

45 Commore Drive
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11 October 1989

Mr Peter Whaley
Chief Executive
'89 Skill Olympics
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Dear Peter

In reply to your letter regarding incidents at Warwick University may I make the following comments.

- A With reference to paragraph two in Mr Paine's letter, I do not wish to make any comment.
- B With reference to paragraph three the catering arrangements were altered on several occasions, at short notice, due to change of competition times at the NEC. On two occasions the catering department were also asked to provide meals for 450 people at short notice when it was discovered that no meal was being provided at the Government Reception and when no meal could be arranged on route back to Coventry from the visit to London. Lindsay Judge will confirm this. As you may recall I mentioned on more than one occasion how accommodating the catering staff at the university had been.
- C I will now deal with the remainder of Mr Paine's letter which refers to the Thursday and Friday evenings.

THURSDAY 31 AUGUST 1989

That was the day the actual competition finished. In the evening there was a Government Reception at which plenty of wine and very little food was served, on returning to the University a cold buffet meal was provided. To celebrate the end of the competition a Toga party had been organised in the Gosford Hall, by the UK and New Zealand competitors, to which every competitor was invited, approximately 200 people attended this party. Around midnight I decided that the party had gone on long enough, as the effects of the release of the pressure of a four day competition plus the effects of the alcohol consumed was beginning to take effect and the event was about to become a rabble. At this point the University security staff arrived stating that university and local residents were complaining about the volume of noise. I admit that by this time the noise was excessive, I asked the security staff to allow Martin and myself 15 minutes to disperse the competitors to their respective Halls of Residence, as I felt that if the security staff intervened it may have caused problems. The security staff agreed and Martin and I succeeded in carrying out this task while they, the security staff, remained in the background. When we returned to our own halls of residence the UK team had already set about tidying up the common room, this task was completely carried out before the team retired to their rooms.

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Around 3am I was awakened by one of the Australian team members who informed me that there had been an incident in their hall of residence which had resulted in one of the team members falling through a window and that they had phoned for an ambulance. I alerted Martin and both of us arrived at the Bericote Hall, at the same time, as the ambulance.

It was obvious that the competitor was badly injured by the amount of blood he was loosing, from a lacerated arm. My main priority, at that time, was the well-being of the individual.

The Australian team leader accompanied his competitor to the hospital.

There was quite a mess with blood all over the place. The Australian Assistant Team Leader undertook the task of clearing up this mess. The security staff of the university were also in attendance.

In the morning the Australian Team Leader explained that there had been two fights involving his team which had resulted in this incident. He was informed by me that when the claim for damages was presented the Australians would have to pay the specified amount, he accepted this and asked that the account be forwarded to the Australian Organisers. I later informed Dr Bosley, our treasurer, of this arrangement. The police were not informed of the incident as, in my opinion, this would have served no purpose.

FRIDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

Around 2 30am on the Saturday morning I was awakened by the security staff who asked me to go the Australian quarters as they were causing a disturbance by the amount of noise they were creating. I contacted Martin and both of us went with the security staff to their quarters with the assistance of the Australian Assistant Team Leader, we succeeded in getting the team bedding down.

In my opinion the Australian Team Leader did not, throughout the competition, carry out his duties in a proper manner. I was however very impressed with his Assistant, who was often left to face up to all the problems.

With regard to the damage charges, the first five items listed are the responsibility of the Australian Team and amount to £1365.95 which when taken away from the overall amount of £1523.45 leaves a balance of £157.50.

When you consider that we were dealing with 450 young competitors from 21 countries, although regrettable, £157.50 damage to property does not in any way, in my opinion, suggest wanton vandalism.

The above is a true account of the incidents that arose at the Halls of Residence and will if required no doubt be substantiated by Martin, the security staff, managers, and the Director of the Halls of Residence at Warwick University.

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In conclusion may I make a further two points.

- 1 The Director, Managers and all the staff at the Halls of Residence provided an excellent service and at all times were extremely helpful and understanding.

The visiting teams were very impressed with the hospitality provided at the university. From Martin's and my point of view we were given our own office, telephone and free access at all times to their administration facilities including their fax machine for which we were most grateful.

- 2 I take exception to the comments in your letter that there is implied serious allegation of failure on my part as Co-ordinating Team Leader, and that of the Team Leaders of the individual countries, with one exception of which I have already made reference, nowhere in Mr Paine's letter is this criticism made or remotely implied, in fact, the reverse is the case. Only one Team Leader and Team created any problem and it is an insult to all the other Team Leaders to suggest or imply otherwise.

With regard to my own position I accept that I was ultimately responsible for what happened 24 hours a day, however in reality it is physically impossible for anyone to be on duty during all of that period of time. All one can hope to do is to react to any situation that may arise and make the correct decision and take the appropriate action. I maintain that, with Martin's tremendous support, I took the correct course of action, at all times, and refute any criticism made by people who were not present when any incident occurred.

In conclusion may I apologise for the length of the reply but I feel very strongly regarding the issues involved as according to your letter, the ability and competence of myself and the individual Team Leaders is brought into question.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Archie Sharkie
Co-ordinating Team Leader

cc Mr M Jones, Mr C Thompson, Mr W Norris, Mr B Arculus