



Robert Hough is arguably one of the most successful business men in the North west; his business portfolio is vast and his contribution and service to our region is outstanding. As Deputy Chairman of the hugely successful Peel Holdings his management skills and legal expertise have come to the fore as the company has enjoyed massive expansion and unparalleled success. Robert Hough has always held independent Schools in high regard and we were thrilled when he agreed to become a Patron of our Centenary Appeal giving us his full support and the benefit of sound advice..

Alexander Robinson and Lauren Murphy, in interview Robert Hough

Robert Hough was born in Urmston in 1945, educated at William Hulme Grammar School and Bristol University, graduating with a first class honours in law. He believes that attending an independent school made a huge difference to his life, saying, “The environment, the quest for academic excellence, the standards and ambitions amongst your peer pupils, are all great drivers to do well. I certainly know that I wouldn’t have achieved what I may have achieved without having attended William Hulme School, an independent school.

When asked why he became a Patron of the Bury Grammar Schools Centenary Appeal, Robert Hough replied, “I have always been an admirer of the great independent schools in Greater Manchester of which the Bury Grammar Schools are a very distinguished component. I was therefore delighted to assist them for that reason. Particularly to help the schools achieve their ambitions for development and maintaining academic excellence in this area, both of which are extremely laudable aspirations.”

When Robert Hough left William Hulme he went to study law at Bristol. We asked what had persuaded him to make this choice. “Well, I wasn’t very good at science! And as I thought I could write and reason fairly well, I felt that law would be an interesting career but one probably which suited my own abilities. Law wasn’t studied at A-level and it was totally unknown to me as subject. It therefore was a risk but it was a wise choice.”

Mr Hough’s business portfolio is varied, with interests ranging from Liverpool Airport, The Trafford Centre, Manchester Ship Canal to Century 105 FM. We were intrigued to know why he chooses to participate in a particular business.

“With a corporate legal background I was involved with complicated companies with complex and difficult financial arrangements. Upon entering Peel, I was involved in a huge variety of tasks. This had a very similar diversity to what I was doing as a corporate solicitor. My non-executive roles are varied and they move from construction to I.T. training. There is a big range and as a non-executive director you must exercise independent judgement to challenge management and devise strategy. These sorts of skills can relate to any type of business providing you have a good grasp of the basic business stuff generally. The openings on a non-executive basis have been where people have approached me and said ‘would you like to do this or that’ and I’ve responded when I felt I could understand the companies quickly and add value to them.

Robert Hough has made a substantial contribution to the regeneration of the North West Region. He was Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Manchester Commonwealth Games and is now Chairman of the New East Manchester Limited, an urban regeneration company responsible for the physical, social and economic regeneration of that disadvantaged area. We asked him finally what his hopes were for the future, he replied, “To continue to enjoy my commercial career and also my contributions to the fabric of life in greater Manchester, as well as finding more time for relaxation, particularly travel, holidays and golf.”