

Birmingham As Number One

early thoughts on a truly radical strategy for Austin Rover

by

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Guy Fawkes Day 1986

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with honourable intentions

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*An Open and Confidential Letter to the Captains of the Great Merchant Vessel
AUSTIN ROVER*

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Prologue

Austin Rover has a unique opportunity.

Instead of busily preparing to fight the last war, they can win the peace and prepare themselves to dictate the terms and the strategic context for the next war.

Every loser knows that once the loss has been accepted it can be transformed from a war lost to a battle conceded. And that is critical because it carries with it the idea of living to fight another day.

The World Car. Highly automated Production Facilities. Finance-backed Marketing through Dealer and Distribution Networks. Grand Ideas in their time. But their time was the Nineteen Fifties. And they were brought to fruition in the Nineteen Eighties by the American Big Three and the Japanese Car Traders.

Austin Rover, under its several disguises, lost this particular round of the battle for a decent share of the spoils of our car-based Western Industrial Civilization as this has unfolded over the course of the twentieth century.

But the Life Cycle of this particular Social Organism may be as much as two centuries, and one and a half is certain, so it still has far to run as it plays itself out well into the middle of the twenty first century.

The Cycles of Technological Change being what they are, there are still another three or four rounds to go in this seven round contest. And the winners will be those with the Green Hills and the Cathedrals at the end of the day, not those who destroy their communities in endless toil and cripple the souls of their

children fighting shadows on the wall. An ounce or two of brain is worth a ton of brawn. This is the interval. Listen carefully to the Coach.

‘The World Car is the Way of the Future’ they proclaim, ‘Baloney!’ How strange to think that this is the way forward today for the world of Thirty Years Hence. Of course it isn’t!

The world has changed since the Nineteen Fifties. And the trends that those changes have set in motion will be playing themselves out in the Nineteen Nineties, the Twenty Hundreds and the Twenty Tens.

What are these changes? What are these trends that those changes have set in motion? What will the World be looking like thirty years from now? And what will be the nature and structure of the Car Business in the year 2015?

PART I: THE PROBABLE FUTURE

Tomorrow’s City Regions

Let us begin at the beginning with that most recent of inventions: the Nation State. This particular idea is likely to be a much weakened currency thirty years hence. Is this the rail to hitch your horse to? This was an Eighteenth Century innovation and its time has passed. ‘Just so’ they cry ‘The One World State is the Future’.

Wrong. The World State Notion was a creation of a very strange and very small breed of Victorian Mind around the middle of the Nineteenth Century. Contrary to our Media-amplified impressions (We see what we want to see. Seek ye and ye shall find) there is no World State. History cannot move so fast. This idea may have meaning a few centuries hence, but this is not the world real people inhabit now, nor will it be the world that they inhabit thirty years from now. This is one of the darkest and most dangerous shadows on the wall. Please ignore it.

The economic engines rooms of tomorrow are not the Megastate, nor the Continental Megastate, nor the One World State. It is Ethnic Tribes and it is City Regions. And if the notion of Israel as the chosen people is to be given any credence, then let it be in this regard.

The World of Tomorrow will be made up not of one Jewish Nation with its Israel and its Zionism, its Sacred Books and its World Jewry, but of hundreds if not thousands of similar groupings calling themselves Scots and Geordies, Normans and Catalonians, Austrians and Swedes, Transylvanians and Bohemians.

And these ethnic tribes with their five to fifteen millions will find themselves gathered around the oceans across which their forefathers and foremothers voyaged and suffered over the past several hundred years and huddled together in the City Regions into which they then migrated seeking the Dark Satanic Mills that would provide them with their means of sustenance over the past hundred years.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland understands these things well. Perhaps better than any others. Already it is a Confederation of Ethnic Tribes and a Commonwealth of City Regions. And as the Great SeaPort for the North Atlantic Ocean for thousands of years, this Diversity has been ingrained in the language and in the cultures of the peoples living in these islands. The Political Institutions with the Monarchy, the Privy Council, the House of Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the House of Communities are not so much Decaying Traditions of Yesteryear as vibrant tapestries awaiting the weaving upon them of yet another chapter of the history of these Island People.

Great Britain has even now during a period of relative economic repositioning three great driving City Regions. London is one. The Scotland of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Silicon Glen is another. And, yes, the English Midlands is indeed another with its heart in the City of Birmingham and its influence spreading south to Oxford, West to Bristol, North to Manchester and East to the Wheat Fields of East Anglia. This is the Heartland of Industry, just as London is the Great City of Finance and Scotland with its four million people is the Great City of Trade. It is no wonder that the Great English Language Economists of the Mercantile Era came from Scotland. Nor is it well enough recognized that the Scottish Traders with their Edinburgh Finance Houses were the glue of the British Empire.

The London City Region as Finance City, Scotland as Trade City and Birmingham as Industry City. But that is no more than a base from which balanced self-reliant thriving economic City Regions can arise over the next wave of the fifty year Kondratieff Cycle. And these three City Regions are no more than examples of the possibilities for a return to greatness for the old Textile City Region in the North West and the Geordie Shipbuilding City in the North East. These have only themselves to blame if they do not allow their youth the chance to subvert their decline.

And there are at least as many other regions of the British Isles where the ethnic coherence is sufficiently strong that over the course of the technological Long Wave stretching into the middle of the next century Great and Beautiful City Regions can develop. There are the Welsh and the Northern Irish, the Old Celtic Traditions yet alive in the West of England and the canny Yorkshiremen in the North and onto all of these are being grafted the New Immigrants, the best and the brightest from all over the Old British Empire and the New English Language Commonwealth.

At present the Tribes of the British Islands are allowing their wealth to dribble away from their region. But this flow of wealth and power to the National Capital alongside the rise of the Nation State and the Centralisation of Governance will begin to flow back from whence it came as the forces driving the affairs of men towards this over centralisation of their lives ebb and the tide turns.

‘Not so’, I hear you say. ‘What of the forces of European Integration?’ ‘

What of them?’ say I. ‘The Old Tribal Chiefs who did not really understand these things, knowing only the horror of two European Wars in one lifetime, may be for that. But their hour has passed. The New Tribal Leaders are not so blinkered by a past which they never knew. They will see things differently. They will see Birmingham and not Brussels. They will build a World of their Own, not a Reaction to the World of their GrandFathers. They will ride the Waves of the Future and not lie on the beach being drawn back into the Sea among the Turbulence of the Waves that have passed.

And the implications of this Anticipation?

I challenge your cherished notions of a National Car Company. I can see perhaps a Birmingham Car Company and I can see the Name of Birmingham known and respected as the dominant force in cars in the City Regions of the North Atlantic - a fame which is world renown. But a National British Car Company thirty years hence. Frankly it’s a nonsense.

Tomorrow’s Car Companies

Let us now scrutinise a little more closely this idea we call a *Car Company*.

We set up the dream of this thing we label *The British Car Company of the Future* but we do it without first defining our terms. First what is the Future that we mean? There are many: *Business as Usual*, *Break-Out*, *Break-Down*, *Hyper-Expansionist (HE)*, *Sane Humane Ecological (SHE)* and so on.

And then there are the time frames. My *Long-Term* tends to be 20-100 years but then I’m a Historian and a Philosopher. For others *Long-Term* stretches only to the end of the decade. I have defined mine. It’s thirty years. It’s matched to the problem of repositioning a *Car Company*. That’s why I chose it. And it also corresponds with the time that secrets are kept for. That’s official. What are your time frames?

But more than that I have tried to understand the meaning of the word *British*. I think it would be a major intellectual error on a thirty-year time-frame to equate that with the meaning attributed to the word by the Governments and Propagandists of the Nation State. I will come back to this in my discussions of *Tomorrow’s Seven Oceans* as opposed to *Today’s One World*.

But what about the ideas we have about *The Car Company*?

Once again we are allowing ourselves to be so seduced by the familiar that we fail to see the obvious.

The *Car Companies* of the 1980s bear about as much resemblance to the *Car Companies* of the 1950s as the Banks of Today do to the Coffee Houses or the Goldsmith Workshop of Yesteryear.

And change, so we are told, is accelerating.

So why should you expect the *Car Company* of the year 2015 to resemble the *Car Company* of the 1980s? Indeed as a first approximation it is probably safer to assume that it will be the complete reverse! Let us explore what this might mean.

What would be the complete reverse of the *Car Company* of the 1980s - and let us not forget that we mean the 1980s *Car Company* not the retrofitted 1950s *Car Company* such as *Austin Rover* might have become without Michael Edwards.

What typifies the *World Car Company* of the 1980s? That’s an easy one. It is what every *Austin Rover Strategic Plan*, be it *Radical One*, *Five* or *Forty Two* has sought for the company to become. Radical, my eye! They are precisely what not to become! Cross them off. More shadows on the wall.

Economies of Scale mean Big Highly-Automated Production Facilities. Wrong! The *Economics of Tomorrow’s Technology* and *Industrial Sociology* means Village and Parish Scale *Car Production Shops*

where the old car goes in one end, a compact disc goes in the robot and the new personally-designed car comes out the other end.

This may be stretching a technological point but when you live just down the road from the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (as I do); and when you spend time working with the New Entrepreneurs from the *Artificial Intelligence Laboratory* and the *Architectural Machine Group* (as I have); and when you are regularly meeting up with so-called crank inventors coming out of the Green Mountains of Vermont with their Sail Cars with aerofoils instead of sails and are good friends with brilliant engineers developing *Tensegrity* structures and applying Buckminster Fuller's *Synergetic Geometry* to real world design problems (as I am)...well then the fear is not at having stretched a technological point too far (*CAD/CAM* technologies are not so very far from this after all even today) but in not stretching it far enough...and most of all not allowing for the unexpected.

The challenge for the *Car Companies* of the year 2015 will be to find ways to cope with the *Diseconomies of Scale*. The Future will be *Doing More with Less*. It will have more *Dispersed Intelligence*. It will be *Invisible rather than Visible*. And, yes, it will also be *Personal rather than Impersonal*.

There is nothing in the underlying technology that implies that *Large Scale Automated Production* will be more economical than *Small Scale Automated Production*. In fact most of the signals point in quite the opposite direction.

The technology is going to be calling for an *Intermediate Scale*. The name of the game thirty years hence will be selecting the appropriate scale for the different parts of the *Man-Machine Organism* that is your *Car Company*.

The world of 2015 will be using organic models and not mechanistic ones. Alfred North Whitehead and many others were telling us that half a century ago.

Nature always matches size with form and function. It is always careful to be the Right Size.

Beware the *Prophets of Giantism*. Yet more shadows on the wall of the deserted and derelict *Great Car Production Plants* that will be littering the landscapes of the next century alongside the entombed *Nuclear Reactors*. Let them not contaminate the rolling green hills of this *Our England*.

Producing Cars or Serving People

If you start your thinking by assuming a *Production Line*, then it is not surprising to discover that the *Productivity* with an *Automated Production Line* when measure as the ratio of cars coming off the end to men standing at the side is a bigger number than the *Productivity* with an unautomated or *Less Automated Production Line*. But does it mean anything?

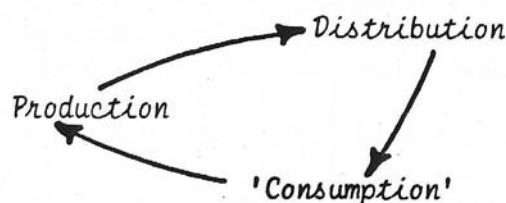
'Yes, of course it does!' I hear you exclaim in defense of the *God of Productivity*. 'It means better margins and higher profits!' Well, does it? To me it is not quite so obvious. And I am an *Economist* and an *Engineer* as well as a *Historian* and a *Philosopher*.

To me this *Production Line* of yours is only a part, and frankly a fairly small part, in a *Production-Distribution-'Consumption' System*. You probably have nice pretty charts in your many corporate plans explaining this to you. They probably look like this.

Production → Distribution → 'Consumption'

It is a straight line process with not too many questions being asked about what happens after '*Consumption*'. The Earth is flat and beyond the land of '*Consumption*' lie territories into which no *Car Company Director* would dare venture. It is populated after all by *The Barbarians: Used Car Salesmen, Scrap Dealers, Thieves, Rogues* and the *Mafias*. To all intents and purposes that is the edge of your car world and those who approach too close to it will quite simply fall off.

Gentlemen. The World is not flat. It is round. And the World of the Car Company of the Future will have discovered this. The Flat World Straight Line Thinking of the mid-Twentieth Century will give way to a more Circular Form of Thought in the Twenty First Century. This Car Company System of yours will be looking like this:



No longer will you be able to watch as from the dust they come and to dust they go before your very eyes. The straight lines will be bending back upon themselves and your processes will become circular. It may even be, this being the nature of things, that such will be the inroads of systems thinking into the entrepreneurs of the *Car Business* that they will have found ways to exploit the fact that actions and reactions are integral to a stable system, and they may start sending the arrows back round the loop in the opposite direction. It would be prudent to reflect on such possibilities before the Mafias start calling the shots rather than after your business has been shot up by them!

Sounds crazy? Perhaps it is. Who knows after all? But thirty years hence is quite a long time. Who in 1925 except H.G. Wells and Buckminster Fuller for instance were able to imagine the Atom Bomb! Not even Einstein thought such things to be possible.

Thirty years is a long time. And Change, so we are told, is accelerating.

All these assumptions will however be tested for feasibility by wise men with experience in such matters.

Even today a *Car Company* is not just an enterprise for manufacturing and delivering cars. The rise of the *Marketing* function itself is evidence of the closing of the loop. And talking to the dealers about the *Trade-Ins* and to the salesmen about the *Car Rental Business* and it will be clear that the loop is already closing. And out there in the real world it is closing fast. Much faster than even those in the business and closest to it perhaps realise. They are not, after all, philosophers and so they do not look at things in quite this way. But they can tell you what is happening.

Perhaps, instead of the automated process of producing a car there may be strategic wisdom in reconceptualising this organism you like to call the *Car Business* and instead of starting your thinking by assuming a *Production Line* you should start your thinking by imagining a family.

And imagining the lifetime or the life cycles of this family. Put people first and automate the family's relationship with their transport needs.

Crazy talk? Perhaps it is. Who knows after all? But thirty years is quite a long time. And the Human Scale has a distinguished history of creeping through the crannies of this world and rending asunder the hardest monuments to Man's pride. Why not automate the *Car User's Time Line* instead of the *Car Maker's Space Line*. At least Einstein would have understood that even though he was only a genius and not an engineer.

What would be your economies of scale then?

What would be the structure of the *Car Business* when it was turned on its head from a *Car Making Business* to a *Transport Needing Business*, where the cars and the buses, the trucks and the tracks they run on were made to serve man's needs rather than man being persuaded to obey the demands of *The Mega Machine*?

And this should not be understood as merely a philosophical point though that it surely is. It is also an economic point because there is an alternative social structure, a different economic context in which such commodities as cars and buses and trucks could fit. And thirty years is a surprisingly long time.

So much for *Production Lines*. But never forget that the economies inherent in them are not only shifting over time but are also essentially organic and not mechanistic in nature and are dependent upon adapting to their economic environment for their surviving. This environment has been quietly without much fuss reasserting the primacy of the personal. Putting the person back on centre stage and compelling the impersonal systems and dehumanised organizations to design their businesses not only as if people mattered but as if they were *whole people, people in the round*, rather than motorists or consumers or workers or socio-economic classes. That is one aspect of the real world which is treated as a shadow on the wall at your peril and that of your *Car Business*.

The *Service* and the *Finance*, the *Marketing* and the *Advertising* are all attempts to force the well-rounded hole to accept your square peg. What would happen if these well-rounded holes were given the opportunity to shape the pegs? Remember the astounding impact of the Japanese putting radios in their cars and 'giving them away for nothing'.

Well after a hundred years of *Industrialism* and *Schooling* those well-rounded holes were getting to be as square as the pegs and in the 1960s and 1970s there was not much to complain about. It was a good fit. But each child born today is born naked, helpless and innocent and by the year 2015 I would rather believe that they will be well-rounded individuals and will not have allowed themselves to be beaten out of shape by *Schools* and *Jobs*. Will there still be *Square Peg Production Lines* thirty years hence?

So much for *Production Lines*.

The Japanese Miracle

If a *Car Company* is not to be viewed as just a great ornamental production facility and if so much doubt can be cast upon the idea of a *World Car* or even a *National Car Business* then how well can the remainders of our strategic definition withstand detailed scrutiny?

Not too well!

The 1980 *Car Company* is a highly automated production facility with finance-backed marketing through dealer and distribution networks.

What then of the future of these dealer and distributor networks?

And how essential is this finance-backed marketing?

Let us begin with the finance-backed marketing...and at the *Japanese Trading Companies* who invented it. How exactly did the Japanese cars come to carve up so substantial a share of the world's car business in so many places? Where did these *Japanese Car Companies* come from so suddenly? And why did they prevail?

Let us ask those who were around at the time they first started to move in. Now of course if you ask a hundred and one different people you will likely receive three hundred and three different answers. But do not let that dismay you. Let us make a note of some of them and see whether there is not some underlying pattern.

"They bought *Market Share*," you will be told. "Dumping, pure and simple. They undercut on price."

"Quality was the real edge. Russian cars are cheap enough but nobody will buy them. The Japanese had these modern factories with these brand new automated production lines. Didn't need anybody to work the lines. Machines did a first rate job first time and last time. And all the people could then just stand around looking for things that had gone wrong."

"Clever those Japs," others will tell you. "Bought up whole dealer networks at bargain prices when firms like *Leyland* and *Chrysler* were going through hard times. Predatory they were. And you can't blame the dealers. They're entrepreneurs not fools. Survival comes before loyalty when the chips are down."

"All well and good," you will hear. "Price, Quality, Low Cost. Sure...but there was more than that. They got money from their government. Them and the Japanese Banks worked together. Government paid all the R & D and then were underwriters for the banks so they had no downside risk to worry about. Well it's like going for double or quits when you will get double even when it comes up quits."

"Maybe yes. Maybe no. Never did understand that sort of things," the engineers will tell you. "Be that as it may, the fact of the matter is that they are damn fine cars. The technology is good. Right up there with anything we were doing. And often doing things that we could not get the financial people to even give their ear to when we wanted it. Market not ready or some such excuse. The joke was of course that it was our technology in the first place. They took anything and everything they could lay their hands on. Not invented here for them was a point of pride which meant not paid for by us! And as if that wasn't enough. Having copied what we were doing from the Yank research and design labs they then had the gall to put hundreds of graduate engineers onto it and do it better and cheapest."

"Protectionism!" That's another one you'll hear. "Kept us out of their home markets they did. Clever the way they discriminated. Nothing you could really get a handle on. Just no way to get a dealer or a sales agent, a distributor, an import certificate. You name it. They got it. We couldn't get it. Went on for years like that. Took a long time for the politicians to wake up to their game. And by then they were away and

clear. Everybody was complaining. Quite impossible in the sixties and not much better in the seventies. Importer he no like. Him stay home. We buy nice Japanese cars.”

“It was their Trading Companies that really wrapped things up for them. Without them it wouldn’t have been quite so easy. Almost seemed like a Mafia or a Chinese Triad Gang. Their tentacles were everywhere. A hint here. A suggestion there. And suddenly months of discussions were suddenly broken off. That was their real power. They could tell the small guys back home when to play ball, when to play tough, when to roll over and play dead, and when to walk away”.

So, there you have it. The Japanese Miracle. Quite a show!

The Japanese Imperative

Quite a show indeed! And quite a lot of different explanations. Where lies the truth? And what are the implications?

As always the truth in such matters is not *either-or* but *both-and*. Each little anecdote contains some parts of the truth.

But at the same time none of these things or very few of them were true for the *British Car Companies*. Nor were they true for the *American Giants*. Nor were they true for the *European Car Makers* even though there were several *niche strategists* who kept their heads above water by marching in behind the Japanese.

So interesting though it may be to analyse the Japanese miracle yet it is essentially a strategic luxury. It is besides the point. From a strategic point of view the key question is not how the Japanese did it but why they did it and got away with it while the Brits and the Krauts, the Frogs and the Yanks, sat back and watched?

A good question. Let me attempt a reply. Part of the answer lies in an understanding of the nature of Power. John Kenneth Galbraith has spent a lifetime touching on this question. Finally he wrote a book about it. According to Galbraith it is helpful to distinguish between three distinct forms of power, which he names *Compensatory Power*, *Condign Power* and *Conditional Power*.

Now the reality of the Japanese situation was that they were in the superficially unenviable position of having no *Conditional Power* to wield across the globe and had been stripped of all their *Condign Power* after their surrender in 1945. All they had going for them was *Compensatory Power* and even that was much circumscribed by MacArthur.

Basically the only way they could get what they wanted was by exchanging for anything that they had to give over in return. And without recourse to the other two forms of power you are stuck with a hand with few high cards and almost everyone else calling trumps.

Not that there is anything unusual about the Japanese predicament. In fact it is surprisingly normal if the historical record is studied aright. One thinks of the *East India Company* for instance as sailing into port behind the *British Navy’s* gun boats. But that came later. In the beginning they sailed in with only the goods they had on board and their wits about them. Those goods were certainly wanted. And they had picked them up for a song from the highly automated *Mill Owners* of Northern England. But like *Supply Siders* then, before then and for ever and a day after then, that was only the start. Your problem is how to get something back for what you want to get rid of. And how to get as many things back for as few things given away.

From such pressing needs and not without quite staggering ingenuity the world gave birth to the *China Trade*, *Opium Wars* and now an *International Drugs Business* that eclipses oil, coffee and every other traded commodity. But that is the unwritten dark side of *British Imperial History*. We can be thankful that the Japanese were closer to their *Samurai Tradition* than our *Merchant Adventurers* were to their *Arthurian Knights*. It also helped that they were *Demand Siders*.

In the 1950s the Japanese saw themselves with a hundred million mouths to feed, a very highly evolved culture that enabled them to do it, but with very little to spare over and above that. The traditional responses of growing something exotic was not on but nor was the other standard response. If you can’t use the sun then you start digging around in Mother Earth. No good either. Japan does not have deposits of copper like Zambia or Zaire, it does not have gold fields like the South Africans or spare iron like the Liberians. Worst of all it does not have the good fortune of the Arabs with an empty quarter perched on a lake of oil.

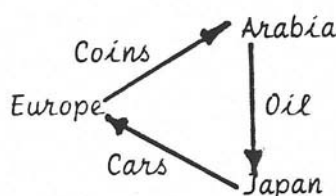
With this reality who needs a strategic plan?

If you want to have cars - and the Japanese decided that they did want to although it was a fairly close run thing for a while - then you need gasoline. If you want to move to a more complex society with a high energy throughput then you need to make electricity, or at least in the 1950s these were fairly universal assumptions.

Put in a nutshell. The Japanese needed to import oil. And the people who had the stuff wanted to be paid with gold coins. The Japanese are now making the coins to make life simpler for themselves next time. But back then the only way they could see to get gold coins was by getting their hands on some of the hard currency that the Americans and some of the Europeans used as money and which they exchanged for gold if you asked them nicely.

So like the *East India Company* before them they discovered the joys of the three-way barter deal. Oil to Japan. Gold coins to Arabia. And something else to Europe and America.

Well that I'm afraid is where your *European Car Manufacturers* lucked out. And I will leave it ambiguous because the jury is still out. You got caught up in a game that was too big for you. They could have gone for Silk Farms and they could have gone for Factory-Built Houses. But they didn't. Among the things they went for were Cars. They looked at what people did all day, looked at what they bought...and went for cars. Their three-way barter plan was like this:



Now nobody needed to invent the Japanese Trading Company for any of this. The *British Merchant Venturers of Yesteryear* had taught the whole world how to do this *Grand Merchanteing*.

But the irony is that of all the things that came up in explanation of the Japanese Miracle the one critical one - Global Trading - was lifted straight from the *Coffee Houses of London*.

But be that as it may. You never stood a chance. You were the pawns in another game. They were playing rugby and you were playing soccer. They were picking up the ball and running with it. And you took the heat.

You have my sympathy. It was definitely not cricket. In fact it was damned unfair on you.

The Japanese were fighting for their lives, or at least they believed themselves to be fighting for the comfort in their lives.

What chance did you have? Your lives were quite comfortable anyway. You were merely trying to earn your living.

PART III: THE TRANSITION YEARS

The End of the Old Order

So much for the Miracle. Basically about as miraculous as the British talking the Americans into the war against Hitler.

Necessity is almost always the mother of invention ...eventually. But all this is behind you.

The Japanese are back in business. And now it is them that have never had it so good. Let's see how long they can keep it up. Not long if I know anything about human nature. And I'm not the only one who thinks so. The Japanese themselves think so.

The world has adjusted to it all as the world always has done and doubtless always will do. The gold coins did not pile up in the desert after all. They were loaded onto camels and then became part of yet another of these interminable webs of barter that lace our globe. College educations at *MIT*, mansions in Surrey, office complexes in New York. It was all there just as it always will be. Real Property did not get its name by accident. And on the side there was a swimming pool for her as well as one for him, and a few more forged masters adorned the walls of the Wall Street lawyers.

There are times when the philosopher in each of us wonders whether perhaps we should try the way of Jesus instead of that of Barabbas and look to God and not to Mammon for our salvation. But by Monday morning we have put such subterranean rumblings back in their place in the deeper recesses of our tormented souls. Back to Busyness and the Golden Calf.

The Japanese were a key factor in the last war. Certainly. But the outcome for them was never in doubt. The bet worth taking was on how the losses were going to be shared. That was the only interesting game and it turned out that the *Chrysler* joker added just the right dash of uncertainty.

Austin Rover probably came out with something like par for the course, if I may be excused for shifting metaphor. I don't know whether there really was any other option on the cards. These things have their own dynamics. Empires come and empires go. Ours was going. The Imperial Markets were no longer part of the firm. They had been divested. It was only a matter of time...and style.

From a historic perspective I thought the British carried out the whole operation with their customary flair for Good Style. We are out and away in the short span of a quarter of a century. We did it everywhere graciously. And they still all love our Queen. What more can you ask for?

Let's see how well the French cope. They are still embroiled. Their problems are yet to come.

Now there is something approaching a clean slate. All this is behind you. The Kamikaze Japanese are a thing of the past. The Imperial baggage has been thrown out. This animal that you call your car company is slimmed down, sleek and fit and rearing to go. Thank Edwards for some of that.

It's really not like the Shipbuilding Industry.

The Motor Car Business of thirty years hence is your oyster.

What a wonderful time to take over the reins of a Car Company.

And goodness what a business this could be for *Austin Rover*.

The Beginning of a New Disorder

Picture the scene in 2015. Cast your mind forward thirty years.

There they are. The whole bunch of them. The Japanese out there ahead. The Americans close behind copying their every move. And nestled in the cracks between the two of them the Little Europeans.

There they all stand frantically waving their national flags as they look out over their obsolescent business organisations from the 1980s with their Diseconomies of Size, their rusting investments in gigantic production facilities, robots spluttering intermittently to a halt, their dealer showrooms and distribution networks gathering cobwebs like the backdrop to a Sam Shepard 1980 movie set somewhere in a decaying small-town in the American Mid-West.

And alongside them, forever rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic first this way then that, now quicker now slower, will be the financial empires in which they put their faith. Desperately churning their paper castles, frantically patching up their Chinese walls and rushing for the exits of one house of cards after another as they collapse around them.

Is this really where you want to send us?

A wise man would keep well away from these decaying financial empires. They are too big. They are too impersonal. They are too complex. They are everything that every other civilization has seen collapse as the civilization falls. The wonder is that they keep going as long as they do.

I would caution you to keep your Car Company well clear of these dinosaurs. Stick to the Car Business and keep out of these International Casinos. If you have to gamble then at least play your own hand in your own way. And play with a partner of your choosing.

Many a great Trading House and many a dynamic businessman will be dragged down by these colossi. Keep it small. Stick to Trade Finance if not just three-way barter deals. And keep your wealth in real tangible assets. Be wary of money and downright suspicious of all their credit devices. Keep your business money-free until the very last moment.

Use money as it should be used: as an information system on the one hand and as a commodity like shrimps or oil or cigarette machines or buses on the other.

Don't be seduced into nailing your business future to their financial mast. The first strong gust of wind and it will snap bringing the sails and rigging of your Merchant Vessel crashing down around you. It may

not capsize the ship sending it and its cargo to the bottom but at the very least it will force the ship back to port.

If you are shrewd there are ways for your New Order to arise out of their Disorder.

Our Two One Worlds

We suffer from a great delusion. Because we have placed our flags over every part of the globe and built our high buildings and our factories all over the planet and have laced our oceans with cables and our skies with satellites, because of all these things we talk of our global village and our small world.

We suffer from a great delusion. This international order is but the thinnest of veneers upon the surface of the everyday life on the planet. Mere surface irregularities upon the web of life and the tapestry of consciousness.

We suffer from a great delusion if we believe it otherwise. As if it were really possible for such a creature as Man to have become so changed in so short a span.

Today's One World just like *Yesteryear's Nation State* is a figment of the human imagination. It is an invention of the human mind. A myth with but the slenderest of links to the everyday life of the people who populate the Earth.

Not that there has not been the profoundest of changes in the human condition, but this too is in the realms of consciousness rather than in the practical realities of day to day living.

Nor should the significance of the changes wrought over the past one hundred years be belittled. But they are not changes that have yet been effected upon our world. They are the realisation of a potential. They are but a first sparking of the imagination as to what is possible.

What is now but a glimmer of what could be. A mere flicker in time. Thirty years hence it may be a steady glow upon the surface of our lives.

Until the middle of the last century it would probably be reasonable to characterise man as ignorant and isolated unaware of other men and of the potentials of friendship, integrated resources and mutual survival.

Since 1850 man has been linking up resource and survival by lines of transport and communication. Material wealth has been generated astronomically. But the enormously increased energy flow has led to an arterial clogging and explosive high pressure. This is *Today's One World*. It is at an impasse. It is a brief transitory state in the aeons of history. The blinking of an eye. It is unstable and unsustainable.

In 1950 Buckminster Fuller sketched out this situation and indicated the probable nature of the intellectual response, a response which would he believed last very long because it was truly *natural* and was synchronised with the dynamic universe.

It is helpful to describe this *One World of Tomorrow* in some detail because although its realisation will take centuries yet its direction will strongly influence the developments that meet with favour and will determine those which will fail to arouse support over the next thirty years. I will leave the description in Buckminster Fuller's own words:

'...the intellectual answer will be a new volumetric and dynamic dimension - wireless, trackless, omnidirectional. It is a high-frequency interaction of time-synchronized relaying from resource to logically dispersed processing centers for physical separation, reintegration and unimpeded direct flow to next function.

It bypasses all constrictions yet in every way facilitates man's range and frequency of voluntary assembly and separation in a continuity of ever higher standards of environment and process control.

It is a moving picture. Everywhere its physical facilities move with ever increasing velocity and synchronized knowledge allowing man to choose when and how and where he wishes to move. He specifically controls his own accelerations and decelerations.

Its scientific key is to serve an ever increasing number of functions of more people more of the time with an ever decreasing investment of energy, matter and number of parts per unit of function by ever greater intellectual re-investment of man's unique capital asset - *hours of time of his life.*'

Our minds inhabit two *One Worlds*. Just like Disraeli's *Two Nations* these two *One Worlds* are divided against each other and are like night and day.

There is the *One World of Today* where Mammon strides freely over the planet laying to waste human souls and providing only for its own functionaries and only to the extent that these support the survival of the *MegaMachine*.

And there is the *One World of Tomorrow* where God smiles upon the freedom and happiness of *Homo Ludens* and man himself wonders at the follies of his predecessor *Homo Sapiens*. And as surely as Day follows Night the *New One World* may be imaginable through *Human Mind* but it will only be reachable through a blossoming of the *Human Spirit*.

PART IV: DREAMS OF DAYS TO COME

The Worshipful Company of Engineers

It is now time to look at *Austin Rover* with fresh eyes.

Just what exactly are you?

You may have forgotten it but you were once a legend in your time. You were Austin Healey and Morris, Jaguar and MG, Rover and Triumph, Leyland Buses and Land Rovers.

There was a time when the English Midlands, the Old Kingdom of Mercia was King Car. Birmingham was Cars and the English Midlands were British Engineering and British Industry. And all the world knew it.

This was the time before the Financial Mechanism had inverted our values and turned our civilization into a Money Cult with Profits as its own Tin God. It was a time when the Old Order still prevailed in pockets such as the Midlands.

In those days the Religious Mechanism was still doing its right job by mediating *reality* at the supra-mental levels and great men and women were able to conceive of a nobler education where this same reality could be mediated through Mind, the Emotions and Body.

This was a disappearing society, this society of the early Victorians, but Religion and Education still held sway over Politics, Administration and Sanctions and as a result the purposes of these three pivotal mechanisms were rightly set.

In the great era of Imperial Administration in the mid-Nineteenth Century that elite cadre of mandarins that administered the Empire were administrators of policy as determined by the Mechanism of Politics. Not for them the political gamesmanship and arrogant presumptions of our Government Pro-Consuls and Regional Administrators of Twentieth Century Big Government.

And unlike today the Sanctions Apparatus with its police and its laws, its judges and its armies, was not being deployed to implement by force the operations of the Financial Mechanism but was used to uphold the authority of government based on an unswerving consensus between Liberals and Conservatives alike that the task of government is to maintain the mediating structures of a society in order that freedom and culture might flourish.

Civilisation was a term which encompassed both spiritual and material progress in all spheres of activity and was of little worth unless it was accompanied by an ethical development of individuals and of mankind.

This was no longer the dominant world. This world of Values, of Dignity and of Honour was in retreat before the awesome power of the Financial Mechanism as it broke out from the bonds of its medieval canon law, but its influence was still felt. And no more so than on the Mechanism of Industry.

The Engineers of the Nineteenth Century, like the Master Masons of an earlier era were the Superheroes of Society. Like the missionaries and merchants deployed around the British Empire, these engineers were visionaries with the highest integrity and with ethical codes and standards of conduct not so far removed from those of the Benedictine Monks of an earlier age.

Industry was conceived by these men as providing with efficiency all the goods and services required by the community. How alien it would have been to them to see Industry as it has become today as no more than a plaything for Governments and Bankers, Lawyers and Administrators; as roulette wheel for entrepreneurs and spiv alike. How saddened they would have been to see the deterioration of that great British Engineering tradition as Industry was corrupted into nothing more than a basis for the monetarisation of real wealth according to a technique, that of usury, which had been the downfall of every civilisation and against which every Great World Religion had relentlessly set its face.

But yet so it has become. And though the tradition of the Great Nineteenth Century Engineering Professions lives on in many a heart, the will is no longer there. It is no longer legitimate to fight for these old professional values. Even Tawney is no longer acceptable reading, though he says much the same thing with much greater eloquence than I.

And this is once again not just a philosophical point. It is an economic point.

The traditional Homeland of *Austin Rover* is the English Midlands, the Kingdom of Mercia. The traditional strength of the Midlander has been his enterprise and what in another place came to be known as Yankee Ingenuity. To regain its former prowess the *Austin Rover* Car Company must reach down deeply to its roots.

These roots are intellectually in the Engineering Ethic and spiritually are grounded in the village communities and the great engineering towns of the English Midlands.

Midlands Engineering must be the rock upon which the future must be built.

Austin Rover must transform itself over the next thirty years from being a British Car Company to being a Midlands Engineering Industry. It must think of itself not as a producer of cars but as industrial designers bringing engineering principles to bear on meeting people's needs.

And already today it must see itself as something much greater than what the legal definition of *Austin Rover* might suggest. It is but the spokes of that great commonwealth of engineering enterprises rooted in the towns of the English Midlands and centred upon Birmingham as the focal point of the Birmingham City Region as it begins to rise once more to take its place, its rightful place, on the World Stage of the Twenty First Century.

As the Captains of the Great *Austin Rover* Merchant Vessel you are the Flagship of a Great Fleet of Industrial Vessels and it is with them that you should prepare to face the future not with some alien vessel from some other fleet from the other side of the world.

Birmingham is not *Austin Rover* but *Austin Rover* is the Flagship of the Fleet which is Birmingham's Economic Future. It is with these other lesser vessels that *Austin Rover* must coordinate its strategies and develop its plans of attack. With no others.

What directions are these strategies to take?

Tomorrow's Seven Ocean World

We are a seafaring nation. The *British Empire* was an *Ocean Empire* constructed in a *Sea Ocean World*. The entire pattern of the world's cities and their positionings grew out of the commerce and communication flows of the *Water Ocean World*.

Whoever commanded the unsinkable ships (islands) commanding the mouths of the local bays, harbours, estuaries, channels and passages, and commanded the islands and capes which governed the entrance to the *Seven Seas* governed the world.

The entrance to the *Seven Seas* was understood only by the *Creators of the British Empire* and they built their empire on this knowledge. The great one *Water Ocean World* pattern was unseen by world people. It was and is in fact one ocean with one central island - Antarctica - clockwise around which ever races west-to-eastbound the winds and waters. This gigantic merry-go-round - called the *roaring forties* (entered into at Forty Degrees South Latitude) is known as the Southern Hemisphere's jet stream area. Ships out of the Atlantic, Indian or Pacific Oceans were swiftly borne west-east by the merry-go-round to choose their re-entries into those oceans and their local lands.

The *Real World* that we have inherited is not the *One World of Tomorrow* which new Emperors will doubtless construct upon the new *Air Ocean World* centred upon the North Pole, around which counter-clockwise west-to-eastward races the northern hemisphere's jet stream at 200 to 400 miles per hour, but upon the interactions of this emerging *Air Ocean World* with the traditional established patterns of the *Old Water Ocean World*.

The *Water Ocean World* has established the fundamental pattern of *Today's World Cities*. Water routes represented the shortest distances between otherwise remote lands and peoples. Water routes represented the most economical lines of communication. Long distance communication consisted alone of written or face to face transmission - most swiftly completed by water.

The tonnage commerce of inorganic and organic world resources could only be accomplished in water-borne vessels. Only token commerce and slow messages could be accompanied via the backs of men or animals travelling the long way - via the plains and mountains around the headwaters.

Centuries ago the masters of the unsinkable *British Isles* established fortified bases at the southern extremities off South America, South Africa and Austral-Asia and with the unpeopled Antarctica at their back they came from the south upon the *soft-bellies* of the essentially northern hemisphere dwelling people.

It was the *Masters of the British Isles* who held secret and commanded until *World War One* this *Water Ocean World*. But many other peoples were quick to follow along behind the *Merchant Venturers* from these islands.

And wherever they went trade followed and great sea-faring cities grew up on the shores of the oceans. To these cities flocked all the most enterprising elements from all the peoples in the sparsely populated *Land World* of the time.

The *Greatest Cities* were those where *Freedom* and *Tolerance* won the day often only after a bitter struggle from the entrenched landowners descended from the earlier arrivals.

The *Great Liberal Cities* became *Confederations of Tribes* and each *World Tribe* eventually remembered its cultural roots and as these pioneers in the *New Lands* and the *New Cities* opened up by the *Water Ocean Routes* of the *Imperial Traders* grew ever more prosperous so their children and their children's children reconnected with the families and the communities they left behind.

Around each ocean webs were being woven, webs of personal, family, ethnic and religious bonds between the *Old Communities* in the *Old Land World* and the *New Pioneer Townships* and *Cities Dwellers* in the *New World* growing up apace at the end of the *Water Ocean Trade Routes*.

This is the pattern of the *Real World* we inhabit today.

It is a series of *Water Ocean Worlds* around each of which are clustered these great cities with their own *Diversity of Tribal Community* and each with their own particular pattern of political power which enables that diversity to be welded into a Unity.

But reaching out as a complex lacework of invisible but immensely strong personal bonds between the families is a most intricate web of ethnic ties and tribal loyalties between the various parts of each clan in each of the cities around their ocean.

Until very recently this web was primarily a support system for the new migrant or for the old or the returning triumphant migrant of an earlier migration.

But in the past thirty years with the advent of air travel and telecommunications each of these families and clans is but a few seconds away from each other by telephone and any part of the ocean can be reached from any other part in less than a day. You can get up with your family and go to bed in the evening with your family.

This *Web of Interrelationships* is now taking upon itself the power that previously it had allowed to leak to *Governments* and *Corporations* and other part of the *Impersonal MegaMachine*.

This has profound implications for business.

The *Nation of Tomorrow* is the *Circle of your Friends* but these are no longer the people in your own town or the girl on your block. Your friends are likely to be your family and likely to be friends of your family. They will be friends you met first locally in your school and then friends that you made at some other place around your local ocean where you travelled or went to college.

Business in the past was about people. The next thirty years will see a return to the personal in business. The *Personal Business* however will not be *Local Business* it will be *Ocean Business* conducted on the basis of trust and *Personal Ties* between friends and family in their tribal communities in their *City Regions*.

Business will return to the *Personal Style* of the *Mercantile Era*. The way of Business will be the *Way of the Merchant Adventurers* of a previous age.

The *Commercial Empires* of the *Seven Ocean World of Tomorrow* will be ethnic businesses and their purpose will not be unending profit but civilisation as they define it for them and theirs.

It is taking place already under your very eyes but the economists do not count it and the accountants do not have a measure for it and the governments cannot tax it. So it is made invisible to your *News Papers* and your *Label-Makers* in their *Money World*.

An *Ethnic Economics* with a *City Region Local Currency* and an ocean by ocean aggregation might show you that this *World of Tomorrow* is actually here with us today. And neither you, nor indeed I, had realised it.

The larger world of the *East Midlander* is the *North Atlantic Ocean*. Each family in the *Midlands* has an extensive network of friends and relations throughout the region.

The *North Atlantic* is not the only place they are. Not by a long shot. Some to be sure are on the other side of the world in the Indian sub-continent, in Australia and in South America but these bonds are much more recent than the *North Atlantic* bonds. They are not always so surely based in community and they are hence inherently more fragile. They may become increasingly important but for the next business generation I do not think they should be a basis for strategy.

It is the *North Atlantic* which should be the wider world for the multiplicity of nations which we can regard as nearest and dearest to the families of the *English Midlands*.

The world is moving once more into a period of relative geo-stability on a new and expanded scale and at a new and expanded pace. The *Nation State* within the *World Empires* was never a sustainable myth. It was too far divorced from real life.

But the local life within the tribal community. And the experience over a lifetime of a number of local lives within the same tribal community geographically dispersed around your own *Ocean World* and located in a number of city regions around that world.

This is no myth. This is *Tomorrow's World*. And it is into this world that the *Car Company of Tomorrow* must find a niche.

Local Brains not Global Brawn

The *Engineering Attitude* within. And Coming Home to the *Ethnic Communities* of the *North Atlantic City Regions* without.

It was a philosopher C.H. Waddington who wrote a book entitled the *Scientific Attitude*. It was, he claimed, the attitude of *Twentieth Century Man*. The philosophers of today have not yet seen that one among them needs now to write a book entitled *The Engineering Attitude*. When he does so he will be writing in the second decade of the twenty first century and by then he will be able to see that this was to be the attitude of *Twenty First Century Man*.

The *Engineering Attitude* just like the *Scientific Attitude* of which Waddington wrote is not synonymous with either the *Business of Science* or the attitude of the individual scientist. It is more in the way of a metaphysics with which to approach the everyday world.

It is important that the idea of the *Engineering Attitude* is understood in this manner. I do not mean that *Tomorrow's Car Company* will be run by engineers or that *Finance* and *Marketing* or *Profits* or *Balance Sheets* will be discarded.

Instead I mean that a *Car Company* that is permeated with the *Engineering Attitude* will approach the world with the collective mindset of the *Good Engineer*. This in turn means that he will deal with the world as it is presented to him not by means of some theory of it and he will use the principles of good engineering design to develop a solution to specific changes that he believes to be needed.

If I were to contrast the *Engineering Attitude* with the *Scientific Attitude* then in a phrase I would say that the *Engineering Attitude* concerns itself with *Feasibility* and *Desirability* - the *Scientific Attitude* only with *Feasibility*.

The *Engineering Attitude* is interested in how a particular system, be it a physical system, a social system, a myth system or a metaphysical system will be used in the real world. It is interested in its impact. It builds in safety factors and concerns itself with making sure the system works all the time.

The *Scientific Attitude*, particularly since the recent introduction of the *Quantum Heresy*, is interested in making general statements about how a particular domain of reality works most of the time. It has created enormous devastation during this century as this attitude has been applied to the *Science of Matter*.

The *Scientific Attitude* is now penetrating into the *Science of Life* and in the next century, if it is not restrained, it will force its microscopes and telescopes into the *Science of the Human Spirit* itself.

The *Scientific Attitude* is fundamentally inhuman. The *Engineering Attitude* in contrast is humane. It seeks flow and form and balance. Unlike the *Scientific Attitude* it does not merely seek to produce effects but it seeks to be useful. This is a profound difference.

The *Scientific Attitude* destroys life. The *Engineering Attitude* enhances life.

The *Economics of Tomorrow* will have as its metaphysical underpinnings the *Engineering Attitude*. It will not look upon people as nothing more than *hands* for the *Lord of the Dynamo* or as *Knowledge Workers* feeding mind food to the *MegaMachine*. Instead *Economic Engineering* in contrast to *Economic Science* will be designing economic structures that support people's needs.

And thirty years hence people will be needing not cars as much as mobility.

They will be needing to jump into a safe and healthy temporary controlled environment as part of the structure designed to meet those needs. At times this might look like a car of today. It may well still have wheels and it will probably still roll them to where they want to go. But thirty years is a long time.

These people of thirty years hence will undoubtedly still be living in houses and in many places they will be travelling to offices. Most of them will probably be living in one place most of the time. Others may be having a number of different *being and becoming places* and their work will be coming to them when they call for it rather than them commuting to their work at the beck and call of the *Factory System*.

These people will undoubtedly still be divided and *dividable* into the rich and the poor. Around the *North Atlantic* they will also still be *North* and *South* but this may be more on the basis of climate than wealth. In today's world the mobility needs of a family are determined by the money at their command. This may not be so thirty years hence. In 2015 it may be that some form of *Ocean Socialism* in the *North Atlantic* has determined that certain forms of mobility are basic human rights and should not be subject to such monetary means tests. Thirty years is a surprisingly long time.

These *North Atlantic People* will doubtless be wanting to travel around their *Ocean Village Pond* thirty years hence. Anyone who has watched the explosion of low cost airfares since the 1950s must keep a very open mind on the possibilities of seemingly uneconomic enterprises of a completely unexpected nature emerging by the years 2015 as people are provided with the freedom of mobility.

There may be many *Little Birminghams* thirty years hence as the idea of ethnic villages is given increasing legitimacy. As Prince Charles observes at *Harvard's 350th Anniversary* this year

'People are happiest when they are living in village-like areas within cities - villages that can display the style and interests of the people who live there. When things are built on too vast a scale they lose their human dimension.'

King Charles will be on the throne of England in the year 2015. His daughter may have married the eldest son of King Carlos of Spain. The *North Atlantic Commonwealth* may have accepted Massachusetts and Florida, New Catalonia in Colombia and Puerto Rico into its Confederation. Thirty years is a long time. Peace can bring just as many surprises as war and who in Paris in the winter of 1938 could predict the presence of the *Gestapo* in their neighbourhood a few months later.

These *Little Birminghams* may be spread out all around the *North Atlantic* thirty years hence. Not only will there be urban villages in Toronto and Philadelphia, Trinidad and Bermuda but perhaps even in Caracas and Bogotá, Monrovia and Accra.

The *North Atlantic Ocean* will be bilingual in English and Spanish thirty years hence. The Midlands schoolboy will be going to summer camp in *la cordillera occidentale* and Spanish will be a requirement for entry to *Oxford University* as evidence of basic literacy. Just as the scholars of *Medieval Europe* would need to learn the Latin and Greek languages of the *Roman Catholic Church* to participate in scholarly discussions so the *North Atlantic Scholars* of 2015 will need to be fluent in English and Spanish in addition to their local vernacular, be that Cockney, Gaelic, Welsh or *brummie*.

And for the West African the situation will be little different to the days of the *British Empire* when as in *Colonial Tanganyika* for instance the educated local population spoke their native tribal vernacular, their regional borrowed Swahili tongue and their administered language of English.

This is the *World of Tomorrow* and it is thirty years hence. It is the better part of a working lifetime. A whole new generation will have replaced the old guard with their *World War Paranoias*, their fears of

this ism and that ism and their frenetic belief in *Materialism* and the *Power of Money* to solve human problems.

This is the world of the new *Austin Rover*. Set it going in the wrong direction now in the 1980s and there it will be dragging down the lives of the rural and urban villages of the *English Midlands* thirty years hence alongside the other collapsing colossi - the Japanese and the Europeans among them.

I think the *Brummies* are smarter than that...if you'll let them be.

If you can find a way to give them space...

If you can find a structure that puts people first...

If you can design a form of organisation that can encompass the *Engineering Attitude*...

If you can transcend the conflict between the *Entrepreneur* and the *Intellectual*...

If you can dream of days to come and...

If you can make others share that dream and ride it with you into the future...

Then these *English Midlanders* can make *Birmingham Number One*.

They can make the *North Atlantic* citizens speak with reverence once again of the *Birmingham Approach* or the *Edgbaston Think Tanks* or *Solihull Technology*.

And the *North Atlantic* would be the envy of the *Seven One Ocean World*.

Why not?

Epilogue

Birmingham as Number One!

Why not? Indeed, just so. But how?

Firstly, don't misuse words like radical? It limits the imagination. Understand what the truly radical options could be.

Secondly, learn how to go about developing a Visionary Plan for *Austin Rover*, if necessary developing your own Visionary Plans for the Birmingham City Region in order to provide yourself with the appropriate social and economic context. See your strategic plans for what they are: Trend Extrapolations, Business as Usual Assumptions, and Beggar Your Neighbour.

You don't need that. The strength of the British is their individualism. And the strength of the English and Scottish education systems has been to shelter the eccentric thus nurturing the genius. And judging by the likes of Shaw and Joyce the Irish do much the same. For the Welsh and the other English tribes I cannot speak, but the Individual is the English strength. You must see to it that we play to our strengths.

We have never got ahead in the world by copying what the Germans or the Japanese have done. They are the producers of the Organisation Man. The English prefer to develop the Superman. It is the American that thinks in straight lines. The English and, infuriatingly, the Irish, the Scottish and the Welsh, the Yorkshireman, the Geordie, the Scouser, and yes indeed the Midlander have never done that.

Don't let yourself be fooled. You have a unique opportunity.

The Japanese and the American and the other Europeans are locked in mentally to Strategic Plans that are guaranteed to set them at each other's throats thirty years hence, fighting like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, over some Market Rattle that is no longer worth fighting over.

Thirty years hence they will still be looking at the Old One World and at its Nation States and its crumbling political and economic structures. You will be looking at City Regions and your vibrant North Atlantic Ocean Economy.

Thirty years hence they will be looking for Car Selling Markets while you are serving Transport User Systems.

Thirty years hence they will be studying the economics of production while you are solving the dynamics of urban village mobility needs in sun-rich environments.

Thirty years hence they will be price cutting to keep their dealer network loyal while you are franchising Village Car making Facilities and spinning off software companies from your Artificial Intelligence Laboratories for 'Low Energy MG and Austin Healey Sports Car Design & Build Systems' and moving into the expanding new field of automated coastal shipping vessel boat making facilities.

Thirty years hence they will be desperately trying to devise new technology for preventing corrosion costs on their soaring inventories of unsold four wheel drive road vehicles while you are sponsoring a graduate scholars program at the *Universidad Joveriana* in Bogotá at the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* and at the *Open University of the Fourth World* in Oxford into the Financial Impact of Changes in Family Vehicle Usage Patterns in New Catalonia in the 2050s.

Thirty years hence they will be wondering how the British did it, while deep inside the ivory towers of *Harvard University* one small voice will sound and *Birmingham as Number One* will become a best-seller - particularly in Birmingham. *In Pursuit of Imagination* will be the hot subject on the American seminar circuit and *Austin Rover 1986-1992* will have the dubious distinction of having been reduced to a case study by the newly named *Harvard School for Creative Enterprise*. Meanwhile the English Midlanders unlike the Japanese of the 1980s will not be laughing all the way to the bank. That after all was never their interest. They'll be smiling all the way to the beach in Cartagena.

Be bold for, as Goethe said, in boldness is genius. And don't be overawed by the idea of bringing genius into business. It is nothing more than a little bit more common sense than the next man. 'Common Sense is instinct' said that Victorian gentleman from John Bull's Other Island. 'Enough of it is Genius'.

And if you can't be radical, then why not at least have fun trying.

Austin Rover has a unique opportunity.

The Next United Kingdom - *a study in earth, air and water*

The planet we inhabit is a sphere. Of this we are assured by the evidence of the satellites that we send into space to take its picture.

Globes are three-dimensional objects while maps are typically two-dimensional. Transferring three-dimensional information to a two-dimensional flat surface requires a technique. The techniques most commonly adopted for our planet have had as their principal purpose the propagation of some nationalism or other. The latest of these is called internationalism and being the biggest is both the most dangerous and the most deceptive.

This map is no exception, the only difference being that my nation is the *Circle of My Friends* and these typically live at the boundary between the water trails criss-crossing the *North Atlantic Ocean* and the land trails fanning out from the ports, harbours and estuaries where their forefathers rested their vessels and reprovisioned them for further exploration.

At certain places on our planet the three elements of earth, air and water can be found coming together and merging into one another. These places are not fixed but ebb and flow with the rhythms of the cosmos. Joined together on maps these land-falls appear as shore-lines.

The only map that accurately represents surface areas is Buckminster Fuller's *Dymaxion Map*. Our map distorts like all the others. But in like manner to satellite cameras it distorts only to the extent that the eye delivers a distorted image when it gazes at a globe. And that means that the mind can deduce the three-dimensional shape with practice.

Technically this projection takes a point between Norway and Siberia (not the North Pole), slices a great circle through Stockholm and then peels thirty degree segments from this northerly point. OK?

Four water trails lead out of the *North Atlantic Ocean* to other places on the planet. Two hundred years ago there were just two. Then the Suez and Panama Canals were built to the great confusion of our modern day politicians whose ideologies were invented before the engineers set to work.

The mountain pass at the top is narrow enough to allow the *Siberian* and *Alaskan Electricity Grids* to be connected. The pass at the other end of the lake is a couple of sailing days wide.

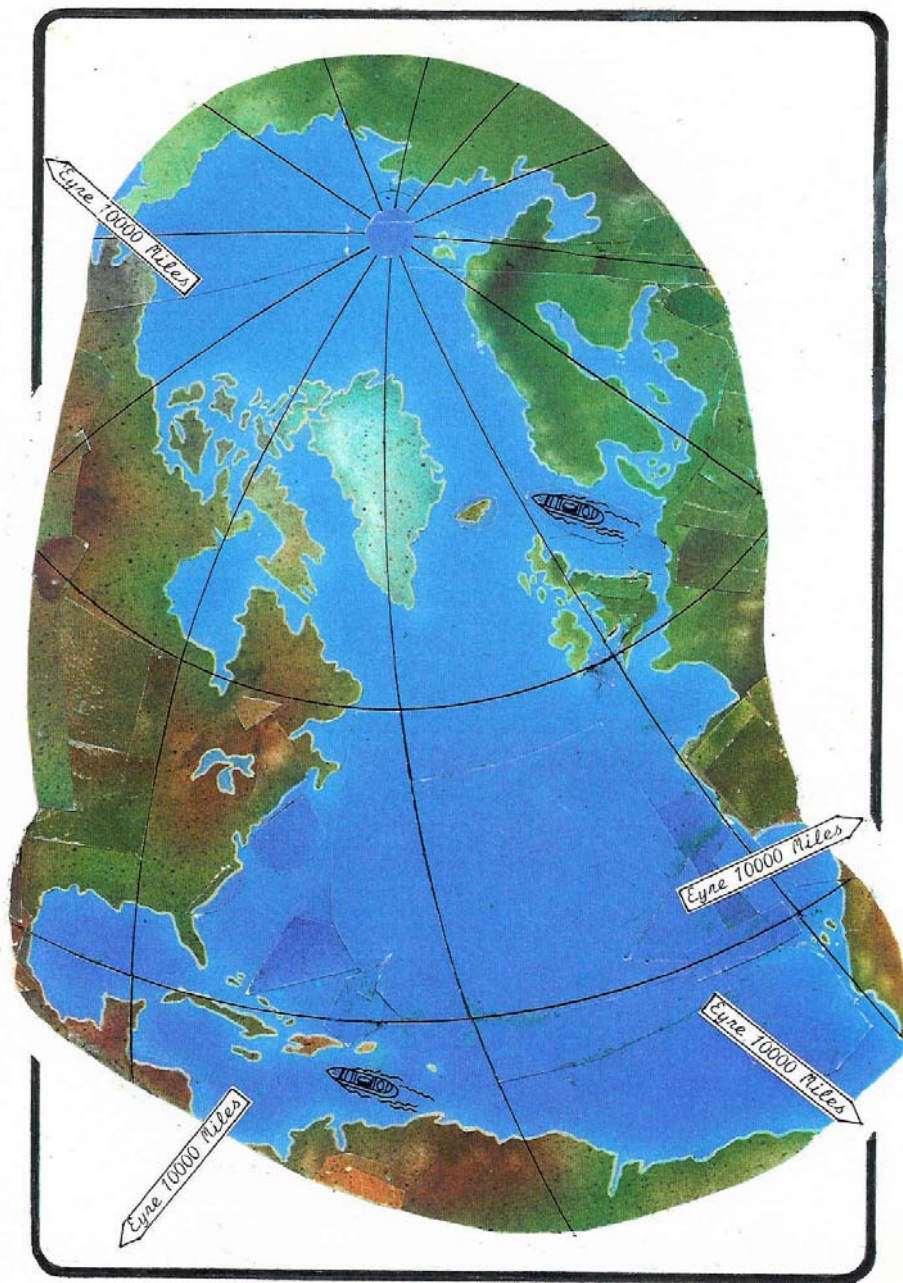
Whether you go by mountain pass or the man-made water trails cut through the mountain ridges sloping down into the Pacific and the Indian Oceans you can if you will make a journey by water of between nine and ten thousand miles and arrive on the *Great Australian Bight*.

This is where you will find the City of Eyre. Contrary to popular belief you can get there from here...several ways. That's spherical geometry for you.

William Norris Shepherd
Cambridge, Massachusetts
17th July 1984

Birmingham As Number One

An Open and Confidential Letter to the Captains of the Great Merchant Vessel
AUSTIN ROVER



- PART I:** The Probable Future
- PART II:** The Ecology of the Future
- PART III:** The Transition Years
- PART IV:** Dreams of Days to Come