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BWMA gratefully records the Patronage of the late Lord Shore and the Honorary Membership of the late John Aspinall, Nirad C Chaudhuri CBE, Jennifer Paterson, CBE, Leo McKern AO, Norris McWhirter CBE, Fred Dibnah MBE, Sir Julian Hodge, KStG, KStJ, Bernard Levin, CBE, Dr Charles H Sisson, CH, DLitt, Fritz Spiegl, F S Trueman, OBE

Supplementary indications look secure, struggle now on for pounds and ounces

May saw unprecedented publicity as the press reported EC Commissioner Verheugen's intention to propose to other Commissioners (the 'College') that the use of supplementary non-metric indications be extended indefinitely. The news made the front pages of both the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*.

This proposal has now been published and is reproduced inside this *Yardstick* (pages 3 to 8). Commissioner Verheugen also proposes to maintain feet, nautical miles and knots for aviation and shipping, and to remove the obligation on the UK government to fix an end date for the mile and pub pint.

For the moment, however, nothing has changed. The Commission has yet to agree the proposal, following which an amending directive has to be passed by the Council of Ministers, and then the European Parliament.

Moreover, the ban on imperial units for use in their own right within the UK still stands, and no proposal has been made to remove this from the Directive. This is despite the EC working document acknowledging that unit pricing, "...does not concern cross border trade ... the Commission considers this to be primarily a matter for the Member State authorities to deal with".

We are not asking the Commission to decide whether imperial units are desirable for the domestic UK market, but that it allows the UK to decide for itself.

* * *

Readers may wish to urge their MPs (House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA) to sign Early Day Motion 2028, tabled by Philip Davies MP on 26 July 2007, which "...pays tribute to Steve Thoburn who became a martyr for standing up and fighting for his customers and the rights of the British people, and supports the campaign to award him a posthumous pardon".

John Gardner, Director

BWMA is a non-profit body that exists to promote parity in law between British and metric units. It enjoys support from across Britain's political spectrum, from all manner of businesses and the general public. BWMA is financed by member subscriptions and donations.
Membership is £12 per year. Cheques or postal orders payable to "BWMA", 41 Greensleeves Avenue, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 8BJ

Pounds & ounces: the legal situation

Following press coverage of EC Commissioner Gunter Verheugen's proposal to continue supplementary indications, LACORS, the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services, issued the following memo to trading standards offices on 14 May 2007:

"It has come to LACORS attention that the EU decision to grant an indefinite derogation for supplementary indications has been reported as a 'victory' by the Metric Martyrs campaign group. LACORS would like to make the following points clear to local authorities:

- We are still a predominantly metric nation; metric quantities must still be used for all measurements in use for trade
- The EU did not 'bow to pressure' by the Metric Martyrs or the Conservative Party - the DTI consulted widely and many respondents, including LACORS, recommended keeping supplementary indications to help people who were brought up on imperial to make comparisons
- Nothing has changed - supplementary indications may still be used, as they always have been, but metric measures must be quoted for all trade purposes
- The announcement to keep supplementary indications in no way invalidates the prosecutions of the metric martyrs, nor should it deter any trading standards officer from bringing about similar legal action in the future".

LACORS is correct that Commissioner Verheugen did not refer to imperial units as authorised for use in trade. But the reasoning behind the use of metric is that the public understands it and, correspondingly, will stop thinking in imperial; to use the words of Sutton Council which undertook civil proceedings against imperial trader Peter Collins, *"the idea is to wean people off pounds and ounces and onto kilos"*. Now that the ban on non-metric expression in 2010 is likely to be withdrawn, 'metrication' in hearts and minds can never happen, thereby ending the justification for enforcing metric in the first place.

LACORS will argue that such a point is merely logical, and their function is to apply the law. Yet, the most recent Act of Parliament, the Weights and Measures Act 1985, says that imperial units are lawful for trade. The basis for authorities not applying the law is the 2002 ruling by Lord Justice Laws which declared the earlier European Communities Act 1972 – requiring metric – a "constitutional Act", thereby enabling it to override the Weights and Measures Act 1985.

This ruling is nonsense because it conflicts with British constitutional law that gives precedence to later Acts. But LACORS need not take BWMA's word for it; the government, judiciary and local authorities also dismiss the notion of "constitutional Acts":

- On 22 November 2006, the government stated (in relation to constitutional Acts affecting Acts that create financial penalties): "If, and to the extent that, a

modern statute clearly provides for such penalties, **it is a necessary implication that any provision in any earlier enactment to contrary effect does not apply. Courts and tribunals are obliged to implement the modern statute"**.

- On 10 March 2006, a judge in the small claims court refused to apply Lord Justice Laws' ruling, saying, **"We do not have constitutional Acts, only Acts with constitutional implications"**.
- On 15 February 2005, the Parliament and Constitutional Centre published an advice note: **"The opinion of Justice Laws is not universally accepted amongst judges or legislators"**.
- In 2005, 48 local authorities were questioned about constitutional Acts. Not one endorsed Lord Justice Laws' ruling. The following are local authority statements: "The Road Traffic Act 1991 Act ... **repeals any legislation that contradicts these powers**" (Enfield Council); "...Road Traffic Acts of Parliament have been passed, **regardless of the existence of the Bill of Rights Act 1689** (Birmingham)"; "...As the 1689 Act was clearly in force when the 1991 Act was considered and passed by Parliament, and that they have given clear direction though the 1991 Act on how the Council is to manage parking enforcement, **the Council has to follow the 1991 Act**" (Cambridge); "...you appear to be questioning the validity of the Road Traffic Act ... You will, of course, be aware that this Act is **a piece of primary legislation, enacted by Parliament**" (Islington); "The Bill of Rights is not relevant in this instance, as the Borough Council is acting pursuant to its statutory powers granted by Parliament; namely the Road Traffic Act 1991 ... I am fully aware of the judge's comments regarding constitutional statutes ... The fact is, as mentioned to you previously, that **Parliament has enacted the Road Traffic Act 1991**" (Colchester); "...it has come to be accepted that Parliament is the principal body for the enactment of legislation and that **if a piece of legislation has been passed by Parliament it is lawful**" (Hillingdon); "RTA 1991 was drafted by Parliament in full awareness of the Bill [of Rights 1689] ... **if there is repugnancy or incompatibility between one statute and another, the latter will prevail**" (Windsor).

Evidently, Lord Justice Laws' ruling is a blip. How, therefore, can LACORS be advising trading standards officers to prosecute people on this basis? Until the government brings forward valid legislation, BWMA will be calling for a moratorium on metric prosecutions. Much less legal uncertainty led the Canadian government to declare its own moratorium in 1983 which exists to this day.

Neil Herron of the Metric Martyrs Defence Fund has launched a petition for the posthumous Royal Pardon for Steven Thoburn. Copies of the petition form can be obtained from MMDF, 12 Frederick St, Sunderland SR1 1NA. The petition can also be signed online: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/metricmartyrs/>

We reproduce the findings of the European Commission Services on Directive 80/181:

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 26 June 2007

Report on the public consultation on the Commission Staff Working Document on units of measurement (Directive 80/181/EEC)

INTRODUCTION

The use of units of measurement is regulated in the European Union by means of COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 80/181/EEC of 20 December 1979 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to units of measurement and on the repeal of Directive 71/354/EEC¹. Over time the directive has been updated a number of times, most recently by Directive 99/103/EEC². Starting on 22 December 2006, a public consultation was held until 1 March 2007. The public consultation document highlighted 10 issues, the reactions to which will subsequently be discussed in this document. Stakeholders were also invited to bring up any other issues that they consider relevant.

Information on the public consultation has been disseminated via the *Your Voice in Europe* site which is public and well known among professional organisations. Also there was an Enterprise e-mail alert that was distributed at the start of the consultation as well as an e-mail alert to all those who had expressed their interest on this issue to the services in the past. All reactions have been published on the website of DG Enterprise and Industry, except those which were submitted as confidential. The individual contributions of firms were not published given that this could lead to breach of confidentiality, whilst their viewpoints were fully reflected by the industry federations.

This report will firstly examine the reactions that have been received. Secondly it will present the conclusions to be drawn with due regard to the Commission's priority for simplification and better regulation. This document has been prepared by the Commission services for consultation purposes. It does not in any way prejudge, or constitute the announcement of, any position on the part of the Commission concerning the issues covered.

1. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Contributions were received from 204 stakeholders, 4 of which were requested to be treated as confidential. All but one gave a view on metric-only or extending supplementary indications. In this summary the views on this point are enumerated. Contributions were received from the following types of respondents:

Public: 37 members of the public reacted, of whom 5 from USA, 1 from Germany and the rest from the UK. The majority, 27, were in favour of metric-only, whilst 11 want to maintain supplementary indications. A main reason of the private individuals to favour metric-only is the confusion on the shop floor: prices referring to only prices per pounds/pints instead of prices per kilo/litre. Some have sent photos and they reason that competing

products and offers in advertisements are difficult to compare due to the difficulties in implementation of the directive in the UK.

Teachers: 8 persons reacted in their capacity as a teacher or lecturer, 6 from UK and 2 from USA. All, but one, were in favour of metric-only. The teachers point out that schooling in the UK has been only in metric for the past 30 years. Over half the population therefore do not have any idea what imperial measures mean.

Non-governmental organisations: 2 Non-governmental organisations from the UK reacted, one very much in favour and the other very much against metric-only.

Retailers: 3 retailers reacted, all from the UK and all in favour of continuing use of imperial measures or leaving the choice of unit to the retailer.

Industry Federations: 76 industry federations reacted (of which 23 Europe-wide federations, 24 UK, 13 US and 6 French) and 56 individual firms (41 European and 15 USA). Without exception, contributors from industry were in favour of extending supplementary indications for another 10 years or indefinitely, pointing to the current federal law in the US which does not allow metric-only labelling and therefore any obligation limiting labelling to metric-only in the EU would require relabelling of all trans-Atlantic trade.

International Organisations: 1 international organisation reacted.

Authorities: 17 Authorities reacted, of which 7 Member States, the USA and 10 regional authorities. All Member States favour of extending supplementary indications.

In the following chapters, details of answers on the 10 questions posed by the Commission services will be discussed, as well as other issues brought up such as the imposition of a date for the Article 1b exceptions for the UK and Ireland and size indications of clothing and shoes, further exemptions and the possibility of a return to the pre-2000 situation as regards goods sold loose and in bulk in the UK. On all these additional points, the views on extending supplementary indications reflected the divisions of opinion mentioned above.

2. EXTENSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SI-SYSTEM

Metric units are defined in the SI-system, the International System of Units (abbreviated as "SI" from the French). They allow expressing quantities in an undisputed way. It began with the Metre Convention in 1866 and has since become a fully encompassing system of coherent weights and measures. All industrialised countries have adhered to the agreements constituting the SI system and under the WTO-TBT agreement are required to base their laws on the SI-units. From the side of the Treaty Organisation it was explained that the Conférence Générale des Poids et Mesures (CGPM), i.e. the governing body of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), has by means of a resolution in 1999 added the unit "katal" to the International System of Units. Those concerned all agree in their reactions to add katal into the Directive.

In Annex 1 of Directive 80/181/EEC the "katal" should be mentioned adjacent to the mention of "mole per second".

3. MULTIPLE INDICATION OF SI UNITS

Respondents agreed that there may be a need to indicate various SI units on a label but that it is too complicated to fix any general rules. Where needed, sector specific directives can indicate priorities, but there is no natural order of priority. There is, however, a trend to leave indications to market parties as this increases flexibility and allows innovation.

If needed, the priorities in the case of the use of multiple SI-indications can be determined by sector specific directives other than Directive 80/181/EEC.

4. SO-CALLED ARBITRARY UNITS (U)

Arbitrary Units are established by other international organisations, such as WHO, in order to define new elements. Very often such an arbitrary unit defines the concentration of a reference material, for example a concentration of a measured protein complex. These arbitrary units, indicated as "U", are widely used in many disciplines and some are even described in legislation, for example In-Vitro Diagnostics Directive 98/79/EC and Commission Decision 2002/364/EC. Stakeholders, who use arbitrary units, notably in health care, agree that such units need not be in the scope of the directive, which according to its Article 1 concerns legal units of measurement.

Arbitrary units are not legal units and need not be included in Directive 80/181/EEC.

5. RATIOS (NOT EXPRESSED IN UNITS)

Stakeholders agree that ratios using SI units, for example concentrations expressed as kg/l, mol/l or kat/l. are covered by Compound Units under point 5 of Chapter 1 of the Annex of Directive 80/181. In the case where ratios using one or more non-SI, which would currently be considered to be supplementary indications, respondents argue that they continue being authorised after 2009.

Ratios containing non-SI units in Directive 80/181/EEC should continue to be allowed as supplementary indications after 2009.

6. NON-SI UNITS REQUIRED BY INTERNATIONAL TREATIES IN TRANSPORT

Stakeholders indicated that the use of non-SI units remains of great importance for the safety of air, sea and rail transport. For example in the case of airplanes, flight levels are indicated in feet, longitudinal distances in nautical miles and air speeds in knots. Change to accommodate metrical measurement would certainly require newly certified equipment, changes to maps and manuals and retraining staff. As 40% of international aviation is between the US and the EU, a change could be expected to represent significant costs. The directive's scope should continue to exempt the units of measurement used in air, sea and rail transport, which have been laid down in international conventions or other agreements binding the Community or Member States (Article 2b). One respondent mentioned that international treaties in the areas of oil and gas exploration and gas transport should also be exempted from the scope. Member States did not, however, consider it necessary to change Article 2b in this respect.

The exemption in Article 2b in Directive 80/181/EEC should be maintained as it is.

7. NON-SI UNITS USED IN TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES AND IN NEW MARKETS

Stakeholders gave many examples of instances in which non-SI units are used in industry and which they say often are the most currently used indication of measurement. This list reproduces views given and is meant to be illustrative without the Commission services taking responsibility for the information presented.

- a) The detergents industry pointed to the requirement in Regulation 907/2006/EC to indicate the recommended dosage appropriate for a standard washing machine load depending on water hardness levels and the possibility it has to include a measuring cup (scoop) in the package. It also needs to label packages for many different markets.
- b) In firearms non-SI measurements are used for the size of boreholes (bore) and cartridges (grain). The SI unit equivalents are approximate while the non SI indications are exact.
- c) Bicycle frames and parts are indicated in non-SI units.
- d) Tyre gauges are indicated in non-SI units and tyre pressure gauges use both SI and non-SI units and the EU is bound by the agreements in UN-ECE.
- e) For manometers and tyre pressure gauges non-SI psi is used next to SI bar and mPa.
- f) Valves are in Non-SI NPS and SI DN.
- g) Letter type setting is done in points which are non-SI units.
- h) Thermal dissipation in air conditioning is expressed in BTU/hr or Kcal/hr, both non-SI. Sometimes 'BTU' without the '/hr' is used. It replaces SI unit kW/hr.
- i) Electrical generators are often referred to in Horsepower (HP) in the USA and in kW in the EU. Wiring is often in the AWG (American Wire Gauge) sizing system and without an extension of the derogation such components would become illegal.
- j) Screw torques and valves may be indicated in non-SI units: lb-in (pound-inches) as opposed to SI Nm (Newton-meters). US torque wrenches would be prohibited in the EU.
- k) Barrels of oil are the quantity used on international oil markets. The oil and gas industry uses Nm³ (Normal metre cubed) as a unit for amount of substance.
- l) Shoe sizes: US shoe size 9 relates to a foot length of 10.5 inches while the equivalent European size is 42 and represents a foot length of 26.6 cm.
- m) Clothes and garment sizes are often also in non-SI units. An ad-hoc working group of CEN, the European Standardisation Organisation, supported by European Federations is preparing a new coding system consisting of an alphanumeric code based on body measurement expressed in centimetres.
- n) Computing uses binary indications, often rounded to decimal such as the Kilo in Kilobytes which actually indicates 1024 Bytes rather than 1000 bytes.
- o) Printer speed is indicated by page per minute (PPm)
- p) US computer network cables exclusively use 'Ohm per foot'.

- q) Billing for phoning and cable usage is done in non-SI bits per second or Giga-bytes
- r) The diameter of computer and television screens is often indicated (also) in inches. Their brightness and that of digital cameras is expressed in pixels per square unit of measurement, even if pixels as such are not defined.
- s) Turbo-electric equipment uses the gallon, but specifically the US gallon, which differs from the old UK imperial gallon, which is no longer used.
- t) In health care, non-SI mercury millimetre “mmHg” is for blood pressure rather than SI-Kilopascal; the “cc/min” measures flow rates and is SI, but the proper SI would be litres per second; measurement of radioactivity is in Curie (Ci), mainly for big sources, but the correct SI unit would be Becquerel (Bq); for exposure to radiation, rad and rem are used, but the proper SI units would be the Gray (Gy) and Sievert (Sv)³; monitoring is in pO₂ for oxygen saturation and pCO₂ for carbon saturation. Within the medical devices industry many measures are non-metric: Charrière gauge, Needle gauge, wire diameter and the notation used to designate size of sutures and ligatures.
- u) In piping the standards are the ½, ¾ and 1 inch diameter in domestic water piping. These sizes are mentioned in EN 10226 and ISO 7. Pipe threads are defined by ISO 7 and/or ISO 65 and these are incompatible with USA NPT (National Pipe Thread). It seems however that the UK plumbing uses metric units and has special connectors by which to connect imperial plumbing with the new metric plumbing.
- v) “kcal” is the non-SI variant of “kJ”, kilo joule, and both indications are prescribed by Article 6 of Directive 90/496/EEC on nutrition labelling for foodstuffs. There apparently is no exact relationship between “kcal” and “kJ”.
- w) Thermal insulation of duvets and textiles is measured in “tog”
- x) “pH” is a measure of the activity of hydrogen ions (H⁺) in a solution and, therefore, its acidity or alkalinity has no SI equivalent and is used in health care and in valves, pumps and compressors for the chemical industry. On the other hand, “pH” in the SI system means pico-Henry, or 10⁻¹² Henry with the “henry” being defined as the SI-unit for inductance.
- y) Cosmetics in the US require non-metric labelling but, according to an industry federation, the US fluid ounce is larger than its imperial namesake, so there is no real misleading of UK consumers.
- z) The US gallon equals 3.78L and is used for water coolers. It is less than the imperial gallon of 4.54L.
- aa) Toilets use ‘gallons per flush’ or ‘litres per flush’.
- bb) Ophthalmologic surgery instruments where “G” represents the gauge to reflect solid and/or hollow lumens and tubes.
- cc) In publishing lettering type fonts are sized in non-SI “pica” and “point”.
- dd) On maps altitudes and depths are often both in metres and in feet.
- ee) In gas and heating in Austria the unit “Zoll” (inch) is often used as a supplementary indication.

ff) Corrugated packaging industry uses SI-based “flatbed die cutting” and non-SI based “rotary die cutting” to make competing packaging products.

gg) Industry sizes for Paper A0, A1, A2, A3, A4 etc are international and while not SI the area of A0 is equal to one square meter.

hh) Oven heats are often indicated in numbers which differ per country or culture. Such indications may also be in SI-degrees Celsius or non-SI degrees Fahrenheit.

The above-mentioned examples illustrate the many instances in which non-SI units are used. No complaints were received about such use nor were examples given of actual difficulties experienced when marketing products in non-SI units on the EU market. Restricting the use of non-SI units could create extra risks which could go against essential requirements stipulating that the benefits to a patient must outweigh the risks in the IVD Directive 98/79/EC. Furthermore, ‘Kcal’ is prescribed by the nutritional labelling Directive 90/496/EEC and prohibiting it would require a change to that directive. It was confirmed by Member States that the application of the current directive does not present difficulties of interpretation in practice and does not give rise for introducing new limitations. There is, therefore, no need at this moment to exclude sectors from the scope of the directive.

Whilst there are many examples of non-SI units currently being in use, stakeholders did not mention specific examples of difficulties and authorities confirmed that there are currently no difficulties in the application of Directive 80/181/EEC and there is no need to reduce its scope.

8. DATE OF SUPPLEMENTARY INDICATIONS IN NON-SI UNITS

The use of supplementary indications in non-SI units are authorised by Article 3.1 of the Directive. There is no definition of what constitutes such an indication, other than that it is not in the SI-system. The exception is therefore the broadest possible and allows to cover a host of indications as mentioned in the points above.

The USA Federal Fair packaging and Labelling Act (15 U.S.C. §§§ 1451-1461) and the regulations promulgated there under require dual labelling for most consumer products. Health products regulated by the FDA are still currently only allowed in non-SI units, but there is currently a proposal to allow SI units next to non-SI indications, but this would still not allow metric-only labelled products to be marketed in the USA. Save for a few exceptions, US federal law does not allow metric only labelling. This represents a costly non-tariff barrier to exports from the EU.

During the last decade there has been a gradual change with all but three US states allowing metric-only labelling next to dual labelling. NASA has also indicated that it will in future use metric units for all operations on the lunar surface when it returns to the moon, which will bring the metric system into wider use by hundreds of aerospace manufacturers and suppliers. This may be expected to give a huge boost to aerospace industries changing to metric and metrics may well become the standard in which innovation is developed.

There may be legal requirements in other markets than the USA. For fruit and vegetables it is reported by the federation Freshfel that also Japan and Canada may require indications in non-SI, notably in pounds (lb).

Respondents from industry unanimously confirmed the necessity to extend the use of supplementary markings. Many have asked for an indefinite extension. Requiring metric-only would lead to very large costs from having to split production lines and making products in metrics for the EU market and in non-metrics for the US market. Next to that there would be additional costs from having to use different labels and documentation, re-training workers and maintaining increased stocks. Finally, bespoke production runs could become shorter leading to higher prices per item. Some of these operations would have negative environmental consequences such as more scrap, more print runs, more cleaning of presses.

It would seem that enforcing metric-only labelling in the EU from 2010 onwards would lead to considerable costs amounting to 0.02% of turnover for large firms and up to 0.2% of turnover for small firms. Mechanically it could lead to more employment, but it is expected that other employment will be lost in those cases where firms cannot cope with rising costs. With total EU exports to the USA amounting to €15bn, costs of the change between 0.02% and 0.2% could amount to between €3 million and €30 million for European industry. There do not, however, seem to be any additional costs caused by extending the use of supplementary indications, because there will be no change to the current situation. Member States would seem to be close to unanimity for extending the period.

It would seem that the recital extending the use of supplementary indications in Directive 99/103/EEC is still valid: "Certain third countries do not accept on to their market products marked exclusively in the legal units established by Directive 80/181/EEC; companies exporting their products to these countries will be disadvantaged if supplementary indications are disallowed after 31 December 1999; supplementary indications in non-legal units should therefore be authorised for a further period".

One respondent suggested that, as it concerns imports from the United States, that EU and USA recognise each others imports in a reciprocal arrangement. While this would solve the direct trade issue it would add costs to imports coming from third markets to both the EU and USA and would cause a non-tariff technical barrier to exports from these third countries which would be contestable in the WTO-TBT. Therefore the Commission should not follow this suggestion.

Another respondent's suggestion is to permit exemptions if, and only if, it could be demonstrated that trade would be hindered with countries outside the European Union, would, if at all feasible, add an administrative burden on many companies and should therefore not be considered. Again another respondent's suggestion was to precisely indicate the non-SI measure, i.e. "US fluid ounce" instead of "fluid ounce". This would again increase costs for producers, because such indications are not required,

and probably not even permitted in the USA. A change in law would be needed in the USA.

Whilst there is unanimous support from industry for an indefinite extension of supplementary markings, Member State governments appear hesitant about an indefinite extension given the still large non-tariff trade barriers imposed by the USA to metric-only labelled goods. It is clear therefore that specific action on this point will also be required.

From an intellectual property rights perspective, allowing the use of supplementary indications takes a similar approach to Rule 10 of the Regulations under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), which lays out the rules for physical units. The PCT requires metric units to be used but allows other units if accompanied by metric units. As it does not permit national authorities to impose more stringent formalities requirements than those under the PCT, indefinitely allowing supplementary indications would avoid a clear inconsistency between the PCT and European legislation.

There would seem to be sound economic arguments for indefinitely extending the date for the use of supplementary indications in Article 3 in Directive 80/181/EEC. However, the continued existence of non-tariff barriers against metric-only labelled goods in the USA represents a difficulty and will need to continue to be addressed bilaterally in the Commission's ongoing contacts on regulatory cooperation with the US authorities.

9. SCOPE OF THE DIRECTIVE

From the side of private persons there were many differing views on the current application of the directive, notably in the United Kingdom. Many are concerned by the non-use of metric units, notably in offers and as the base for unit pricing. The result can lead to unclarity and to potential confusion. Consumers complain that they cannot always compare the price of products in shops easily and that this may be to the advantage of traders and at the expense of shoppers. A number of photos were sent by individuals underlining the lack of market surveillance. However, as it does not concern cross border trade, there is no incentive for the Commission to pursue the UK authorities on this issue. The Commission considers this to be primarily a matter for the Member State authorities to deal with.

Many also discussed the issue of the four exemptions allowed to the UK and Ireland. There were views expressed in favour of indefinitely maintaining such exemptions and also contrary views stressing the scope for errors after 30 years of fully metric education whilst imperial measures are no longer taught at school. It was also pointed out that the exemptions are exclusive, i.e. that it is illegal to sell draught beer in metric units, whilst the exemption for pints of milk is only for returnable bottles but that nearly all pasteurised milk in non-returnable packaging is sold in multiples of pints.

While a UK citizen said that mainland lorries regularly collided with low bridges, a UK local authority said statistics did not show more accidents involving foreign drivers. The UK 1997 national rule requiring the height of the truck to be clearly displayed in feet and inches in

the drivers cab if the truck has a height of over 4m was not flagged as a problem by non-UK operators.

The UK government has asked for the obligation about determining a date in advance for ending these exemptions to be lifted. No reactions were received on this issue from EU stakeholders other than UK citizens. Unless new arguments about costs of the current exemptions would be brought forward by economic operators outside the UK, there does not seem to be an overriding reason to require the UK and Ireland to fix a date in advance for lifting the exemptions.

The UK government has also indicated that new land-registrations are all done in metric units. In Ireland the acre for land registration was withdrawn end 1998. The Commission services suggest taking out the exemption for UK and Ireland concerning land registration in acres.

Two UK retailers and two NGOs requested to return to the pre-2000 situation regarding the implementation of the directive requiring goods sold loose and in bulk to be sold in metric. It also does not appear that UK authorities would wish to change back to the pre-2000 situation.

Other UK citizens pointed to the obligation in the UK to indicate metric in four decimals. This was not flagged as a problem by producers outside of the UK, possibly because they do not produce in non-metric sizes and therefore do not need to apply this rule.

Some respondents have requested to no longer allow Member States to require that measuring instruments bear indications of quantity in a single legal unit of measurement (Article 3.3). They do not give any examples of actual problems and give the impression that the article will in future cause extra costs. This appears, however, to be misleading. The article is being fully applied by all Member States since the inception of the directive and having it does not lead to extra costs. It rather gives benefits, namely the guarantee to consumers that a measuring instrument gives a result in SI units. Getting rid of the article would open up many possibilities to mislead customers by 'juggling with units', which currently cannot occur. There was no support from Member States to scrap Article 3.3 of the Directive.

In the absence of views indicating that cost additions or difficulties emanate from the current exemptions to economic operators from outside the UK, the Commission should have no overriding reason to require the UK or Ireland to fix a date in advance on the lifting of the exemptions.

10. REASONS TO MAINTAIN THE DIRECTIVE

One respondent suggested scrapping the directive given that SI units were now widely in use and that the Directive had served its purpose and achieved its aims. There are, however, in the opinion of the Commission services good reasons to maintain the Directive and these were unanimously supported by Member States.

- The Meter-Convention is a treaty of which all EU Member States are signatories. The *Conférence Générale des Poids et Mesures (CGPM)*, i.e. the governing body of the *International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM)*, is developing the International System of Units (SI). Nevertheless the Mem-

ber States of the Meter-Convention are not legally bound to exclusively implement the SI system. Other Units of Measurements are allowed.

- To have a comparable common basis for all the measurement done in Europe in the Member States and between Member States it is necessary to have the same legal units as in the other countries.
- If there would be no directive (or regulation) any unit of measurement could be applied. If a Member State would implement solely the SI system on its national territory, the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice would force it to accept all the other measuring units allowed in any other Member State of the European Union. This would lead to a situation in Europe of the past. The *Cassis-de-Dijon* jurisprudence would lead in the end to nearly endless possibilities for units of measurements and thus to significant problems for cross-border trade.
- Especially the issue of dual labelling of quantities would be a problem again. If the SI system is no longer the reference system for Europe other units (US fluid ounces) could be used as sole indication. This would lead to a very unclear market situation in Europe.

Another respondent suggested including adding consumer protection as one of the aims of the directive. Currently all Member State authorities understand the directive's aims to include consumer protection. Consumer protection has been considerably reinforced in Treaty changes since the inception of the Directive. Therefore consumer protection should be retaken and explicitly mentioned in Article 2a of the Directive. The same holds for environmental protection where environmental targets are expressed in quantities by law and which should similarly be included.

In the light of existing jurisprudence, maintaining the Directive guarantees a clear system of units of measurement which is required for the transparency of the European internal market. 'Consumer protection' and 'environmental protection' could be added in Article 2a of the Directive.

11. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Commission services consider that the impacts of the various options to adapt Directive 80/181/EC are the following.

1. Indefinitely extend the date for the use of the supplementary indications in Article 3.2 after 2009. No action would mean applying the sun-down clause, which has been extensively costed in chapter 8 above, leading to the conclusion that that enforcing metric-only labelling in the EU from 2010 onwards would lead to considerable costs amounting to 0.02% of turnover for large firms and up to 0.2% of turnover for small firms. Mechanically it potentially could lead to more employment, but it is expected that employment will be lost in those cases where SME firms cannot cope with rising costs, probably leading to a close to zero sum, although this is also uncertain. With total EU exports to the USA amounting to €315bn, costs of the change between 0.02% and 0.2% could amount to between €63 million and €630 million for European industry. Costs of a similar order could be experienced

by industries in non-EU countries exporting to both the European and US market. There do not seem to be any additional costs caused by extending the use of supplementary indications, because there will be no change to the current situation.

2. Add consumer protection and environmental protection at the end of Article 2(a). This is a change that does not lead to any change in society given that units of measurement are already being applied for these reasons. What has changed is the Treaty itself since the inception of the directive and it is for this administrative reason that the change should be considered.

3. Delete the obligation of fixing of a date for the end of the exemptions for UK and Ireland in Article 1b. This concerns the use of the pint as indication for milk in returnable bottles and draught beer and cider in both UK and Ireland and the use of indications in non-metrics for road signs and speeds in the UK and the use of the troy ounce on the London bullion market. Currently all of these uses are deeply engrained, having cultural significance, and do not give rise to discomfort which can be considered a major benefit. The Commission is not aware of any costs associated with the continuation of these specific exemptions. On the other hand change would invoke costs. The adapting of road signs in the UK could cost between £80mln to £800mln depending upon the speed with which the change is implemented. The London bullion market would be at a costly disadvantage with its world wide competitors in Zurich and New York where the troy ounce is the unit of measurement – the exchange estimates that it could lead to the loss of the whole market in London. It would seem that costs of change are many with few benefits, whilst there are no costs and only benefits associated to a continuation of the existing exemptions.

4. End the exemption for land registration by taking out the third line in the table in Chapter II of the Annex. This exemption is no longer applied in UK and Ireland and therefore ending it does not bring costs. The only benefit is simplification.

5. Include the katal in table 1.2.3 “SI derived units” in the Annex. This is an update to an existing standard, which is already overdue. Some Member States may already have made the change in national law which means that manufacturers and consumers in these states have a legal base for applying the international standard. In other countries this may not be the case, which implies a legal inequality in the sense that where there is no legal base domestic production is not covered by a legal base whilst imports are. Uncertainty is impossible to estimate and it would seem that the administrative costs are minor to adapt the law. There do not seem to be other impacts on the costs side. The benefits of abiding legally with the international standard are many.

12. FURTHER WORK

The Commission services will proceed to prepare a proposal concentrating to adapt Directive 80/181/EC on the following elements:

1. indefinitely extend the date for the use of the supplementary indications in Article 3.2 after 2009

2. add consumer protection and environmental protection at the end of Article 2(a)

3. delete the obligation to fix a date for the end of the exemptions for UK and Ireland in Article 1(b)

4. end the exemption for land registration, which is no longer applied in UK and Ireland by taking out the third line in the table in Chapter II of the Annex

5. include the katal in table 1.2.3 “SI derived units” in the Annex.

The Commission services publish this report in line with the Commission policy on better regulation in order to summarise the results of the recent consultation process and their findings. The publication of this report is without prejudice to any subsequent proposal to be adopted by the College.

UK Metric Association response, 27 June 2007:

“UKMA Chairman, Robin Paice, commented: ‘This has all the signs of a stitch-up between the UK’s Department of Trade and Industry and the European Commission. The DTI has made it clear that they are implacably opposed to further metrication in the UK, and rather than challenge them, the Commission has bottled out and is proposing to abandon the objective of a single, rational system of measurement used and understood throughout the European Union.’

In its own submission to the Commission, UKMA had argued that there is a simple solution to the problems allegedly encountered by transatlantic traders in coping with two conflicting labelling regimes. All that is needed is a reciprocal arrangement to accept each other’s labelling for imports and exports. Until such an agreement is reached the EU could unilaterally accept dual-labelling on American imports. Or if that is too difficult, dual labelling could be allowed on all packages and product manuals etc - but not on loose goods priced and weighed out by the trader. The Commission’s report ignores this last point and attempts to justify its rejection of the mutual recognition argument by suggesting that third countries might complain that it also affected their exports and would be a non-tariff barrier to trade. This argument is clearly disingenuous since it would obviously be possible to devise wording that would accommodate this very minor problem. They thus appear (or pretend) to believe that two systems are cheaper than one.

The Commission has also agreed to support a UK proposal that it should not have to name a date for converting road signs to metric units. Citing both the UKMA cost estimate of £80 million and the Transport Department’s grossly inflated estimate of £800 million, the Commission’s paper comments that imperial road signs have “cultural significance and do not give rise to discomfort which can be considered a major benefit”. They have thus failed completely to understand the benefits of a single system as well as the hidden costs of continuing to muddle through with two systems. They have also ignored UKMA’s argument that the continued existence of imperial road signs is the biggest obstacle to the acceptance of metric measures in the UK in everyday life. “As long as we have miles, yards, feet and inches on the road signs, many people will not adapt to measuring up for curtains and carpets in metres and square metres”, said Robin Paice. He added: “Why should the refusal of the Americans to accept the world system condemn the British to endure indefinitely the misery and muddle of incompatible weights and measures in shops and markets. It undermines consumer protection (one of the Commission’s claimed new stated objectives), wastes our children’s education, and just prolongs this very British mess. It is a piece of political cowardice.”

BWMA’s reply to the Commission will be published in the next *Yardstick*

Trading standards authorities divided on supplementary indications

The two umbrella bodies, LACORS and the Trading Standards Institute, are both in favour of indefinite extension. According to the **Trading Standards Institute** on 28 February 2007: "As regards the US as a third country, it surely is not for the EU to attempt to pressure another non-EU country into complying with its will. This can only serve to alienate that country and cause problems for producers in the EU. As supplementary units can be so useful to the EU users, it is illogical to attempt to limit them for other countries ... As the reasons for retaining supplementary units are unlikely to change in the future, it is logical to allow their continued use indefinitely, to avoid having to consult just on this point at future intervals. Whilst individual units may fall out of use over time, the future proofing aspect allowing for innovation is unlikely to disappear and its necessity alone should be enough to secure the future for Article 3".

TSI added: "To remove the pint from the British identity could cause an uprising of feeling among the public similar to that experienced in 2000 when sales of loose goods in imperial units was prohibited and whilst the law was proved to be legal it was extremely unpopular. We question the need to repeat that when there is no cross-border issue at stake?"

LACORS said on 7 March 2007, "It is LACORS' view that the use of supplementary indications should be permitted for an indefinite period. Not to do so would result in unfair pressures on exporting businesses. We do not see that there is anything to be gained from precipitating such a crisis."

However, the following is a letter, dated 28 February 2007, by the **Worcestershire** Principal Trading Standards Officer on behalf of 14 British trading standards offices, to the European Commission:

"Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on this working document. I forward the comments of the CEnTSA (Central England Trading Standards Authorities) in respect of Commission staff working document on the units of measurement directive 80/181/EEC. CEnTSA consists of the following local government authorities, Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire. CEnTSA make the following comments:

Response to question 7 - Should the use of supplementary indications in Article 3 in Directive 80/181/EEC be able to continue?

Loose goods that are unit priced are required to be sold by reference to legal units i.e. price per kilogramme. At present for such sales supplementary indications may also be given in non-SI units e.g. price per pound. CEnTSA understands that these non-SI supplementary indications are only authorised until end of 2009.

CEnTSA does not support extending the use of supplementary indications beyond the 2009 deadline in respect of loose goods. Permitting the display of supplementary indications in this instance is not considered necessary. Displaying SI units and non-SI units together can lead to consumer confusion when making price comparisons. CEnTSA does not see that this would impose any cross-border issues or cause any disadvantage for companies exporting products.

Permitting supplementary indications for sales of loose goods by weight or measure can cause difficulty for enforcement authorities in requiring compliance e.g. prominence of metric wording and refusal to comply with metrication legislation. Guidance and information to business and consumers on supplementary indications has for many years all been aimed at ensuring compliance by the 2009 deadline. As such any literature would require to be amended and communicated to businesses and consumers to convey any change. There will inevitably be costs involved with this process.

However CEnTSA would not object to the continued use of non-SI units as supplementary indications in other instances, that is, transactions that are not by reference to unit pricing, such as goods which are pre-packed and non-SI units which are marked with a supplementary indication on consumer packaging. There was some concern that there was no base in the current directive allowing Member States to require that supplementary indications be correct. What protection will be afforded to the purchaser who could be relying upon such indications?

Response to question 8 - Do market operators face any problems with the current system?

CEnTSA's comments are restricted to the exemptions relating to draught beer and cider and milk in returnable containers. These particular exemptions, where there is no cross-border issue at stake, should remain unchanged and their use allowed to continue. Any removal would be extremely unpopular. In addition CEnTSA has no objection in using non-SI units for descriptive purposes, for example describing a 6-foot table or 16-inch shirt collar.

Yours sincerely

Mark Strain, Chair CEnTSA Metrology Group"

Active Resistance to Metrication website

In June, Active Resistance to Metrication (ARM) launched its website, www.activeresistance.org.uk, featuring a photo gallery of its improvements to metric signs. The website states: "Over the past 6 years, we have been able to convert over 2,500 road and footpath signs that were illegally signed in metric, to British distances such as miles, yards, feet and inches. We use professional techniques including professional adhesive labelling and plates made by sign manufacturers. Where we make amendments to signs which are governed by the strict rules of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002, we use Department of Transport-grade adhesive reflective material and of course the same size and font style of lettering".

'THE GENERAL RULE -- A GUIDE TO CUSTOMARY WEIGHTS AND MEASURES' by Vivian Linacre

The General Rule has now been published by The Squeeze Press: ISBN 1-978-906069-01-8

208 pages and lavishly illustrated, it is an essential compendium of articles, tables and notes to explain the imperial system of customary measures. The author, BWMA President Vivian Linacre, is recognized, both in Britain and internationally, for his knowledge of customary weights and measures.

Whether buying for one's own library or as a present, the recipient of *the General Rule* will find a depth of knowledge combined with readability which makes this book not only outstanding but arguably the definitive publication in this area of weights and measures. It is ideal both for the serious student and those who wish to extend their general knowledge.

Retailing at £12.99, *the General Rule* is available to readers of the *Yardstick* at the reduced price of £12, post free, from Vivian Linacre at 21 Marshall Place, Perth, PH2 8AG

Jilly Cooper: "...beautifully written, great fun and a mine of useful and interesting information"

Simon Heffer: "Terrific ... refreshes our memory about the depth and richness of a vital part of our cultural history"

The Duchess of Devonshire: "A book to cherish among the non-stealables"

Which? The Consumers Association

In *Yardstick* 28, we asked members to write to the Consumers Association *Which?* to urge support for the continuation of the right to use non-metric supplementary indications. The following reply was sent by Claire Hill to our colleague Martin Barnett in August 2006: "We are aware of the wishes of consumers in this country and I can tell you honestly, that this isn't an issue for the vast majority of consumers. That's not to say that the move to metric hasn't been a challenge for some but, right now, yours is the only letter I've seen about this issue for a very long time".

Curiously, Ms Hill also wrote to Kenneth Evans: "That's not to say that the move to metric hasn't been a challenge for some but, right now, yours is the only letter I've seen about this issue for a very long time".

A month previously, July 2006, *Which?* representative Matt Stevens sent an email to Michael Parker: "That's not to say that the move to metric hasn't been a challenge for some, but right now, yours is the only email I've seen about this issue for a very long time".

In February 2007, *Which?* representative Diane Hacker wrote to Tony Parkins, "I can tell you honestly, that this isn't an issue for the vast majority of consumers. That's not to say that the move to metric hasn't been a chal-

lenge for some, but right now, yours is the only letter I've seen about this issue for a very long time".

So, apart from lying, what is the actual policy of *Which?* on metrication? Representative Miles Chapman told our member Charmain Newton that, "The abolition of imperial measurements is not something that we'll be lobbying for or against. It's not an area that we have an opinion on". However, this assertion does not accord with the historical record. In June 1978, *Which?* magazine printed the article, *Metrication - let's get on with it*; the following is an extract:

"Whatever the intrinsic merits and comfortable familiarity of feet, yards, ounces, gallons, and other Imperial units, the inescapable facts are that we are a trading nation, depending for our livelihood on trade with other countries [and] the only countries in the world which aren't already metric (or going metric) are Brunei, Burma, Liberia, the Yemen Arab Republic, and the People's Democratic Republic of the Yemen. So, at *Which?*, our efforts have been directed less at commanding the metric tide to go back, more at ensuring that metrication happens in a way that causes as little confusion as possible ... it was more than five years ago [i.e. 1973] when we first told the government that we wanted the change to be as swift and orderly as possible ... Two years ago [1976], we decided to get the views of members. We asked a random sample of members when they thought the process of changing over to metric would be completed. We analysed 800 replies: more than half said 'between 1976 and 1980' ... This was the background to our decision to tell the government publicly, in April [1978] that we supported the proposal to give statutory backing to an agreed timetable for phasing out the Imperial system - including its use in the sale of fresh foods - by the end of 1981".

Leaving aside the fact that *Which?* had not heard of the United States, the article shows that they had formed a position and were lobbying government five years *before announcing their position publicly*. Further, their poll was of their own members, not the general public.

Charmain Newton wrote back to ask when and why *Which?* adopted a policy of 'no policy'. Representative Susanne Long replied: "The reason that here at *Which?* we do not have a campaign on metrication is because there are good arguments on both sides. There are arguments for and against going metric. I am unable to pinpoint a date as to when our policy changed. We have had many changes of staff in our campaigning teams in London since 1978. However, from speaking with our campaigns team, I do know that only last year we reviewed the situation. This is because metrication is a factor that affects all consumers in everyday life. Yours sincerely, etc"

So, when imperial units were lawful, *Which?* campaigned for their abolition; after the government declared imperial units unlawful, they ceased to have a viewpoint. In other words, *Which?* claimed neutrality after the law had been changed to what it wants.

For members who wish to pursue *Which?*, its address is: Castlemead, Gascoyne Way, Hertford, SG14 1LH

From the Archives: a letter from the French Minister of Industry and Labour to Chambers of Commerce, reproduced from BWMA's annual report of 1906:

REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE.

Paris, April 11th, 1906. To the President of the Chamber of Commerce of — — — — —.

It has been the duty of my department on several occasions to give instructions to the Weights and Measures Inspectors to obtain complete suppressions of the weights and measures forbidden by the law of July 4th, 1837, by the seizure of illegal standards. The Inspection Department, in spite of all its efforts, has not yet obtained the desired result. This appears to be mainly due to the persistence with which certain bodies of tradesmen continue to use prohibited standards and cause thereby the employment of illegal weights and measures.

I have found, in fact, that in some industries, the advertisements, prospectuses, catalogues, etc., exchanged between manufacturers or sent to clients contain illegal denominations. Manufacturers will no doubt plead that they are under the obligation of continuing to design their articles in inches or lines, and that they dare not make alterations from the present state of affairs for fear of losing orders. It is true that, in certain cases, it is more a question of the names than of the actual measures for the sale of merchandise. But the present result is brought about no less by the vexatious customs which hinder the efforts made by my Department to obtain the suppression of all weights and measures other than those of the metric system, especially the inch and the line.

I do not think it is needful for me to give a list of the industries and professions which employ the prohibited standards, they are still numerous, and most of them well known to the members of your Chamber. I no longer think that it is any use to enforce the strict application of Article 45 of the Order of April 17th, 1839, which orders that all contraventions relative to the illegal standards which are found in public circulars and announcements shall be reported by the Inspection Department to the Comptrollers of Registration. I perceive, in fact, that if this procedure were followed, a considerable number of prosecutions would have to be undertaken and cause trouble in commercial and industrial operations.

I have been led, under these circumstances, to consider whether it would not be possible to modify the present state of affairs by other means than

force, and I wish to ask Chambers of Commerce to demand their members to use their influence either with the works they patronise or with merchants themselves, to get them to give up practices which are contrary to law.

I am persuaded that they will not be indifferent to the appeal made to them by the Government on this occasion, but that they will give their help in causing the last vestiges of the standards used before the creation of the metric system to disappear.

I shall be glad if you will acknowledge receipt of this letter, a copy of which I am sending to all the weights and measures inspectors, who being daily in contact with merchants and manufacturers, will be able to furnish you with useful information with regard to industries and trades in your district in which the old standards are still used.

GASTON DOUMERGUE, Ministre du Commerce, de l'Industrie et du Travail".

* * *

Were Monsieur Doumergue alive today, he would be *delighted* with his English counterparts who have issued these enforcement notices to imperial traders:

East Sussex trading standards notice to Orchard Farm Shop, Hurst Green, Sussex, 6 February 2007:

"The imperial scales must now be replaced or converted to facilitate transactions based on the kilogram. Please arrange for their replacement or conversion within the next three months. As you are aware, this legislation has been in force for some time now, but this service is now altering its approach to ensure the legislation is complied with".

Rotherham trading standards notice to butcher Edward Smith, Rawmarsh, West Riding of Yorkshire, 11 June 2007:

"I must inform you that the imperial weighing equipment currently in your possession for trade use does not conform to the Weighing Equipment (Non-Automatic Weighing Machines) Regulations 2000 and as such is liable to be rejected and subsequent forfeiture".

BWMA reminds readers of the *Weights and Measures Act 1985*: "The yard *or* the metre shall be the unit of measurement of length and the pound *or* the kilogram shall be the unit of measurement of mass".
No repealing or amending Act has since been passed by Parliament.

Peter Halstead

BWMA is sad to report that imperial trader Peter Halstead, owner of Gemini Fish Supplies in Codicote in Hertfordshire, died in an accident at his home in April. Peter, 57, fell from scaffolding while painting a wall; he had turned to say hello to a friend when the accident happened.

Peter was a leading supporter of the cause and turned his fishmongers Gemini Fish into a private club to circumvent metric regulations. Customers joined by putting at least one penny in a charity box, whereupon Peter served them in imperial measurement. Although trading Standards officers visited Peter's club, they did not take any action. According to the *Welwyn & Hatfield Times*, his wife Alison said: "Peter always stood up for his beliefs. He was always willing to take on the Establishment and his family have always been proud of him for that".

Peter began working at Unilever as a food technologist, taking regular trips to New Haven to indulge his hobby of sea fishing. However, he soon found himself taking increasing numbers of orders for fresh fish from friends until he and his business partner Irene O'Brien decided to open their own shop. Irene said: "He was a great family man and always had time for you. He liked inventing things and he loved making customers laugh, so would play practical jokes." Speaking about their campaign to remain imperial, Irene said: "We did try to use metric, but customers found it very difficult. Then he discovered this loophole where if we formed a club and people joined for a penny, we could still use imperial measures. We had people join from miles around.

"He always said the 2010 plans to make imperial measurements illegal would never go through because we would lose all trade with the States. It's just a shame it was too late for him to see it because he would have said that was what he thought for years and it was one for Gemini. He would have been very pleased". Irene says that the business received many calls from friends and customers, and has vowed to keep the imperial club running.

Peter leaves his wife Alison, children Alison, Kathryn, Stephanie and Richard, and grandchildren Emily, Luke and Alice.

Early Day Motion – "British Heritage Engineering and Imperial Units"

John Hemming MP (Liberal Democrat) has tabled the following EDM (1290) in the House of Commons:

"That this House notes the concerns of model engineers and other heritage engineering workers that they may not be allowed to use imperial measurements subsequent to the EU Directive 80/181; recognises that this could do a considerable amount of damage to the maintenance of imperial heritage engineering and the model engineering sector; and calls for an urgent review by the Government of mechanisms to facilitate the continuation of this aspect of British heritage, which may include a permanent derogation from this aspect of the directive facilitating the reporting of measurements in both imperial and metric units".

To date, it has been signed by 38 MPs: Mike Penning, Conservative; Bob Spink, Con; Andrew George, Liberal Democrat; Bob Russell, Lib Dem; Ann Cryer, Labour; Andrew Dismore, Lab; Peter Bottomley, Con; David Taylor, Lab; Kelvin Hopkins, Lab; John Redwood, Con; John McDonnell, Lab; Mike Hancock, Lib Dem; Rudi Vis, Lab; Ann Winterton, Con; Nicholas Winterton, Con; Greg Pope, Lab; Vincent Cable, Lib Dem; AJ Beith, Lib Dem; Brian Jenkins, Lab; Dr William McCrea, Democratic Unionist; Gregory Campbell, Democratic Unionist; Janet Dean, Lab; Nigel Evans, Con; John Leech, Lib Dem; Alan Simpson, Lab; Robert Walter, Con; Derek Conway, Con; Desmond Swayne, Con; Sammy Wilson, Democratic Unionist; Andrew Murrison, Con; Nick Harvey, Lib Dem; John Barrett, Lib Dem; David Crausby, Lab; Nadine Dorries, Con; Jo Swinson, Lib Dem; Tony Wright, Lab; Humfrey Malins, Con.

Metric preference dropped by US mathematics teachers

The U.S. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has abandoned its view that metric be the primary measurement system in teaching in the USA. In 2000, the NCTM position statement on metric was: "The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recommends the use of the metric system as the primary measurement in mathematics instruction". However, in 2006, a new position statement was issued: "To equip students to deal with diverse situations in science and other subject areas, and to prepare them for life in a global society, schools should provide students with rich experiences in working with both the metric and the customary systems of measurement while developing their ability to solve problems in either system". The US Metric Association has described NCTM's revised statement as 'shocking'.

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