teams with these clients. We do the entire food value chain from cow to consumer as well as development project design, implementation and evaluation, strategic and investment planning at national and enterprise level; and trouble shooting, which is what I mainly do for Gates.

Now we do quite a bit of renewable energy and soil nutrient recycling work which is UN speak for muck spreading.

In Kenya we have a couple of sub-contracts with President Obama's Powering African Agriculture Programme. One is on-going work with the Kenya Geothermal Company and USAID on the feasibility of using geothermal energy for food processing; in this case milk powder, which uses a lot of energy.

The other is with an America outfit called SunDanzer, a spin-off from NASA. It starts in Kenya next year. You are asking how do NASA and milk fit together? Well NASA developed a direct drive solar powered cooling system for the International Space Station. The cooling system doesn't need

batteries like convention solar electricity systems. So one of its potential applications on earth is to cool milk. A prototype cooler for small farmers who don't have electricity is currently being built in Texas. Our role is to do the dairy pieces with small farmers in Kenya. I was hoping I would also get a field trip to the Space Station; no chance we have to make do with a trip to the US and NASA during prototype testing next year.

I've just got back from China: where we're doing the due diligence and design for the livestock components a 200 million US dollars loan jointly funded by the Chinese government and the Asian Development Bank. The money is going to 13 huge vertically integrated, mega-polluting, mega livestock enterprises - some with annual livestock turnovers of: (i) over one million pigs, (ii) 100,000 fat cattle or (iii) tens of millions of chickens and ducks. The investments will be used to clean up the enterprises, making them bio-secure and environmentally sustainable; and to bring product quality and bio-security up to international standards.

So how do milk and development reinforce one other? Milk is nature's most complete food. That's why all mammals like us give it to their young. Just one daily 200 ml glass of cow's milk provides a five year old with 20% of protein requirements; 60% of calcium and other vital micro-nutrients; as well as about 20% of daily water needs – after all milk contains almost 90% water.

In developing counties in Africa and Asia, almost half of all children under 5 don't get enough to eat and drink, and more than half of these are stunted as a result. Milk is an ideal food to tackle such nutritional problems, especially if it's fortified. After catastrophic events such as wars and natural disasters, providing affected farming families with a package of one or two cows, feed and advice, and the all-important access to markets gets them quickly going again. Milk provides food for the family and the surplus can be sold to provide daily cash income for buying other food and a child's education. A win-win situation.

In most developing countries where I work one 10 gallon can of milk provides 2 full-time off-farm jobs along the cow to consumer food chain. In post-conflict situations processed milk can be reconstituted from milk powder and made available immediately while food production and markets are re-built and ramped up. This is not unsustainable short-term, emergency food aid, rather it is a longer term solution for getting people and local economies back on their feet. So it makes economic sense as well as social sense – and environmental sense too as the cow shit can be used to fertilise the family's vegetable plot, dried for fuel or even to grow fish.

Gentlemen: it seems I'm running out of time. I wrote this on the aeroplane coming back from China on Thursday and misjudged the length. So tales about the work we did in Bangladesh and Uganda in the 70s, 80s and 90s will have to wait for another time

It's impossible to do my type of work without a supportive family. Until very recently my wife has always travelled with me and set up home. Now she just cherry picks the counties she goes to - like our on-going jobs.....

In Jamaica: where we are designing a national 5-year strategic action plan to revive the dairy industry.

Or Myanmar and Thailand: where we support the first school milk programme in Myanmar, funded mainly by the Thai Government.

And the Seychelles: where I led a UN pig and poultry investment mission last year.

And in East Africa: where we support a big Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation programme – *East Africa Dairy Development* - that works in 5 countries with 500,000 small dairy farmers. All Gates project are big! Bill Gates came out to Kenya visit us. He is especially intent on speeding up the process of development employing a business approach that operates at scale and brings in innovative technologies.

My wife didn't come to:

Eritrea: where we are supporting the Government to set up a demonstration eco-dairy farm for student practicals at the Agricultural University at Hamelmalo.

Or Iraq: where last year I led an evaluation of the dairy parts of the UN Oil for Food programme in Kurdistan. There I met another of my heroes, **Yousif Taher**. You might recall during the first Gulf War the Americans bombed a milk powder plant in Baghdad because they thought Saddam Hussein was making biological weapons there. Yousif was manager of the plant at the time. He is adamant there were no WMDs there. The raid destroyed the only baby food producing facility in the country

Or North Korea: where we built 3 small dairies to process goat milk into drinking yoghurt for school feeding; then the North Koreans built 16 more.

It's not all work of course – far from it – those of us who have the privilege of living and working for long periods overseas, especially in places perceived as being dangerous or difficult, know that one tends to play hard, party hard and then find time to work hard.

In **Bangladesh** we played cricket and rugby. We put together quite a good national rugger side – nearly all of us expats with a few Bangladeshis who had been at school in the UK. We played against mainly expat teams in the region in the 1970s in Bangkok, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Kathmandu. We hired a little Fokker – an aeroplane not a lady of the night – from Bangladesh Biman, the local airline, to fly to Kathmandu. 24 of us each took 4 cases of beer for the weekend – all drunk before we left. We played against a team made up largely of Ghurkhas - and managed to win.

In **Calcutta** – or Kolkata as it is now known we played at the legendary Calcutta Cricket and Football Club – football as in Rugby. You may know the CCFC is the second oldest cricket club in the world. The Club donated a silver dinner service to our Rugby Football Union that was melted down to cast the **Calcutta Cup** that England and Scotland play for every year. In Calcutta we had a couple of US marines playing in the scrum and lost one of the games on penalties – the marines kept taking Calcutta players out off the ball – just like in American football.

In **Uganda I played rugby on and off up to 1990**. We had a sailing boat on Lake Victoria. And went on many safaris to Uganda's well-stocked game parks, including those in the fabled Mountains of the Moon. If you ever get there - there's a great bar around the back of the Mountains of the Moon Hotel in Fort Portal. It serves up a seriously dangerous local drink called **Waragi** – a gin like spirit; it also serves up seriously dangerous ladies of the night.

Mongolia. I would like to finish with a few words about Mongolia - Land of the Blue Sky. A country where we lived and worked for the UN and the Japanese and Mongolian Governments for 4 years from 2004 to 2007. It's one of the remotest countries in the world with one of the harshest climates. For long periods in winter, the temperature stays below minus 35C; in the Gobi Desert in summer it gets above 45C. Ulaanbaatar is the coldest capital city in the world. Half the 3 million population lives there.

With its extreme continental climate and vast grasslands, livestock are hugely important to Mongolians who, until very recently, were a predominantly nomadic society depending mainly on milk and meat for sustenance. Very little grows except grass during the short summer. Mongolia's remaining 75,000 herding families, many of who are still truly nomadic, own about 40 million head of livestock including cattle, yaks, horses - nearly 3 million horses roam the steppe in huge herds – goats, sheep and camels. Not the vicious African or Arabian one-humped Dromedary, but the more docile two-humped Bactrian camel kept mainly for milk, camel hair and transport, and for racing and vodka making.

Mongolia has about twice as many livestock as the UK, but on an area 6 times bigger. So Mongolians know a thing or two about handling livestock, which they still do on horseback, even in the depths of

winter when the animals are out grazing standing hay. They have horse races too in winter; sometimes with over 200 horses and young riders racing up to 45 kilometre gallops in the snow in temperatures of minus 20 to 30C. Every decade or so there's a great *Dzud* – a great snow storm followed by very cold weather that buries the standing hay. About 10 million animals usually perish, mainly sheep and goats. But as they multiply quickly, their numbers build up quickly again.

Like farmers the world over, herders in Mongolia have developed well tried and tested environmentally-friendly coping systems. It's sometimes unfortunate the bunny-huggers and the tree-huggers often blame farmers for climate change – especially when they are usually wearing leather shoes and waving wads of paper pamphlets.

Milk is sacred and a central part of Mongolian culture. For example, before all important journeys, it's splashed on the hooves of horses and on the wheels of vehicles, even trains and aeroplanes. In fact, Mongolians milk almost any animal that moves, including camels and horses, and even reindeer.

Mongolia's nomadic herders produce more than one hundred traditional dairy products, many of which have unique functional properties. For example *airag* a - frothy beer made from fermented horse milk and *Shimiin Arkhi* – vodka distilled from fermented camel milk.

Mongolia used to be self-sufficient in milk and dairy products, but during the rapid transition from state-run to market-led economy in the 1990s after the Soviet Union collapse and pull back, the dairy industry like other state-run food industries collapsed and urban people became dependent on imported processed milk and milk products.

Our job was to kick-start the re-building process; the Mongolia team took over in 2007. Now we just provide advice on demand – once or twice a year. Ten years on, Mongolia is almost self-sufficient again in all processed milk and dairy products except cheese and milk powder.

We had and still are having adventures in Mongolia. Close to the top is probably the trip we made in deep winter to Irkutsk in Siberia to buy 50 Simmental in-calf heifers and 10 young bulls to cross with local Mongol breeds to boost their milk and meat yields. Simmentals are hardy dual purpose milk and meat animals well able to withstand the rigours of the Mongolian steppe in winter. Irkutsk is at the southern end of Lake Baikal on the iconic Trans-Siberian railway. The animals were loaded into 2 rail cars and we set off for Mongolia. At Ulan Ude we branched off on to the even more iconic, but less well travelled Trans-Mongolian railway, which goes all the way to Beijing via Ulaanbaatar. The animals soon settled in to do their job.

My wife and I were given couple of camels which we keep with a herding family in the Gobi. I was back in September this year to set up with a Mongolian partner a company to produce Yak cheese and camel milk vodka. The processing unit is on the edge of the Gobi and we will buy milk from about 200 herding families. We've done the product development and market research and the products look promising, but need improvement - as you will see if you taste our vodka later tonight. We start production next summer. The finance is lined up and our business plan is to sell to the domestic market for the next 2 to 3 years to establish our brands - *Gobi Yak Cheese and Gobi Camel Vodka* – then perhaps to export.

And finally to back to Chinggis Haan: in 25 years in the 14th century his Mongol army subjugated more lands and people than the Romans conquered in four hundred years. Whether measured by the number of people defeated, the sum of the countries annexed, or by the total area occupied, Chinggis Haan conquered more than twice as much as other man in History. Little wonder he was the US Time Magazine's Man of the Last Millennium. *All this with an army of just 100,000 warriors.*

How did he do it? Why with milk of course! Each warrior travelled with a string of 10 to 15 horses; some were war horses; others trekking horses; and others food horses. Mongolians milk

mares night and day every 4 hours during the short 3 month summer period using the milk exclusively to make **airag** beer. Any **airag** that can't be consumed immediately is left to sour and solidify. This was carried by Chinggis' warriors and used as food on the run or rather on the hoof.

The Mongols could move three times as fast as any other army of the day, especially the heavily armoured European Crusaders. They rode for days on end, sleeping in the saddle, and only pausing once a day to make and eat **black airag**; made by bleeding one of their food horses and mixing it with the *solid airag*. **Black airag** is pretty disgusting, but very nutritious. There's some *solid airag* here if anyone wants to try it - with your blood, not mine.

The hooves of the horses of Chinggis Haan's warriors splashed in the waters of every river and lake from the Pacific Ocean to Mediterranean Sea. Some of his direct descendants ruled as Moghuls – for Moghul read Mongol – in India until 1857 when we British drove them out. Chinggis Haan's last ruling direct descendent, the Emir of Bukhara, was finally deposed by the Soviets in Uzbekistan in 1927 – 600 years later.

3. WRAP-UP

Gentlemen: it's been an honour and a privilege to chew the cud with you. I hope you will perhaps have come to know there's a bit more to milking cows – the four-legged variety that is – than just milk - and to milking camels and horses. That said - beer is always better than milk – especially Mongolian milk beer and Mongolian milk vodka.

There's some **Shimiin Arkhi** available here for sampling if anyone wants to risk his constitution – not made from our own camel milk unfortunately – but to be drunk communally from a traditional Mongolian silver bowl.

Allow me to conclude with a Mongolian camel tale - told by my Mongolian interpreter Haanda – we call her Handy Handa.

It's about a Mongolian golfer who staggered into emergency at a hospital in Ulaanbaatar. He was concussed with multiple bruises, walking around with a 5-iron wrapped around his neck. Naturally, the doctor asks him what happened. "Well, it was like this" said the man. "I was having a quiet round of golf with my wife when after the 9th hole we stopped for some liquid refreshment (airag and shimiin arkhi of course). We stated playing again a little the worse for wear. At the 13th we both sliced our balls out on to the steppe where some camels were grazing. We went to look for them - the balls that is. While we were rooting around on the steppe I noticed that one of the camels had something white stuck in its rear end. I walked over and lifted up her tail. Sure enough, there was a golf ball with my wife's monogram on it stuck right in the middle of the camel's backside. That's when I made my mistake." "What did you do?", asked the doctor. "Well, I lifted the tail, pointed, and yelled to my wife, "Hey! This looks like yours!"

Gentlemen, Ermysted's and its masters and pupils shaped my life – for that I am and will always be truly grateful. It is my very great pleasure to ask you to charge your glasses and be upstanding to toast the School and the Society

Tockh toi - Bayaar laa laa Good health and thank you