

Clive

It is with enormous sadness that we have to announce the death of our founder, John 'Clive' Dalton, after a long illness. He was 86.

Clive started the company that eventually became Cambridge Insitu Ltd (CI) in 1971. Previously he had worked for Grant Instruments and had left them to manufacture under license an unusual electronic thermometer for measuring the core temperature of people. Because, as he said, a new company needs as much free advertising as possible, this company was called Deep Body Thermometers Ltd. Once heard, never forgotten.

The intermittent nature of the medical business led him into other ventures and a friend persuaded him to take up a contract for manufacturing strain gauged load cells using designs coming out of Cambridge University. In order to calibrate these devices he was permitted to use the facilities of the Cambridge University Engineering Department (CUED) and this brought him into contact with a number of people doing interesting work in the soil mechanics field, in particular John Hughes and the late Peter Wroth. They had developed a novel tool for the *insitu* measurement of soil strength, stiffness and lateral geostatic stress. A curious and unplanned set of circumstances led to Clive acquiring the rights to manufacture these devices, known as self boring pressuremeters. 'Cambridge Insitu' was the trading name under which the manufacture and distribution was carried out, only becoming the limited company in 2004.

Although the company began life as a manufacturer, it eventually evolved into more of a service provider, with personnel from CI prepared to carry out pressuremeter testing in any part of the world and in any environment. At the same time the company was always willing to manufacture equipment for whoever wanted to purchase, never worrying that each sale would in principle create an additional competitor. Clive managed to reconcile the apparent conflict of interests and foresaw the current situation, which is that those who own our equipment also make the greatest use of our service side. This balance was made possible because people trusted him to prioritise their needs over the immediate needs of CI.

He was a meticulous record keeper (however, not so good at throwing away redundant paperwork) and always paid the company debts precisely when due. If he knew a company or individual needed paying sooner, he would do it without expecting a return. This is rare in business and Clive commanded enormous loyalty, respect and affection from the group of suppliers who he dealt with over the years.

He was an enthusiastic and generous teacher and there is a group of acolytes who over the years have had the benefit of his considerable engineering knowledge. Hundreds of engineering students have attended one of the equipment demonstrations he arranged for their benefit in the gardens of Rectory Farm, Little Eversden.

As universities have gradually disposed of their ability to manufacture internally, he was widely sought out as someone prepared to undertake one-off tasks for various Ph.D. students and research projects. These invariably cost more than could be recovered in direct financial returns but that never bothered Clive. CI financially supported several doctorates, not all of them linked to the company interests.

Clive had a strong sense of duty and obligation. He was for many years active in local government and was a committed school governor. He has been described as a Renaissance man. He had a vast curiosity and an enormous range of interests that included his beloved vintage Lagonda, often the vehicle of choice for mundane local trips. He believed that such things were there to be used, not treated as museum pieces. He was very musical (particularly Beethoven) and was a competent pianist. Probably his greatest pleasure was also the simplest, a good meal with friends and interesting conversation. It is especially cruel that his final illness robbed him of the power of speech.

He is survived by his wife of over 60 years, Shirley, his sons John and David and four grandsons.

We will miss him.



Clive and Simon, former and current managing director of Cambridge Insitu