

It is official I **am** getting old – I cannot believe that 2009 is nearly over! This time last year there were nearly 75 students studying here. Every single one of those who wanted a job is now working; some with responsibilities and salaries that they could not have imagined possible a year ago. Today, there are nearly 75 *different* students; each with their own plans and aspirations. Our Gap Year students will soon be leaving to begin stage two of their year; using their new-found skills to work, in order to fund their travels. Those on the Graduate Skills course are now busy with interviews and we are confident that they will all begin work soon after Christmas. The Return To Work students are now equipped with up to date IT and business skills. There are 45 students returning next year to continue studying on our Executive Personal Assistant Diploma, and 25 new students arriving in January. With all of this going on it is no wonder that the year seems to have flown by!

Angela Liddiard



Pictured are Lottie and Tara; two budding entrepreneurs! Unimpressed with the limited choice of red, white and blue for the official OMBS sweatshirts, Lottie and Tara sourced alternatives. They pitched the idea to the rest of their group, and between them agreed the design. They made an appointment to see Andrea to get permission to use the OMBS name, and finally they sold the idea to the rest of the student body. So, if you are in Oxford over the winter, keep a look out for the brightly coloured sweatshirts created from an idea by Lottie and Tara.

Website of the month

http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8356000/8356176.stm It is not just us that extol the virtue of shorthand in the workplace. Read what John Humphreys, presenter of the Today programme on BBC Radio 4 has to say about it – and if anyone in your home or office was taught Pitman shorthand you could take the test!

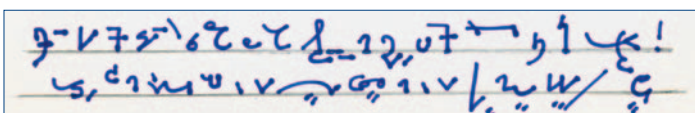
This month's IT Tip

Imagine someone asks you the question "When are you free this week"? Do you immediately begin to scroll through your electronic calendar and write a list of available times? **Outlook** can perform that task for you. Open a new email message and click into the message pane (as if you were going to begin writing). Go to the **Insert** tab/**Include** group and click on **Calendar**. Select which Calendar from the **Calendar:** box (there will be more than one listed if you are responsible for someone else's calendar), and the date from the **Date Range:** box. All details now appear in your email, with a simple list detailing the times that you are available.

Merry Christmas

On behalf of the staff and students at OMBS may I take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Andrea Freeman – Principal



Shorthand – a lifelong skill

We get approached on a regular basis by companies wishing to sell us the latest gizmo and gadgets. Apparently recording devices are the latest office 'must have'. For people working in lone occupations, this may sometimes be the case. A surveyor, for example, may take a voice recorder on site and talk into it as they inspect the property. Back at the office, they simply plug the device into the computer, and theoretically the audio is turned into editable text. For most people, the outcome is not quite what they expected!

Imagine if the owner of the house was showing the surveyor round. Their voice would be recorded too – the phrase 'do you take sugar in your tea?' may well appear in the final report!

Imagine again if this type of machine was being used in meetings where there is a 'lively discussion' taking place. It might explode! In these instances a logical human brain is needed, not a machine. Shorthand is still recognised as the best way to take the minutes of meetings, write confidential notes and take telephone messages along with a myriad of other business related tasks.

Who says so? Well, it is not only John Humphreys (see the Website of the month) and us. Last week I emailed a number of ex-students, some who left us last July, some who are on their second or third jobs, all of whom learnt the Teeline method of shorthand here at OMBS. Here is a selection of their responses:

"Personally I do not use Teeline for my boss, but I use it a lot for my personal notes, not to be faster, but have the confidentiality. Sometimes I am so busy leaving my desk constantly that I do not have the time to clear everything away. So any confidential notes I will write in Teeline. My diary, notebooks, notepads are 60% in Teeline so my staff cannot read a thing. My verdict: vital to keep it alive!"

"I use mine most days in some form, for letter dictation or telephone messages and I take minutes up to 4 times per week."

"Many people are impressed with the fact that I take shorthand. It is actually much less time consuming than a Dictaphone, as that would require listening to the whole meeting again in order to write up the minutes."

"I really do hope the art of shorthand doesn't get forgotten as I am a firm believer that it is an extremely useful skill to have. I know technology has progressed hugely over the years, and devices like Dictaphones are now commonplace in all sectors of work, but being able to just whip out a pen and pad and scribble key notes is surely far more useful than having the whole recording and needing to go back and trawl through everything?"

"I use my Teeline daily, and not only for when my boss is dictating a letter. I use it to take telephone messages, instructions and even for jotting down the lunch order. I am proud to be able to do Teeline and have found it especially useful when on the telephone ... – Teeline enables me to write down everything they say and capture the key details, it also makes me look like I have a fantastic memory :-)."

'Testing Timberlake' Transcribes

Last month an ex-student got into contact with us and said that she needed help reading the shorthand at the bottom of the page. If you would like confirmation that you have read the shorthand correctly, Sally Timberlake, Head of Secretarial Skills, is publishing a transcription on the Latest News page of the website each month, approximately 5 days after you receive the newsletter.

Feel free to pass this email onto anyone who will find it useful. If you have received this as a forwarded email and would like a regular copy of your own, email newsletter@oxfordbusiness.co.uk . To unsubscribe email newsletter@oxfordbusiness.co.uk

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