EDITH COWAN
UNIVERSITY
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# THE 1999 HERBERT COLE (NUGGET) COOMBS LECTURE

## The Sparship Enterprise

by

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Lecture transcript

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# Endeavour - The Sparship Enterprise

Chancellor of Edith Cowan University, Justice Robert Nicholson

The Hon Max Trenorden, Representing the Premier of Western Australia

Mr Michael Hardy representing the HC Coombs Lecture sponsor, Clayton Utz

Ladies and Gentlemen

It certainly is a great honour to be asked to deliver the 1999 H. C. Coombs lecture.

Like Nugget Coombs I have a strong association with the Edith Cowan University but unlike him I had to keep coming back to the University for regular top ups.

After leaving school I went to England with my parents for 5 months and when I returned like most of today's school leavers I had no idea of what I wanted to do with my life.

I sat around the house for three weeks until my mother suggested it would be appreciated by the rest of the family if I went and got job and started pulling my weight. After getting over the shock of this gentle shove out of the nest, I caught a bus into Perth clutching my Leaving Certificate.

It never occurred to me to look at the jobs vacant section of the West. I simply walked down St Georges Terrace and knocked on the door of the personnel managers of the companies that had the biggest buildings.

I was treated very well and by the end of the week had 5 job offers. I took the one at MLC Insurance with no great plan of having a career in the Insurance industry, it was just that after spending the last 11 years at Hale School, the sight of the 7th floor typing pool was pretty good and it had the tallest building - all 10 floors of it..

My success with job hunting wasn't because I was particularly clever or had a great Leaving Certificate, it was just that it was 1964 and we had full employment. When Nugget Coombs wrote his white paper on full employment in 1945, the year I was born, he would have been pretty pleased with my job hunting experience 18 years later.

The other contributing factor to my job hunting success was that Mr Gates and his peers had not appeared on the scene and so all the tedious jobs that are today done by computers, were done by young people fresh out of school.

For example, one of the jobs I had as a Remittance Clerk with MLC, was to work out which policy holders had not paid their weekly premium.

This was the old type of policy typified by the 'Man from the Prudential' who would knock on doors each week and collect the 5 shillings or so for the "Whole of Life" policy that usually was set up to cover the insured's funeral expenses.

Each policy had a record card with 52 holes along the top corresponding to the 52 weeks of the year. When a payment was made I punched through to the top of the card, the hole corresponding to the week the policy was paid up to. These cards all went into a wooden box and I would get a long needle and put it down the row of holes corresponding to the current week, give it a jiggle and raise the needle vertically. Those policies not paid up to date were not punched and so out came their card. I would then spend the rest of the day writing up and sending out their late payment notices.

Those sort of jobs do not exist for kids today and many would say "Thank Goodness", but I think back to those days with fondness as it gave me a great sense of being part of the workforce and of being useful. I had a twenty pound car, got paid each week and a girlfriend in the typing pool. Life was pretty good.

However, after 18 months I got bored. I had been transferred to New Business and had an In-Tray bulging with proposals that I had to check with great care to see if the salesman had made any mistakes in his eagerness to sign them.

When I asked after a week of this tedium, how long I would have this task, I was told 18 months to 2 years.

I had only recently returned from my first interstate yachting championship and the thought of sitting at that desk for another year, let alone two, was too ghastly to contemplate.

I discussed my dislike of clerical work with my mother and asked her advice. I was toying with the idea of joining the Navy but she was dead against that and instead suggested that I went to Teacher's College. My father and elder brother were both teachers so I knew what I would be getting into. I liked the idea of the long holidays so I could go sailing and also liked the idea of lots of sport. It all sounded a lot more appealing than checking new business proposals ad nauseum.

I rang up the Education Dept and asked for an interview.

"Applications closed last August", I was told "but come in anyway".

This was quite encouraging seeing that it was January, so off I went. The interview went well and within a week I was sitting in the big hall at Claremont Teacher's College just like Nugget Coombs must have 40 years before. I had signed up for two years training and three years of bonded service to the Education Department. It was a bit like joining the Navy anyway.

The two years flashed by and all I really remember was the sport and the fun of it all. We went to lectures and had exams but I don't seem to remember them being that onerous.

At the end of the course the most important thing was to find out to which school you were to be posted. Everyone got a job even if you failed, you simply went out on a conditional certificate.

This was usually handled very tactfully by the college in an amazing tradition called *The Posting Ceremony* where literally the whole graduating year was assembled in the hall and each student's name was called out. As they made their way to the dias, the school they were going to was read out. I remember one girl who lead a rather protected life at home with her parents in Dalkieth, fainting on her way to the stage when her posting of "Pumping Station Number 7" was read out, greeted by howls of laughter from the assembled student body.

I was spared the indignity of all of this. My father and brother had contracted polio in 1951 and I was the only son of three still living at home. I consequently applied for a metropolitan posting on compassionate grounds so that I could help Mum look after Dad. A deal was done. As I had a Leaving Certificate that included the three sciences, I would get a job in the metropolitan area as long as I was prepared to teach at the Secondary level.

"But you've just spent two years preparing me to teach primary school children." I complained.

"Don't you worry about that my boy." I was told. " Go to Albert's Book Shop, buy the Year 8, 9 & 10 Science A books, read them over the holidays and go and teach that."

I duly arrived at Bullsbrook JHS near Pierce Air Force Base (well it was close to the Metropolitan area) the day before school started and met Mr Fred Gatti, the Principal, who was a marvellous man.
I was told that not only was I teaching Science A, but Science B, that is the maths of chemistry and physics (at which I was hopeless) and also Year 10 maths A & B and New Maths to the Year 8's. It did not seem to concern anybody that I had failed Leaving Maths which shows just how short the State was in those boom times of qualified teachers, particularly of Maths and Science.

"What's New Maths" I asked .

" Don't you worry about that, John" Fred said. "Take this book, read it and teach it".

The following three years at Bullsbrook JHS were enormously satisfying and most likely my best years as a teacher. I have never worked so hard, particularly in the first year, just simply trying to stay one lesson ahead of the kids.

Many a time I would sit there with teenagers who were not much younger than I, and try and solve some chemistry or trigonometry problem, openly admitting to them that I had no idea how to do it myself. Somehow we always seemed to figure it out and ironically the external exam results that I achieved in my first year of teaching were the best of my three years at Bullsbrook. I may not have learnt much relevant content at Claremont Teacher's College but I certainly learnt my trade.

As soon as my bond was up I did what many young people my age did and caught a ship to Europe to go and see the world. Flying was much too expensive.

I wrote to a publication that advertised jobs for English Prep Schools and got five interviews. Most of them offered a monastic existence in the wilds of south west England, so I opted for a job at St Paul's in London.

The house tutor had just left to get married and the position in the boarding house came with a three room flat overlooking the Thames with the London Corinthian Sailing Club on the far bank. No dossing down in some Earl's Court flat for me!

St. Paul's is a very famous English Public School that was established in 1509. Montgomery of Alamein was an old boy as were many other famous people. I was the token colonial.

It was at this time that I started sailing with Alan Bond when he bought his yacht *Apollo* across to Cowes. I had already competed in a Sydney to Hobart race with Dr Peter Packer but to suddenly be sailing across the Channel almost on a weekly basis and competing against Ted Turner (Now Mr Jane Fonda) and his famous yacht *American Eagle* during Cowes week, was like a young footballer who normally played for Pardenup Under 18's, suddenly being in the AFL Grand Final at the MCG.

When the summer finished, Alan and his yacht went back to Australia and I went back to my school in London.

But a few months later I had a letter from him asking me to come and sail in the Onion Patch Series off Newport, Rhode Island, the Newport to Bermuda Yacht Race and the Trans Atlantic from Bermuda back to Spain.

Teaching at St Paul's was very interesting and I was certainly enjoying my life in London, but sailing was my passion and so after only one year at St Paul's I headed off to America to join *Apollo*'s crew.

Newport fascinated me, the competition was fantastic and it was enormously satisfying to sail a yacht across the Atlantic. After it was all over I was offered a job with Alan's first America's Cup challenge which I took and after a couple of years working on the preparation for that event, I ended up back in Newport for my first America's Cup.

We duly got thrashed 4:0 and I returned to London and got a job with the Inner London Education Authority teaching at Pimlico Comprehensive School.

It was very much at the other end of the British Education system compared to St Paul's. The highlights of my time there were getting the kids of one maths class to lie underneath the concrete sill of the windows as some disgruntled child opened fire from the roof of the Dolphin Square apartments across the road. I also had to bail the same Biology Master out of the same corner of the same lab who was being threatened by the same child most likely with the same scalpel on three consecutive occasions.

The Brits felt that large Australians were somehow best suited to deal with this sort of situation. A bit like Gallipoli really.

After 20 months of this I had had enough and returned to Perth where I was offered a job again by the Education Department and started teaching Science and Maths at Forrestfield SHS, having still not passed Leaving Maths.

I thought my sailing days were most likely over and I had better clean up my act as far as my qualifications were concerned, and so enroled at Churchland's Teachers College for two years part time study to convert my Teacher's Certificate into a Diploma of Teaching. This was my second visit to what was to become Edith Cowan University.

I was wrong about the end of my sailing career though, as Alan Bond issued another challenge for the America's Cup in 1977 and after being beaten 4:0 again, was back in 1980 when we finally won a race, even though Dennis Connor in the yacht *Freedom* still won 4:1. I was selected for both of these crews and after the 1980 Challenge was appointed Project Manager for the 1983 campaign.

Ironically I had just achieved that most sought after position of permanent staff member of the Education Department. I think I resigned a month later.

The '83 Challenge was of course a fascinating exercise. My early involvement was to Project Manage the construction of Australia 11, complete with the famous winged keel, as well as train the crew and hide the secret bits from American spies.

I was also deeply involved in the mast and sail programs orchestrated by the incredible New Zealand sailmaker Tom Snackenberg, who in many people's opinion was largely responsible for the New Zealand America's Cup win in 1995.

Most importantly I was tutored in management and leadership by Warren Jones, the best leader I have ever known, and also sailed on board *Australia II* under John Bertrand's wonderful on-board leadership. Looking up at the faces of the New York Yacht Club America's Cup Committee as we crossed the line in the seventh race was a sight I will never forget. Not one of them showed any emotion.

In retrospect, what was so fascinating about the whole event was to see what can be achieved when a group of, quite frankly, ordinary people become involved passionately with an enterprise that was so well managed and led. Having lost the Cup three time before, we knew our business and with Benny's incredible design, went on and won in a "Boys Own Annual" manner - by 41 seconds after 40 hours of finals sailing.

I could devote my whole lecture to Ben Lexcen but I think that his story is well known. A man with no formal training and yet enormous ability and intelligence. A man who was never afraid of his lack of education. He simply went and found out what he needed to know. If Ben needed an understanding of calculus for an aspect of yacht design, he simply taught himself. He was totally computer literate even in the very early '80s and could converse and work with the most gifted technical people as a peer.

He simply had no fear of not being able to understand anything and was driven by his passion for yacht design and design in general. An incredibly practical man, he could always come up with a solution to solve virtually any mechanical problem on the boat and elsewhere.

The people I met and worked with during that campaign epitomised the way in which any enterprise should be tackled. Get the right people, specify what you have to do and attack the job while being able to cope with the ever present fear of failure. Warren, Ben and John and to a certain extent all of the crew had that ability.

Having won the Cup we returned to Fremantle to defend it but were unable to do so. I was the General Manager of the Bond America's Cup Defence Syndicate and although we conducted a very good campaign we were beaten by Iain Murray and the new kids on the block. In retrospect we did not adjust quickly enough to the new parameters of multi million dollar efforts and being Defenders at home instead of Challengers away. We were to a certain extent over confident and made a couple of poor, key decisions. How hard it is in any field of endeavour to stay on top of the pile once you have got there.

After the Defence was over, Warren Jones offered me the job of being the CEO of Sky Channel which was based in Melbourne. For the first time in my life I chickened out, mainly because I had no formal business training. I could not even read a balance sheet. I also knew nothing about television, although that didn't seem to worry anyone at Bond Corporation.

Later on, I was offered the job of building *Endeavour*. Although I had no knowledge about ship building or 18th century ships I at least had, by this time, project managed the construction of half a dozen or so large yachts. I figured it couldn't be all that much different.

As soon as I started on the *Endeavour* project I decided I should go go back to school so that after the project was over I wouldn't be in a position to have to knock back another Sky Channel job.

Churchlands Teacher's College was now Edith Cowan University and I enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Business Management. I was accepted despite having no previous degree for which I was very grateful. I usually only did one unit a semester and so the whole course took me almost four years but I loved it and learnt an enormous amount. The great thing was to learn the skills in the evening and put them into practice virtually the next day.

And what of *Endeavour*. I want to use the ship to bring together the threads of the story I have been telling you.

The *Endeavour* project was the dream of a journalist by the name of Bruce Stannard. In 1986 he had been elected to the Board of the new Australian National Maritime Museum which was to be built in Darling Harbour, Sydney as a lasting benefit from the Bicentennial funding.

The new museum was to have a floating collection, but unlike the US and Britain, or even Sweden, we have no *USS Constitution, HMS Victory* or *Vasa* with which to interpret our early maritime history. All our famous early ships were long gone.

Bruce then came up with the idea of building a museum standard replica of *Endeavour,* the ship that not only was the starting point to the European chapter of our land's ancient history but meant so much to other countries particularly Britain, New Zealand and to a lesser extent the US and Canada.

Bruce's idea was a flight of fancy. Museums like to put original artefacts in their collections and only build replicas when the original no longer exists, but the artefact is essential for the story they are telling. Building a replica of a piece of pottery or a scientific instrument, for example, is one thing but to build a museum standard replica of a ship displacing 550 tons is another.

The idea would have died on the vine if it had not been for the unique set of circumstances created by the crazy 80's, and the hiccup to Alan Bond's ongoing America's Cup aspirations created by Michael Fay's spectacular challenge in a 134 foot yacht and Dennis Connor's response in building a huge catamaran.

Our America's Cup Team had effectively been disenfranchised by the Kiwi challenge but Alan wanted to keep us all together. He was also looking for a Bicentennial Project for Bond Corporation and what the heck, Endeavour's $13 million original budget was , in 1987, pretty small beer.

Having agreed to take on the project, I flew to London and went to see the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich to find out what information they had on *HM Bark Endeavour*.

"To what scale are you going to build the model?" I was asked by the Acting Head of Antiquities.

My reply of "Twelve inches to the foot." made him sit up and pay attention and so started our wonderful relationship with that incredible institution.

The original concept had been to build a ship that would not sail. It would be constructed on the banks of Sydney Harbour and be towed over to the Museum and used for theatre and exhibition. The construction was anticipated to take about 18 months, but Alan was only interested in building a ship that could actually sail and so the size of the enterprise grew.

I must admit that I never thought that we could not do it. In a certain way that was a part of the corporate culture of Bond Corporation. Anything was achievable.

The build, as they say in the trade, actually took almost six years and the story of that enterprise, has to a certain extent passed into folk lore.

The collapse of Bond Corporation, the purchase of the project by a Japanese Company only to see them follow a similar fate to Bond, the creation of the Foundation that completed the project, staff working for nothing until further funds were found and the generous philanthropic donations by Garry Weston from Great Britain and John Singleton from Sydney.

The spectacular launch and the even more amazing, to my mind, event of the first sail when the ship handled flawlessly as if she had been worked up by an America's Cup team over a period of many months. This was due to the very high standards we had achieved in research and construction and because we never tried to second guess the 18th century design. We simply built her as she was.

But the real story behind the build was the people. I am often asked where on earth did we get the tradesmen. It is envisioned that we scoured the planet for people who knew how to build an 18th century ship. Apart from the original designer, David White, who I recruited from Greenwich and who did such an amazing job of converting, by today's standard, primitive draughts into drawings from which we could actually build a ship, virtually everyone else walked in the door and asked for a job, a bit like I did on St Georges Terrace back in 1964.

Danish Blacksmiths, Flemish woodcarvers, Scottish master ship wrights. American, West Indian, Slavic and Australian boat builders. English block builders and riggers and lots of young Australian kids flocked to the project.

They were all here already and when this great enterprise commenced, they came like bees to honey. In a way the construction of *Endeavour* was a celebration of Australia's multiculturalism.

Most of the kids were really nothing special. They just had the gumption to knock on my door. One boy, who was 15 at the time, came to me with no self esteem, was starting to drift into a bad crowd and had a terrible stutter. Today that boy is a strong young man who has built a ship and sailed it to New Zealand. He has two young children, a flat, a house and an interest in a cray fishing business. His, of course, is only one of many stories of young people who, given a chance to work as I was, go on to become highly productive members of our society.

While the build was taking place, people would often ask me what we were doing it for. " For the museum" I would lamely reply knowing that the truth was that I was just plain stubborn and that the *Endeavour* team had fallen in love with the ship.

After commissioning *Endeavour* in April of 1994 and working her up off Fremantle for the winter, we sailed to Sydney via most Southern Ports. Where ever she went she was met with great interest and excitement, but the question still lingered - "What are you doing this for?"

After touring the east coast the Trustees of the Foundation decided to agree to my proposal to take the ship to New Zealand.

The Chairman of the Foundation Arthur Weller (now Sir Arthur) the Captain of the ship, Chris Blake and I, were mad keen to sail the ship to London but the Board were, and rightfully so, somewhat cautious about this plan. If we could make a go of it in New Zealand and in fact make some money, then our case to go to London would be that much stronger.

It was in this frame of mind that I set off to New Zealand to organise the tour. During the negotiations for our arrival and exhibition program, I contacted the Maori people of Auckland, our first port of call. There were concerns that we would have some sort of protest and I wanted to square that away.

The local tribe, the *Ngahti Phatua* took the news of our arrival with mild interest but said that they would welcome us in their huge *waka* or canoe.

We duly sailed across the Tasman and as the ship approached the wharf in Auckland I experienced for the first time from the decks of *Endeavour* the wailing welcome of the Maori women's *pophori,* the theatre of the *haka* and the quite frankly spine tingling drama of being formally challenged by Maori warriors.

After the welcome was over and the ship had been placed on exhibition at the New Zealand National Maritime Museum I was quite frankly somewhat relieved.

There had been no protests and all was going well. However, a few days later I received my own challenge from the Maori of the area around Gisborne on the North Island's east cape.

It was the *Taranganui a kiwa* and the *Naghti One One* who met Captain James Cook and the people of *HM Bark Endeavour* in 1769 and who felt the full force of the clash of cultures that resulted. Several of their people were killed and Cook sailed away after naming the place *Poverty Bay*, as he had failed to achieve anything he wanted. Banks, after one particularly tragic incident that cost the lives of two Maori youths, referred to that day as "the blackest day of my life".

My personal challenge came in the form of a fax which said that *Taranganui a Kiwa* were aware of the fact that *Endeavour* was in New Zealand waters, that she was not welcome in Gisborne and that if she did come "They could not guarantee her safety".

The whole of New Zealand watched as I travelled down to meet with the elders on their Marai.

After being formally challenged and then welcomed, I explained that we had not brought the ship to New Zealand simply to laud Cook, but as a museum artefact which we hoped would encourage story telling from people of all racial and cultural backgrounds.

The stories of the events surrounding the arrival of the original ship and the enormous impact that it had on the life of the indigenous people, could be told from their own perspective and would therefore lead to a greater understanding of those events and hence assist the healing process.

After many hours of discussions it was agreed that *Endeavour* would be made be welcome and so several weeks later the ship sailed into Gisborne. The Captain, crew and I with my wife and two sons at my side walked onto the Marai of the *Naghti One One.*

We received three fearsome challenges from huge Maori men with lolling tongues, rolling eyes and tears rolling down their tattooed cheeks. They represented the two tribes, who had been traditional enemies since before Cook arrived and yet who had come together as one people to welcome us, as the *tengata phenua*, the people of that place.

*Haka's* that had not been heard publically for over 80 years were performed by the Maori men. Some were dressed in the traditional flax skirts while others, who had just arrived on huge motor bikes, wore black leathers. The older women watched over the proceedings from the verandah of the Marei with humour and wisdom and the "hot hands" of the kitchen produced a great feast to which all our crew and extended family were made welcome.

A couple of weeks later when we were in Wellington, I was told that when *Endeavour* arrived in Auckland she was perceived by the Maori to be the original ship, *HM Bark Endeavour*, as she had the same mana.

When Cook had sailed away from Poverty Bay in 1769 he had taken with him the spirits of those Maori who had died. When *Endeavour* returned to Gisborne in 1996 those spirits were returned and finally after 237 years this matter could be put to rest. You might think that this is a bit fanciful but the Maori spirituality is based on their ancestry and so this was an extremely important event to them.

I realised that day why we built *Endeavour*.

As we sailed around the country, the New Zealand Herald regularly published features based on Dame Anne Salmond's wonderful book entitled "Two World's" which tells the story of the first landings in New Zealand from both the European side and that of the Maori. These most public articles, often on the front page of the paper, were an enormous boost to the reconciliation process and were of course as a direct result of *Endeavour*'s tour.

Enough to say that when the ship arrived in Wellington, the then Prime Minister Jim Bolger, dined in the Great Cabin of the ship and stated that in his opinion the voyage of *Endeavour* to New Zealand had been the greatest single act of reconciliation between the Maori and the European New Zealanders in modern New Zealand history.

I think Nugget Coombs would have been proud of us.

Since leaving New Zealand, the ship has sailed more than half the way around the world. She has been to South Africa, has sailed under the Tower bridge and been honoured by a visit from Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh. She has sailed into Whitby Yorkshire where her namesake was built, to be greeted by a crowd of nearly 200,000 people in a town of only 15,000 residents.

The sight of *Endeavour*'s spiritual home bedecked with the cross of St George, the Union and Australian flags of which the biggest was flying from the steeple of St Mary's, the 12th century church overlooking Whitby, would have made any Australian very proud.

The ship has crossed the Atlantic and travelled up the east coast of North America telling Americans and Canadians from Florida to New York and Boston to Halifax something of the origins of our country of which they know so little.

Wherever the ship has gone our country's foreign missions have used the opportunity to show the communities in which they work what Australians can do when they set their mind to it. As I speak, the ship is in California carrying on with that work.

Meanwhile I have spent quite a lot of time working with the indigenous Hawai'ians so that when *Endeavour* arrives in those islands later this year we will do so as a positive force for the process of reconciliation that is going on there.

After sailing back across the Pacific, *Endeavour* will make a second visit to New Zealand before returning to Australia to hopefully film a documentary that the Foundation has been associated with. It tells the story of *HM Bark Endeavour*'s voyage up the east coast from Botany Bay to Cooktown, from both Cook and his crew's perspective, and also from the local aboriginal people using their oral history, so that the story can, as in New Zealand, be told from both sides.

And what does all this tell us about Enterprise. Well the America's Cup and the *Endeavour* project both started from pipe dreams. They were achieved by ordinary people who followed their passions. It is amazing to think what good has stemmed from them. The refurbishment of Fremantle with the America's Cup Defence and the wonderful ambassadorial and reconciliation roles that *Endeavour* continues to carry out.

Neither of these outcomes were dreamed of when these projects were started, but passion can take you to funny places.

I ask the question, "Are we creating and attempting to tackle enough pipe dreams today"? When Ernie Bridge talks about piping water down from the North across the desert to the South, do we laugh it off or do we give his idea serious consideration?

When C.Y. O'Connor put forward a similar plan a century ago to build the world's longest pipe line, he too was ridiculed, but John Forrest had the courage to support his pipe dream and the rest, as they say, is history.

Are we happy for our children to follow their passions even if there is no obvious short term financial return, or do we all want them to be doctors and lawyers?

Are we forcing our children too early into tertiary education because that is the norm, when many of them, like myself, have no idea what they want to do?

Maybe we should be at least offering them the option, of simply going out into the world straight from school and finding out what they are really interested in and yes, it is alright to get your formal qualifications, if you need them, when you are in your thirties, forties and how much more meaningful to get them when they have some relevance to your own dreams and aspirations rather than fulfilling the expectations of others.

Isn't it sad, that we have allowed those with the vested interest to do so, to make it so difficult to employ anybody, let alone young people, that we have 25% youth unemployment, even though the majority of economic indicators are the best they have been for years.

After all, we all know that if we fail our young, then we fail - absolutely.

When I was in London with *Endeavour* I couldn't help but notice that so many of the great public works, seemed to have been built in the 19th century.

The massive iron bridges over the rivers, the huge railway systems, the mighty museums and public buildings.

Typical of the spirit of that period was Isambard Kingdom Brunel, now there's a name for you.... who half way through building the world's first large iron steam ship, "The Great Britain", saw a small experimental vessel go by driven by a propellor and said

"Pull the paddle wheels off, this is the way of the future." and promptly designed and successfully fitted a propellor to his vast iron ship.

So many of these enterprises must have been pipe dreams, but they were taken on by the leaders of the time who had faith in these extraordinary enterprises. For example Brunel was working for a Railway company and simply wanted to extend the line from London to New York hence the need for a big ship. It says something about the faith that the Great Western Railway Commissioners had in their 32 year old engineer.

I was asked this evening to talk about Enterprise. Well we need more of it and the lack of fear to take it on. We need to nurture the lateral thinkers like Brunel and Lexcen to create extraordinary enterprises and the patrons to promote and fund them.

Its unfortunate that enterprise in the 90's is dogged by over zealous risk managers who can take the prize out of enterprise so that nothing gets done.

Can you imagine an 18th century risk manager - I know that is a big ask - analysing James Cook's first voyage in *HM Bark Endeavour*.

"Now lets get this straight.... **you** want to send a coastal coal carrier commanded by a **bloke** who has yet to be commissioned, **down** the Atlantic, the **wrong** way around the Horn, to find a pin prick of land in that large uncharted waste called the Pacific, and **when there** carry out a complicated astrological observation, **then** to sail south to discover a mythical continent. If it is **not there** to sail west to rediscover land reported 126 years ago by a **Dutchman** and not visited since and **then** if his crew and ship are still in good nick check out the undiscovered **east** coast of **New Holland** before completing his circumnavigation. **And** you also want him to take a friend of the **King's** to collect plants and animals. **OK???**"

I think he would still be searching for 18th century consultants to help him analyse all of this and meanwhile we would all be talking French.

We need projects like *Endeavour* and challenges such as the America's Cup so that we can give our children something to aspire to and be passionate about.

How we do this as a young and dynamic country may well be our biggest test in the new millennium.