

My Lords, Ladies & Gentlemen

Good-evening and welcome to this - the Communications Management Association's 50th anniversary celebration. You will all by now have seen our 50th Anniversary booklet. It's a splendid publication and for its compilation we must acknowledge and give thanks for the diligent endeavours of Rosie Gardner. You can – I'm sure you will - read it at your leisure – so I don't need to repeat what the Old and Bold have said therein.

And, speaking for a moment of the Old and Bold, I'm really sorry that our most venerable member, George McKendrick, and his wife, Winnie, cannot be here with us tonight. But I am delighted to welcome those past chairmen and long standing members who represent those volunteers who've given their time and treasure over the years to make us what we are today.

And we must not forget our past and present team in Leatherhead for their tireless and highly valued efforts that are often well beyond the call of duty.

There are two individuals present tonight who, in more recent times, have made tremendously significant contributions to CMA's health and well being during a very difficult period in our history. One as Treasurer and the other, as Business Development Director. It is therefore with great pleasure that we confer honorary fellowships on David Bunting and Alan Hindley.

Some people have different views about what constitutes an industry. The words industry and market are often confused – but at the CMA we have always been very clear. The ICT industry includes both buyers and sellers.

They are - we are – interdependent. ICT is woven into the fabric of the economy - central to the way we all do business - and the way we live - and the way we are governed – and, my Lord Currie, regulated.

The CMA - and before that the TMA - has always been an integral part of this central industry. That's why our founders set up a body to interface with PO Telephones. We are in a different era now – but the issues are fundamentally the same. Unfair competition, international pressures, maintenance of choice and attack on cost - and urgent calls to take advantage of newer, better, technologies.

But today's actors would not have been recognised 50 years ago – Ofcom, the European Commission, IPR, DRM, internet governance, FTTH and an ever-increasing rate of technological development.

Our industry has always ridden the tightrope of cooperation versus competition – of *Competitive* versus *Collaborative* advantage. That's what makes us, in aggregate, so much more than a Utility.

As a User Group – we would say THE user group – we naturally find ourselves in a perpetual love-hate relationship with the government, the regulator(s) and the suppliers. We would not, could not, have it any other way. It is why we survive. We are fiercely independent. We say what our members think. We might upset some people some of the time. But we are always welcomed back to this great industry table, not least one might suppose because there'd be a lot less industry without the £15bn annual spend of our members, and again not least because that annual spend represents the most profitable market segments for the suppliers.

We also value our relationships with Ofcom, with BERR, with DCMS and now with the Department that has, for delivery of UK policy objectives, the greatest dependence on a modern communications infrastructure. I refer, of course, to the Department of Communities and Local Government who are leading the transformation of government through the devolution of responsibilities for economic growth and societal development – for the creation of Prosperous Places.

Of course CMA continues to make the case for universal access to broadband. We understand, but are not happy with, the continuing note of caution sounded by our policy-makers, and we can't help comparing this with the dynamic progress being made by our competitors.

I suppose we can only dream of seeing us follow the Australian example, with a dedicated government department set up to drive our converged communications future, headed by a visible, knowledgeable, and active Minister.

We also value our wider European relationships, conducted mainly through INTUG, and with the Commission and with MEPs. And of course we also value our working partners, EURIM, PITCOM and, now more so than ever, the BCS. Long may these relationships continue to prosper.

As we look to the future CMA will continue to inform and represent our members as in the past. We will not only support their new corporate social responsibility activities but must take a key role in helping them reduce their carbon footprint through the use of ICT.

As a start I am pleased to announce that CMA has been chosen by the Carbon Trust to carry out a study that will enable enterprises to metric the use of three areas of activity - **Flexible Working, Unified Communications and Remote Call Centres**. This will be through travel replacement and the identification of other areas of carbon savings.

I have spoken for long enough. I hope I have wetted your appetite and that you are looking forward to hearing, later, our guest speaker, Chairman of Ofcom, Lord Currie.

But there is, now, only one thing standing between you and this splendid dinner - and so I ask you now to stand for The Grace read by one of our past Chairmen, Ron Bell.