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Is that Sir Mark Moody-Stuart standing in the middle of the road outside his Sussex home with a mobile phone to his ear looking out for me? The SatNav has let me down and the morning is to be full of surprises.

His Toyota Prius in the driveway jostles for space with cars that appear to belong to tradesmen who clearly know him well, and are full of cheerful banter. Directing me into the drive, Sir Mark apologises for a lack of room. He makes me a mug of tea while conducting a conversation about the whereabouts of a critical mains stopcock. The sheer everyday humanity of the scene almost makes me forget the reason for being there.

Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, KCMG, PhD, MA, FGS, served as a managing director of Royal Dutch/Shell group from 1991-2001 and as Chairman from 1998-2001. He was Chairman of Anglo-American plc from 2002-2009. So states the flyleaf on his book *Responsible Leadership: Lessons from the Front Line of Sustainability and Ethics*, recently published by Greenleaf Publishing.

“You wanted to see where I wrote the the book” he says, ushering me into a study that defies any possibility of tidiness. The sun pours in, revealing books everywhere, piled up and on shelves. Behind him a ‘Proud You Are My Dad’ card stands on a shelf in front of assorted family photographs. Pieces of an international life vie for attention – a large old hour glass, he says, is from Saudi Arabia – he has been a director of Saudi Aramco since 2007.

His wife Judy’s presence is there too, as *The Poems of Andrew Marvell* jostles for space on the table. Partners for almost 50 years now since first meeting at Cambridge University, they both studied Natural Sciences. He mentions in his book he was delighted to claim her attention at a time when the ratio of male students to female ones was 18:1. “Even to this day some of Judy’s fellow Quakers will ask her

sympathetically what it is like to be married to someone who was involved at a high level in a major oil company like Shell” he writes.

This is clearly a man to whom relationships matter, whether they are family, friendship, or business. His book outlines the impact of his career in the evolution of his thinking on the role of business in society.

His story began in Antigua, where he was born into privilege, the youngest of six children to a father who ran a sugar plantation, amongst other things. “Apparently he acquired it off a bad debt” says Sir Mark. Attending Antigua Girls High School at first, which took boys up to the age of seven, he went to boarding school in England in 1950, the year he was ten. First prep school, then Shrewsbury School in Shropshire followed.

When asked as a teenager what he wanted to do, he assumed he would do as his father had done before him. “Forget it – it’s over. It’s high time we handed it back and left” was the response. Part of the attraction of an agro industry was “being outdoors” he says, and he found he enjoyed geology at school, so he headed in that direction.

Having “scraped a place at Cambridge” and missed an upper second or 2:1 degree – which was the requirement for doctoral studies to be funded by the Natural Environment Research Council - he had a stroke of luck. Shell, which had been prepared to award him a postgraduate studentship for a doctorate on “fluviatile sediments in Spitsbergen” stood by its offer, as long as Cambridge would have him.

On completing his doctorate he applied to Shell and was given a job as an exploration geologist. It was to take him around the world. “If you live in a lot of different countries which is a great privilege and watch the impact of the oil industry which is usually the largest contributor to the economy, you see how they change in time” he says.

Looking at the variables that lead to different scenarios of development from Oman to Malaysia to Nigeria he concludes that the critical one “is the government – so what do

you do if (as a business) you are incapable of forming a constructive partnership there in development?”

“The great inventions of the last 20 years or so have been advances between civil society and governments solving very specific problems: it has been demonstrated that such co-operation can improve life” he says. Today he believes strongly that the role of civil society in creating trust is essential for progress.

A recent example is the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a voluntary global standard ensuring transparency of payments from natural resources first mooted in 2002. It involves companies publishing what they pay for oil, gas and mining with government disclosure as well. The figures are then reconciled by an independent administrator. The UK, along with France, signed up to it last year.

Preceding EITI, Sir Mark worked to succeed in getting a tenth principle on corruption added to the UN Global Compact of 2000, with its principles in the areas of human rights, labour and the environment. “It’s about continually trying to raise the bar. Even when standards are voluntary, they get baked in if the bar is constantly rising. Today we’re talking about tax transparency – 15 years ago people would have said that was outrageous” he says.

It has been almost two decades since what he terms Shell’s *annus horribilis* in 1995 in the book. It included two unconnected events: an attempt to dispose of the storage and tanker loading buoy Brent Spar in the Atlantic and the execution by the Nigerian government of Ken Saro-Wiwa, who had been involved in many protests against Shell’s activities.

“Events like that don’t just hit the management of the company, they hit everyone. Self-esteem is completely dented” he says today. Shell had to start again, and its next report had the title ‘Profit & Principles: Does There Have To Be A Choice?’ Sir Mark believes there are echoes here for the banking industry today.

“It is all about how you get values to penetrate, and it’s very tricky. When it came to exploration, it was about people starting up projects before they were ready, to hit a

deadline or meet a target. You realise to your discomfort that they are not sure you mean it (when you stress values) so you have to deal with situations when you shut something down, lose money, and then congratulate people for having done the right thing” he says.

Responsible leadership, he says, is about finding a way to link individual responsibility with corporate responsibility. Many companies today “do not have a basic respect for people” and that is where they must start again, says Sir Mark.

He is, as the foreword to the book by the former UN Deputy Secretary General Sir Mark Malloch-Brown suggests, “an unlikely perhaps, but very effective revolutionary.”