

Les Cagareilles,
Chemin Carboussan,
Mormoiron 84570, France.
Tel. 04.90.61.90.82.

As from : 4 Church Street,
Wye,
Kent TN25 5BJ.

(email :christophermacrae@

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To : Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz,
Deputy Rector, Imperial College London,
Level 4, Faculty Building,
South Kensington campus,
London SW7 2AZ,
United Kingdom.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE AT WYE: THE "WYE CONCORDAT".

My immediate reaction to your letter dated 8 December was "one and a half cheers". The one cheer was because Imperial College London (ICL) had finally decided not to pull out of Wye (a hard-fought struggle, I know, since I happen to know someone on your Board). That is good for Wye and for Kent. It is also good for ICL's reputation since many of us who live in or near Wye were beginning to think of ICL as simply asset-strippers. After all, the site you currently occupy has been a place of learning for over five centuries; and history would not easily have forgiven ICL if they had been the hangmen who terminated this impressive story.

The half-cheer was for the fact that ICL had at last thought of communicating with the inhabitants of Wye – who do not deserve to be treated as were the serfs during the Middle Ages. This is the first time that ICL has been in touch at all with me and my wife, although we live very close to the college: for alas, despite Wye's small size, town-gown communications have seemed to be nil during the 10 years that we have owned a house in the centre of Wye. But I did wonder if you had been consulting the Wye Parish Council, and the Wye Design Group who worked for years to produce the Wye Design Statement of some four years ago – a pilot project and then a model for planning in the whole of England. Now I know that you did not: so you deserve only half a cheer, for having at least called a public meeting on 9 January (which my wife and I are unable to attend because we shall be in France then).

You score nil from us on the substance of what you propose – because we simply cannot understand what you mean. "12,500 job opportunities" *where?* Clearly not in Wye, whose total population is less than 2,500. "Housing of an appropriate range to cater to a broad spectrum of householders", but *where?* Again, clearly not in Wye which is in Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and whose entire centre (including the College) is a Grade II Listed Area. I begin to wonder if anyone has ever shown you or anyone else from ICL the Wye Design Statement which is still valid. Indeed, any planning for the village has to conform to it. Ashford Borough Council may, for all I know, view with equanimity the possibility that Wye may one day be joined up with Ashford as a one continuous urban development: people in Wye certainly do not. Nor do other important constituents in Kent.

After the proposed meeting on 9 January 2006, we hope to be able to give ICL three cheers. But you still have a long way to go to allay very reasonable misgivings. Local democracy and decision-taking do still matter.

Yours sincerely,

(Sir Christopher MacRae.)